



VOL. 45, NO. 201
PAGES 20 | BAISAS 210


2010000387405

12 ZVEREV
POWERS INTO SEMIS,
KOSTYUK TO FACE
ANDREEVA

IN BRIEF

‘SAS FOR EXCELLENCE’
INITIATIVE TO
ENHANCE DIGITAL
SELF-SUFFICIENCY

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology launched the ‘Sas for Excellence’ initiative within the ‘Sas’ programme for supporting tech companies, as part of its efforts to enhance digital sovereignty, localise technologies and build an Omani digital industry with added value.

The initiative focuses on enhancing local digital self-sufficiency by supporting national tech companies to develop and own digital products and services with added value, contributing to consolidating digital sovereignty, enhancing local content, and building a base of Omani companies capable of competing in regional and global markets.

Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaithani, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, pointed out that the initiative contributes to supporting the localisation of technologies and enhancing the national digital industry by enabling Omani tech companies to develop and own local digital solutions and products, and building their competitive capabilities relying on national talents. This enhances digital sovereignty and local digital self-sufficiency, and supports the growth of startups and national tech companies to become capable of competing and expanding regionally and globally. — ONA

PROTESTS OVER US EBOLA CENTRE



Protests over a fiercely contested Ebola quarantine centre for US nationals in Kenya have killed one man, a rights group said on Tuesday, as President William Ruto defended the planned centre.

The US-built facility at Kenya’s Laikipia Air Base was due to open last week, according to US officials, to quarantine Americans arriving from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which is battling a major Ebola outbreak. The centre — about 200 kilometres (125 miles) from the capital Nairobi — was set to have 50 isolation beds and be managed by US medical staff. — AFP

Oman ranks first in export supply chain

The Sultanate of Oman has achieved advanced regional and global results in several indicators within the 2025 Logistics Performance Index (LPI) report issued by the World Bank. This reflects the efficiency of its logistics system and its competitiveness in the fields of maritime transport and postal services, and enhances its position as a global logistics hub, as

this index measures the efficiency of supply chains and maritime, air, and postal trade across countries.

The Sultanate of Oman secured first place globally in the “Export Supply Chain Initiation” index with a record time not exceeding 0.8 days, an achievement that reflects the efficiency of its logistics system and the speed of its commercial procedures. This index

measures the entire time duration of an empty container’s cycle from its departure until its return loaded and ready for export through the port, serving as an indicator that reflects the high operational efficiency and speed of container handling in Omani ports.

This advanced performance comes as a reflection of continuous national efforts to

develop the logistics sector by strengthening infrastructure, expanding the network of ports and maritime and postal services, and raising the efficiency of operational processes, thereby contributing to supporting trade and investment movements and reinforcing the status of the Sultanate of Oman as a global logistics hub. — DETAILS ON P15

WILL THERE BE A DEAL
TO END US-IRAN WAR?

US HAS NOT OFFERED IRAN SANCTIONS RELIEF TO REOPEN STRAIT

US SECRETARY of State Marco Rubio said on Tuesday that President Donald Trump’s negotiating team has not offered Iran sanctions relief in exchange for reopening the Strait of Hormuz and insisted that any sanctions relief was tied to Tehran giving up its nuclear programme.

“Right now, everything that’s been discussed with them (Iran) is that... any sanctions relief is condition-based, which means it has to be in return for the reason why those sanctions were put in place in the first place, which is their nuclear programme,” Rubio told a Senate hearing.

Testifying in Congress publicly for the first time since the Iran war began, Rubio said there will be sanctions relief for Iran if they agree to give up their nuclear activities.

“Iran is being sanctioned because they’ve highly enriched uranium. Iran is being sanctioned because of their nuclear activities. If they agree to give up those things, there will be sanctions relief associated with their commitment and compliance with those agreements,” he said. Rubio testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday morning as the Trump administration seeks congressional approval for its proposed 30% cut to the



Women walk outside a jeweller’s shop at the Tajrish Bazaar in Tehran on Jon Tuesday. US President Donald Trump said that talks with Iran were moving at a ‘rapid pace’, even as Tehran threatened to widen the war. — AFP

foreign affairs budget and a 50% increase in military spending. He was to appear at three other hearings later on Tuesday and on Wednesday, as his fellow Republicans have been showing signs of concern about the Iran war.

Trump insists that gasoline prices will come down and has insisted for weeks that he will reach a good deal to end the conflict. Iran wants an interim agreement with sanctions relief that would allow it access

to billions of dollars in oil revenue, but Washington has continued to add sanctions against Iranian actors while talks have taken place.

Rubio did not specify when there might be such a deal. He said Iran had intended to build up its conventional weapons capabilities as a “shield” for its nuclear programme. “What they tried to do is they were going to try to build a conventional shield and hide behind that conventional

shield,” he said, spelling out why Trump felt it was imperative to launch the war.

Lawmakers, including some of Trump’s fellow Republicans, have been increasingly questioning the fighting, as the Iran conflict enters its fourth month. Last month, the Senate voted to advance a war powers resolution that would end the Iran conflict unless Trump obtains Congress’ authorisation. — Reuters

SEE ALSO P6 & 7

UN warns of extreme heat risk from El Nino, urges preparedness

GENEVA: The United Nations weather agency forecast on Tuesday a moderate or possibly strong El Nino that could drive up global temperatures and increase the risk of extreme weather over the coming months.

El Nino is a periodic warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, which typically lasts between nine and 12 months, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

The WMO said warm ocean waters were driving El Nino’s development and predicted above-average temperatures in most parts of the

world from June to August. The WMO said it is likely El Nino will continue until November.

“We need to prepare for a potentially strong El Nino event - which will exacerbate drought and heavy rainfall and increase the risk of heatwaves both on land and in the ocean,” said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo.

The weather pattern is known to disrupt regional climates, potentially bringing warmer temperatures across the globe, while increasing rainfall to southern South America, the southern United States, parts of the Horn of Africa and central Asia. It can also



A view of cracked ground at a dam, as Zimbabwe is experiencing an El Nino-induced drought, resulting in malnutrition among children under the age of five, pregnant women and adolescents, in Mudzi, Zimbabwe. — Reuters file photo

cause drought in Australia, Central America, Indonesia, and sections of southern Asia, and lead to the formation of hurricanes in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, the WMO said.

The most recent El Nino, in 2023 to 24, contributed to making 2024 the hottest year on record, Saulo added.

“Extreme heat alone is already one of the deadliest climate hazards we face, and an El Nino event could intensify the threat,” said Saulo. The risks include more heat-related illnesses, a wider spread of vector-borne diseases and increased pressure on food and water systems. “Communities that were already

struggling will be pushed farther beyond their limits,” she said.

Some national weather agencies have forecast the strongest El Nino, in a decade, warning of hotter, drier weather across Asia in the second half of 2026 that is likely to damage crops and food supplies as farmers already struggle with fertiliser shortages and costly fuel caused by the Iran war.

“The world must treat it as the urgent climate warning it is. El Nino conditions will pour fuel on the fire of a warming world,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres, urging a shift away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy. — Reuters

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



The meeting formed part of the visit of an Omani trade delegation to Belarus. — ONA

OMAN, BELARUS
EXPLORE INDUSTRIAL
COOPERATION

MINSK: Oman and Belarus have discussed opportunities to deepen industrial and investment cooperation as both countries seek to expand economic ties and create new avenues for private sector collaboration.

The discussions took place during a meeting in Minsk between Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), and Andrey Kuznetsov, Belarusian Minister of Industry. The meeting formed part of the visit of an Omani trade delegation to Belarus and was attended by members of OCCI’s Board of Directors.

Both sides reviewed the progress of bilateral economic relations and highlighted the importance of strengthening industrial partnerships to support mutual economic interests and promote sustainable growth.

The talks focused on potential cooperation across a number of industrial sectors, including vehicle manufacturing and assembly, as well as the production of road construction machinery and equipment. The two sides also explored opportunities to encourage greater private sector participation and facilitate new investment partnerships between businesses in Oman and Belarus.

In addition, the meeting examined mechanisms for enhancing commercial, industrial and investment cooperation and discussed practical steps to expand economic engagement in the coming period.

The discussions reflect the growing interest of both countries in broadening trade and industrial links, while leveraging complementary strengths to create mutually beneficial investment opportunities and support long-term economic cooperation. — ONA

RAM LAUNCHES
PUBLIC POLICY
PROGRAMME



Participants will gain the strategic insights, analytical capabilities and practical tools required.

MUSCAT: Committed to strengthening future-ready, forward-thinking national leadership and action-oriented public sector capabilities, the Royal Academy of Management (RAM) has launched the Public Policy Design and Implementation Programme with King’s College London (King’s).

In alignment with Oman Vision 2040, the bespoke programme is designed to enhance participants’ ability to navigate complex policy environments, address emerging challenges and drive institutional excellence. It equips them to develop effective public policies and translate national priorities into executable initiatives, delivering sustainable impact across organisations and society at large. Dr Fathiya bint Abdullah al Rashdi, RAM’s Vice-President for Programme Affairs, said, “The Public Policy Design and Implementation Programme reflects our commitment to preparing public sector leaders to respond effectively to an increasingly dynamic and complex operating environment.

Participants will gain the strategic insights, analytical capabilities, and practical tools required to design and implement evidence-based policies and translate national strategies into actions that deliver a real-world impact.” She added that RAM continues to offer bespoke, high-impact leadership programmes that respond to national priorities and contribute to building a more agile, innovative, and future-ready public sector positioned to deliver long-term value for Oman.

Royal Office Minister receives Algerian military official

MUSCAT: Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office and Head of the Office of the Supreme Commander, received at his office Saïd Chanegriha, Minister Delegate to the Minister of National Defence and Chief of People’s National Army Staff of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria and his accompanying delegation. The meeting reviewed the bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the People’s Democratic Republic



The meeting reviewed the bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria. — ONA

of Algeria. The two sides also discussed existing areas of cooperation and ways to support and enhance them to achieve the aspirations of the leaderships of the two countries. Additionally, the meeting touched upon a number of topics of common interest. The meeting was attended by the Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces, and the Ambassador of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria to the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA

Don’t trust your dashboard
for the official temperature

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 2

AS temperatures soar across the Sultanate of Oman during the summer season, many motorists have reported vehicle dashboard readings that appear significantly higher than temperatures announced by the Oman Meteorology Department, raising questions about the discrepancy.

According to weather experts, the difference stems from the methods used to measure air temperature. Official meteorological readings are obtained through calibrated instruments installed at designated weather stations that follow international standards.

These sensors are positioned in shaded, well-ventilated locations to ensure they measure the actual air temperature rather than heat generated by surrounding surfaces.

Vehicle thermometers, on the other hand, are often influenced by local conditions. Sensors mounted on cars can be affected by heat radiating from asphalt roads, nearby buildings, and other vehicles, particularly during periods of intense sunshine.

As a result, they may display temperatures several degrees higher than official readings. Meteorologists explain that road surfaces can become substantially hotter than the surrounding air after prolonged exposure to sunlight.

The heat released from these



These sensors are positioned in shaded, well-ventilated locations to ensure they measure the actual air temperature rather than heat generated by surrounding surfaces.

While car temperature displays offer a useful indication of local conditions, they should not be considered a substitute for official weather measurements

surfaces can temporarily raise the temperature around a vehicle’s sensor, especially when the car is parked or moving slowly in congested traffic. The phenomenon is particularly noticeable during Oman’s summer months, when ground temperatures may far exceed the air temperatures recorded at weather stations.

Drivers may therefore observe dashboard readings reaching extreme levels, even though official measurements remain lower. Authorities emphasise that weather forecasts, warnings

and climate records are based exclusively on standardised observations from meteorological stations, which are designed to provide accurate and comparable data. While car temperature displays offer a useful indication of local conditions, they should not be considered a substitute for official weather measurements.

Experts advise the public to follow updates issued by the Oman Meteorology Department for the most accurate information on temperatures, heatwaves and weather conditions across the Sultanate of Oman.

‘Eco Expo Central Asia 2026’ showcases
innovative environmental initiatives

SAMARKAND: The Environment Authority participated in the opening of the “Eco Expo Central Asia 2026” exhibition, hosted by the city of Samarkand in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The exhibition showcases the latest innovative environmental initiatives and technologies and runs until June 4.

The delegation was represented by Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority.

The exhibition, which saw wide participation from ministers, officials, experts, and representatives of international and regional organisations concerned with environmental, climate and sustainable development affairs, is one of the most prominent



Oman was represented by Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority.

— ONA

environmental events in the Central Asian region. It aims to enhance international cooperation and exchange expertise and experiences in the fields of environmental

protection, climate change adaptation, natural resources management and financing green growth projects.

The exhibition’s activities included a high-level working session titled “Financing Green Growth,” in which the Chairman of the Environment Authority participated. The session discussed ways to enhance environmental investments and develop sustainable financing mechanisms to support initiatives and projects aimed at achieving low-carbon development and strengthening the capacity to confront environmental and climate challenges.

The participation in the exhibition comes within the framework of the Sultanate of

Oman’s keenness to enhance its presence in international environmental forums, and expand the fields of cooperation and partnership with countries and organisations concerned with environmental affairs, contributing to supporting national efforts to achieve environmental sustainability targets and Oman Vision 2040.

The exhibition’s activities include holding a number of panel discussions and accompanying events addressing issues of biodiversity, water resources management, environmental education, green economy and sustainable local solutions, with the participation of specialised international and regional organisations. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



The exhibition aims to reinterpret Omani fashion as a renewed visual symbol.

EXHIBITION TO HIGHLIGHT OMANI WOMEN’S FASHION ARTS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY) will launch the creative exhibition ‘The Splendour of Oman’ on June 8 at the headquarters of the Omani Society, presenting Omani women’s fashion as a visual and cultural expression of national identity.

The exhibition is the outcome of three art workshops organised by the General Directorate of Arts, bringing together visual artists, photographers, digital designers, and students of fine arts and fashion design. The participants produced a curated collection of artworks inspired by traditional Omani attire.

According to officials, the exhibition aims to reinterpret Omani fashion as a renewed visual symbol reflecting the Sultanate of Oman’s cultural, geographical, and human diversity. It combines fine art, photography, digital media and installation art to explore the relationship between heritage and modernity.

The artworks draw inspiration from traditional costumes across Oman’s diverse governorates – mountain, desert, coastal and plains– highlighting their patterns, colours, materials and aesthetic symbols. Organisers said the initiative goes beyond documentation, seeking to transform heritage elements into contemporary artistic experiences that merge image, symbolism, light and form.

Ibrahim bin Saif Bani Araba, Assistant Director General of Arts, said the exhibition represents an artistic initiative that reimagines Omani fashion as a living cultural symbol, using modern visual tools to express identity and continuity between past and present.

Diana bint Abdulmajid al Zadjali, Director of the Visual Arts Department, noted that the project also serves as a platform for cultural communication locally and internationally, while offering young artists an opportunity to engage with heritage through creative reinterpretation and experimentation. — ONA



The exhibition aims to reinterpret Omani fashion as a renewed visual symbol.

OMAN, CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN DIALOGUE REVIEW TIES

MUSCAT: Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, met on Tuesday with David Harland, Executive Director of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed aspects of the ongoing cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and



The two sides discussed future plans between the two sides. — ONA

the results achieved through this cooperation during the past period. They also discussed future plans aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two sides.

The meeting was attended by Shaikh Humaid bin Ali al Maani, Head of the Diplomatic Academy, and a number of officials from the Foreign Ministry and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. — ONA

Identity pillar of stability amid global transformation

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, JUNE 2

AS the world continues to experience rapid economic, cultural and technological transformations, national identity remains a vital pillar that helps societies preserve their cultural distinctiveness while strengthening social cohesion. In an era marked by unprecedented connectivity and exposure to diverse cultures, reinforcing national identity has become increasingly important for communities seeking to balance openness with the preservation of their core values and traditions.

In Oman, national identity is deeply rooted in a rich historical legacy and a long-standing civilisation that has shaped the country’s social fabric. Values such as tolerance, coexistence, mutual respect and openness to other cultures have long been defining characteristics of Omani society, enabling it to engage confidently with the wider world while preserving its unique cultural heritage.

As globalisation and digital communication continue to reshape lifestyles and influence younger generations, many citizens believe that safeguarding national identity has become a shared responsibility involving families, educational institutions, media organisations and the wider community.

Salim bin Abdullah, a citizen, noted that national identity is reflected not only in celebrating national occasions but also in everyday behaviour and commitment to the values that have long defined Omani society. “Today’s youth are exposed to a wide range of global influences through digital platforms. This exposure offers valuable opportunities for learning and growth, but it also highlights the importance of remaining connected to our



In Oman, national identity is deeply rooted in a rich historical legacy and a long-standing civilisation that has shaped the country’s social fabric.

cultural roots and traditions,” he said.

Similarly, Aisha bint Mohammed emphasised the critical role of families in instilling a sense of national identity among younger generations. She explained that introducing children to Oman’s history, achievements and cultural heritage helps strengthen their sense of pride and belonging.

“When young people understand the journey of development that Oman has undergone and appreciate the values that have shaped our society, they become more committed to contributing positively to the nation’s future,” she said.

Observers point out that global transformation does not necessarily threaten national identity. Rather, it presents an

opportunity for societies to reaffirm their values while engaging constructively with the wider world. Communities with strong cultural foundations are often better positioned to benefit from international developments without losing their distinctive character.

Educational institutions continue to play a central role in this effort by promoting citizenship values and deepening students’ understanding of Oman’s history, culture and national achievements. School activities, cultural programmes, and community initiatives provide important platforms for strengthening national awareness and encouraging civic engagement among young people.

Algerian official visits Medical City

MUSCAT: Saïd Chanegriha, Minister Delegate to the Minister of National Defence and Chief of People’s National Army Staff of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria and his accompanying delegation paid a visit to the Medical City for Military and Security Services.

Upon his arrival at the headquarters of the Medical City Hospital for Military and Security Services, he was received by Eng Odai bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of the Medical City for Military and Security Services.



During the visit, the guest viewed the healthcare and service facilities. — ONA

During the visit, the visiting guest and his accompanying delegation

listened to a briefing about the Medical City for Military and Security Services,

and viewed its healthcare and service facilities and departments, as well as the modern medical technologies, equipment and devices they contain.

Saïd Chanegriha, Minister Delegate to the Minister of National Defence and Chief of People’s National Army Staff of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, also paid a visit today to the Maritime Security Centre, accompanied by Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF).

Abdulrazzaq’s ‘Cities of Poems’ explores living symbols in poetry

MUSCAT: The book ‘Cities of Poems.. Poems of Cities’ marks a new addition to the literary project of poet and writer Abdulrazzaq al Rubaie, who has long explored the relationship between place and poetic expression, drawing on his experience across Iraq, the Sultanate of Oman and several Arab countries.

Published by Musandam Publishing and Distribution House (Omani Society for Writers and

Authors, 2026), the book affirms the presence of the city as a central yet ‘hidden hero’ in modern Arabic poetry – an emotional and imaginative space where experiences of love, exile, longing and memory intersect.

In the introduction, Al Rubaie invites readers on an ‘enjoyable journey’ through cities captured in poetry or born within it, emphasising that place exists not only on maps but also within



‘Cities of Poems.. Poems of Cities’ by Abdulrazzaq al Rubaie, poet and writer.

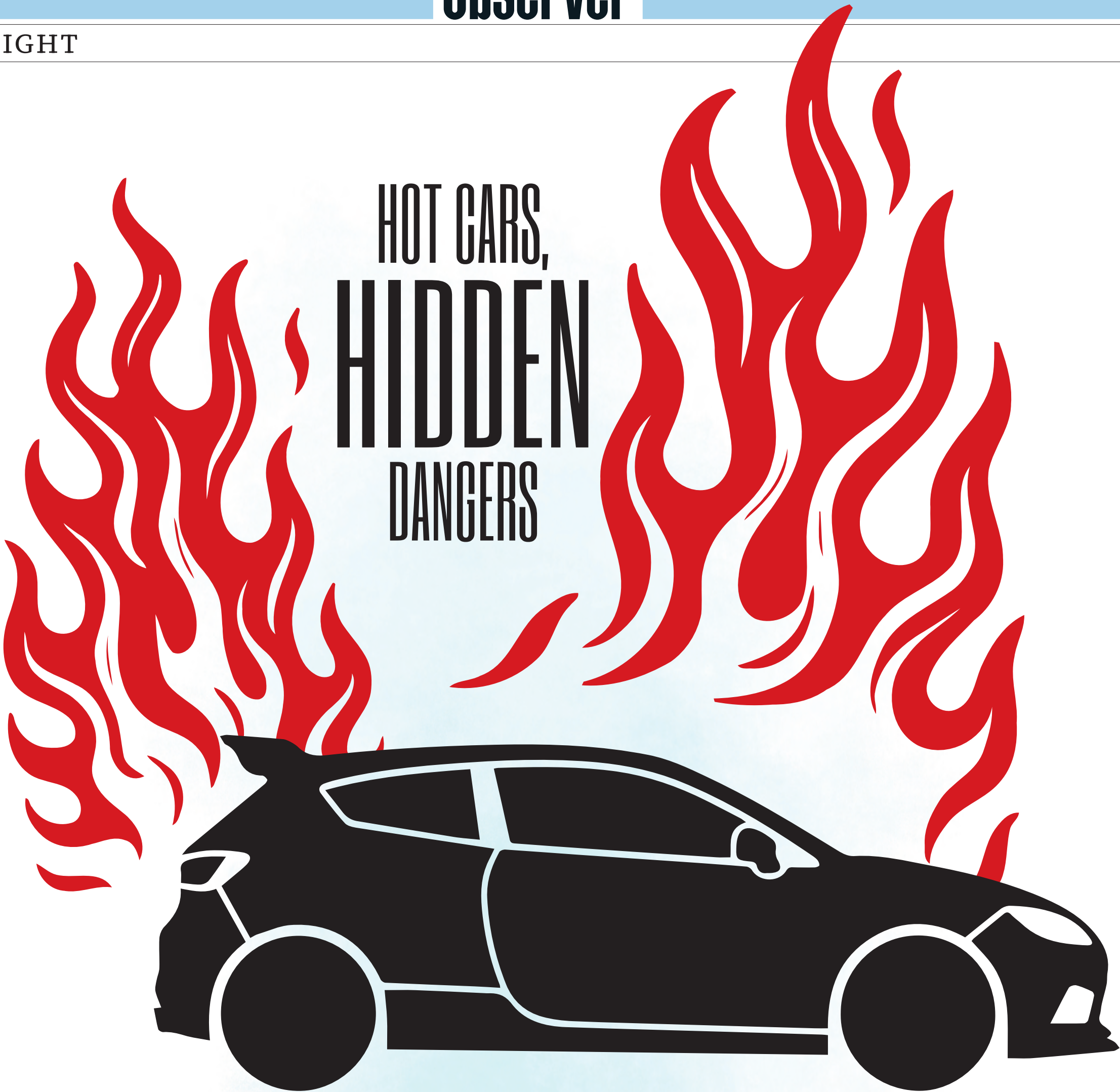
language, emotion and memory.

He reflects on the evolving relationship between poets and cities, noting that while classical romantic poetry often portrayed cities as noisy spaces to be avoided in favour of rural landscapes, modern Arabic poetry has transformed the city into a dynamic centre of human experience. Today, the city emerges as a living entity where memory, history and existential questions converge.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, ‘Cities of Poems,’ includes chapters on Omani, Iraqi and other cities, focusing on how poets have perceived urban spaces and reflected their architectural, historical and cultural features in their work.

The second part, ‘Poems of Cities,’ presents Al Rubaie’s own poetic texts inspired by cities he has lived in or visited, particularly across Oman, Iraq, and Yemen. — ONA

SPOTLIGHT



BALQEES AL ORAIMI

AS TEMPERATURES continue to rise across Oman during the summer months, motorists are being reminded that extreme heat can be just as demanding on vehicles as it is on people. While drivers seek shade and air-conditioned comfort, cars are left to endure relentless exposure to scorching temperatures that can quietly compromise performance and increase the likelihood of unexpected breakdowns.

From overheating engines and weakened batteries to worn tyres and struggling air-conditioning systems, summer presents a unique set of challenges for vehicle owners. Automotive experts say that many of these issues can be avoided through routine maintenance and early inspections, saving drivers both time and costly repair bills.

The impact of high temperatures is often underestimated. Modern vehicles are engineered to operate in demanding environments, but prolonged exposure to extreme heat places additional stress on critical systems. As a result, workshops and garages across the country typically witness a rise in heat-related mechanical problems during the hottest months of the year.

Among the most vulnerable components is the engine cooling system. Designed to regulate engine temperature, the system relies on coolant, radiators, hoses and fans working together efficiently. Any weakness within this network can quickly lead to overheating, particularly during long journeys or heavy traffic conditions.

“Overheating remains one of the most common problems we

The impact of high temperatures is often underestimated. Modern vehicles are engineered to operate in demanding environments, but prolonged exposure to extreme heat places additional stress on critical systems. As a result, workshops and garages across the country typically witness a rise in heat-related mechanical problems during the hottest months of the year.

encounter during summer,” said Adel Mohammed, a local garage owner in Muscat. “In many cases, drivers ignore small warning signs such as coolant leaks or rising temperature gauges. What starts as a minor issue can eventually lead to major engine damage if not addressed promptly.” According to him, preventative maintenance is often far less expensive than repairing the consequences of neglect.

Another component that suffers significantly in hot weather is the vehicle battery. While many motorists associate battery failures with winter conditions, excessive heat can be equally damaging. High temperatures accelerate chemical reactions within the battery, causing internal deterioration and reducing its lifespan.

Experts recommend checking battery performance before the peak summer season, particularly for vehicles that are more than two years old. Regular inspections can help identify signs of weakness before drivers find themselves stranded with a vehicle that refuses to start.

Tyres also face increased stress during periods of intense heat. Road surfaces can become extremely hot under direct sunlight, increasing tyre temperatures and internal pressure levels. Combined with underinflation, overinflation or worn tread, this can create a dangerous situation that compromises road safety.

Automotive specialists advise motorists to check tyre pressure regularly and ensure tyres meet manufacturer recommendations. They also stress the importance of replacing tyres that show signs of

excessive wear, cracks or ageing. Air-conditioning systems, meanwhile, become indispensable during Oman’s summer. A poorly functioning cooling system not only affects passenger comfort but can also contribute to driver fatigue and reduced concentration behind the wheel.

“Many vehicle owners wait until the air-conditioner stops cooling before seeking assistance,” the garage owner noted. “A simple inspection before summer can identify refrigerant leaks, blocked filters or worn components and prevent more expensive repairs later.” Beyond mechanical maintenance, simple everyday habits can also help reduce heat-related stress on vehicles. Parking in shaded areas whenever possible, using reflective windshield covers and avoiding prolonged exposure to direct sunlight can significantly lower cabin temperatures and protect interior materials from premature wear.

Regular oil changes also play an important role during hot weather. Engine oil helps lubricate moving components and dissipate heat. Old or degraded oil loses its effectiveness, increasing friction and potentially affecting engine performance.

With summer temperatures expected to remain high for the coming months, industry professionals emphasise that prevention remains the most effective strategy. Routine inspections, timely servicing and attention to warning signs can help motorists avoid inconvenient breakdowns and ensure their vehicles remain reliable throughout the season.

Many vehicle owners wait until the air-conditioner stops cooling before seeking assistance. A simple inspection before summer can identify refrigerant leaks, blocked filters or worn components and prevent more expensive repairs later.

A GARAGE OWNER

SHORT TAKES



The workshop covers the mechanisms and methodologies for producing statistics. — ONA

WORKSHOP
TO ENHANCE
STATISTICAL
KNOWLEDGE

MUSCAT: The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) organised on Tuesday a specialised workshop aimed at enhancing statistical and economic knowledge among the personnel of governors’ offices, and raising the efficiency of statistical and informational performance.

The workshop, which runs for several days, covers the mechanisms and methodologies for producing statistics, statistical indicators and macroeconomic accounts. It also introduces participants to the methodologies for calculating the value added of non-oil activities for the governorates in accordance with internationally approved standard classifications.

Abdulaziz bin Khamis al Sunaidy, Director of the National Accounts Department at the National Centre for Statistics and Information, stated that this workshop comes as a continuation of the Centre’s efforts to develop national capabilities and enable specialists in the governorates to acquire the statistical and informational knowledge and skills necessary to support planning processes, policy-making, and data- and evidence-based decision-making.

He added that the workshop included a number of working papers and themes of cognitive importance and strategic dimensions that contribute to enhancing the understanding and perception of the importance of data and statistics in various areas of comprehensive development, thereby reflecting positively on the performance of the governorates and their developmental roles.

The National Centre for Statistics and Information continues to organise a series of training programmes and specialised workshops to support decision-making based on accurate and reliable data and statistical indicators, and to enhance national statistical capacities across various government entities and governorates.

— ONA

MoSD organises innovation camp

SAUD AL ANSARI
MUSCAT, JUNE 2

The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) organised the Institutional Innovation Camp (Six Steps Innovation Methodology) – Enhancing Innovation Efficiency at the Child Care Centre and Youth Homes, aiming to strengthen the innovation capacity of staff and enable them to transform ideas into sustainable, impact-driven projects.

The implementation of this camp comes within the ministry’s efforts to empower work teams and develop their skills in institutional innovation, contributing to supporting initiatives directed at children and youth, and transforming ideas into implementable entrepreneurial projects.

Dr Maryam Tabila, Innovation Camp Trainer, Founder and CEO of MT Management, stated that applying the Six Steps Innovation Methodology contributes to building an institutional culture capable of transforming ideas into valuable projects. She emphasised that “this methodology enables individuals to move from a mere creative idea to a viable project, service, or product



with real impact.” She explained that the ministry is among the first entities in the Sultanate of Oman to apply this methodology in a practical manner, noting that the programme focuses on empowering participants with innovation tools and applying them in a real work environment. Muthla bint Rashid al Faliti, Head of Programmes and Training Department, said, “Through this workshop, we aim to empower children in the Child Care Centre and Youth Homes to transform their ideas into entrepreneurial projects under the ‘Pioneering Tomorrow’ initiative during 2026.”

Mohammed bin Amir al Harbi, Social Specialist at the Ministry of Social Development in the Child Care

Centre and Youth Homes, stated that the camp helped clarify the concept of innovation and the mechanism of developing ideas and transforming them into market-ready projects, emphasising that success requires excellence and the ability to offer differentiated value in a competitive environment.

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Social Development is considered one of the leading entities in the Sultanate of Oman in adopting the Six Steps Innovation Methodology, aiming to enhance team efficiency and enable youth and orphans to launch entrepreneurial projects that provide sustainable income, in addition to strengthening a culture of knowledge transfer within society.

MoE, Oman Broadband Company sign entrepreneurship programme

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education (MoE) and Oman Broadband Company on Tuesday signed a cooperation programme to support a summer initiative titled “Young Merchant”. The cooperation programme seeks to promote entrepreneurship among students from grades 7 to 11.

The cooperation programme was signed by Dr Faisal bin Ali al Busaidy, Director-General of Information and Communication Technology at the Ministry of



The programme aims to instil a culture of entrepreneurship in young people. — ONA

Education, and Eng Khalfan bin Mohammed al Amri, Executive Vice-President of Technology at Oman Broadband Company.

The programme aims to instil a culture of entrepreneurship in young people and foster entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy and practical skills among students through applied learning experiences that develop their ability to innovate.

Dr Faisal said, “This programme constitutes an

important step to consolidate the existing partnership with private sector establishments and to support initiatives that integrate education with practical application.” He added that the “Young Merchant” initiative contributes to furnishing an educational environment that stimulates creativity and empowers students with future skills in the fields of entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy. — ONA

Omani delegation explores
Belarus latest technologies

A trade delegation from the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), currently visiting the Republic of Belarus, paid a visit to the International Agro-Industrial Exhibition “Belagro 2026”, which opened on Tuesday in the city of Minsk.

The delegation members emphasised the importance of this visit, which will contribute to exploring opportunities for establishing strategic partnerships in the agricultural sector and food industries. It also provides insights into the latest technologies and solutions used in production, manufacturing, packaging and storage processes, as well as transferring knowledge and expertise and benefiting from advanced experiences in developing these sectors and related industries.

They pointed out the importance of discussing joint investment opportunities and localising certain advanced industrial technologies to support the enhancement of food security and increase the added value of food products in the Sultanate of Oman.

Naif bin Hamed Fadel, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the OCCI Branch in Dhofar Governorate, stated that this visit to the “Belagro 2026” exhibition represents an opportunity to learn about the latest progress achieved by the Republic of Belarus in the fields of food security and food industries.

He added that the visit enables the trade delegation to transfer several ideas for commercial and industrial projects to be established in the Sultanate of Oman and attract companies from the Republic of Belarus to engage in joint investment projects.

For his part, Saud bin Ahmed al Nahari, Board Member of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the visit allowed the delegation to learn about



The delegation members emphasised the importance of this visit, which will contribute to exploring opportunities for establishing strategic partnerships in the agricultural sector and food industries. — ONA

the wide variety of food industries and agricultural products, as well as the latest equipment dedicated to the agricultural sector. He expressed his hope that this visit would contribute to increasing cooperation opportunities with the Belarusian side and establishing commercial and industrial partnerships in the coming period.

On his part, Ibrahim bin Abdullah al Hosni, Board Member of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, highlighted the significance of this visit to the exhibition, which features the participation of many local Belarusian companies operating in the field of food security and the manufacturing of equipment and machinery for large farms.

He noted that there are Omani companies participating in the exhibition, which allows visitors and investors from Belarus to learn

about Omani industries and agricultural products, opening up horizons for establishing joint investment projects.

Shaikh Salim bin Ahmed Qatan, CEO of Evergreen Gulf Recycling Hub, explained that the OCCI trade delegation’s visit to the “Belagro 2026” exhibition contributes to developing economic and investment relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Belarus, maximising the delegation’s benefit from the investment opportunities offered by the exhibition.

He stated that the exhibition allows visitors to become acquainted with the progress in manufacturing and the technology used in the agricultural field, alongside the possibility of bringing Belarusian projects and partnerships to the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA



الجامعة الوطنية
National University
Science & Technology العلوم والتكنولوجيا

The National University of Science and Technology (NU), Sultanate of Oman

Announces

Employment Opportunity at the Head Quarter (HQ) for nationals only

Position	Head of Legal Affairs Office/Board Secretary.
Summary of the role	Oversee litigation matters handled by external service providers while managing the secretariat of the Board of Directors, Audit Committee, and Annual General Meetings, and provide comprehensive legal support to the University by drafting legal opinions, reviewing and preparing contracts and agreements, ensuring compliance with corporate governance requirements, and liaising with external legal service providers on all legal and corporate matters.
Qualification	Graduate with Bachelor’s degree in Law.
Experience	More than 5 years of experience in corporate legal system. Must be bilingual.



Job Details & Applications are Available at:
<https://nu.edu.om/careers/>
Application Deadline: 10th of June 2026
Applications will not be accepted after the specified date.
Successful applications will be contacted within 30 days from the closing date of this advertisement

IRAN STUDYING DEAL TO HALT WAR

THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT HAS MORPHED INTO A STALEMATE



People chant during a rally in Tehran, Iran. — Reuters

IRAN is reviewing a proposed agreement with the US to halt their war but has not communicated with Washington for a few days, Iranian media reported on Tuesday, after US President Donald Trump said negotiations were ongoing. More than three months after the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran, the conflict has morphed into a stalemate with the pivotal Strait of Hormuz largely shut. Iran has not yet responded to a proposed final text of a temporary deal, and was taking a “stern” approach given what it sees as a history of US non-compliance and longstanding mistrust, Mehr News Agency cited a source as saying.

The semi-official Fars agency, also citing a source, added that messages on the possible deal, or memorandum of understanding, had stopped a few days ago, with the last one being Tehran’s “clear message” over Lebanon, where Iran is

seeking a stop to Israel’s incursion against Hezbollah. Trump said on Monday that negotiations were continuing and there would be a deal over the next week to extend a ceasefire agreed in early April and reopen the strait. Since mid-March, he has repeatedly said he is close to a deal, which would postpone thorny issues including the future of Iran’s nuclear programme. A ceasefire has largely held since early April, but Iran and the US have exchanged strikes several times over the past week. Oil prices fell more than 1 per cent on Tuesday. A senior International Energy Agency official warned that oil inventories could hit historically low levels.

The war that began on February 28 has killed thousands of people, mainly in Iran and Lebanon. It has caused global pain by pushing up energy prices since Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, which previously carried about a fifth of global supplies of oil and liquefied natural

Iran is pushing for a limited interim agreement as it tries to ease economic pressure while avoiding major concessions on its nuclear programme. Tehran is seeking an end to hostilities across all fronts including Lebanon, access to billions of dollars in oil revenues, waivers on crude exports, a lifting of a US blockade on its ports and continued leverage over the strait

gas. It also triggered the latest round of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, with Israel pursuing its deepest incursion into Lebanon in 25 years. On Tuesday, Israel kept up strikes on a string of towns in southern Lebanon, Lebanese security sources said, despite a US-mediated partial ceasefire announced on Monday.

In the wider war, Iran is pushing for a limited interim agreement as it tries to ease economic pressure while avoiding major concessions on its nuclear programme, according to Iranian sources. Tehran is seeking an end to hostilities across all fronts including Lebanon, access to billions of dollars in oil revenues, waivers on crude exports, a lifting of a US blockade on its ports, and continued leverage over the strait. Trump is under pressure to reopen the strait and curb US fuel prices while not making concessions to Iran.

John Bolton, who served as Trump’s national security adviser in his first

term and has since become a critic, said the president faced few good options. “I think he wants to have a deal that opens the Strait of Hormuz, and he can declare victory and get the price of gasoline down,” Bolton said. “But he knows if he makes a bad deal, he’ll be justifiably criticized for it, so he’s between a rock and a hard place, and he doesn’t know what to do.”

Iran’s elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Tuesday that 24 vessels had transited the strait in the past 24 hours, after obtaining permission from the Guard’s navy. Iran threatened on Monday to expand its blockade to the Bab El Mandeb Strait, another chokepoint at the mouth of the Red Sea, if Israel resumed strikes on Beirut. Highlighting the risk at sea, the world’s largest shipping group MSC said on Tuesday that one of its vessels was struck by two projectiles while in Iraq’s Umm Qasr port the previous day. — Reuters



People review the rubble of the damaged hospital building at the site of an Israeli strike that hit near the hospital in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre. — AFP



RIISING CONCERNS



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio testifies before a Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington DC. — Reuters

US LAWMAKERS GRILL RUBIO OVER MIDEAST WAR

WASHINGTON: Members of the US Senate and House of Representatives get a rare chance this week to question Secretary of State Marco Rubio in public about President Donald Trump’s foreign policy, as his fellow Republicans have been showing signs of concern about the Iran war. Rubio, who also serves as Trump’s national security adviser, testified on the State Department’s budget request to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday morning. He was to appear again before the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee and House and Senate appropriations subcommittees over two days.

The Trump administration is seeking congressional approval for its proposed 30 per cent cut to the foreign affairs budget, as it seeks a 50 per cent increase in military spending. Rubio was a senator from Florida until January 2025, and lawmakers said they hoped their former colleague would spell out a strategy for ending the Iran conflict, which started with strikes by the US and Israel on February 28. Rubio has joined other top administration officials in speaking to members of Congress about the Iran war behind closed doors, but has not testified publicly on the conflict.

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, blasted Rubio for failing to provide information to Congress about the administration’s plans. “When I talk to my constituents, they asked for economic relief at home, not regime change in Havana or Caracas or Tehran,” she said. “Instead, you sent Congress a war powers notification saying we are not in active hostilities with Iran, while the US was conducting strikes against Iran, and Iran was bombing US embassies and bases throughout the Middle East. That was not consultation, it was an attempt to avoid answering to this committee and this Congress about this war.”

Americans have voiced mounting frustration over rising prices, and Trump’s fellow Republicans hope he can get the Strait of Hormuz reopened and lower US gasoline prices before November elections that will decide whether the party retains its slim majorities in Congress. Trump must also contend with Iran hawks in his party who oppose any concessions to Tehran.

Rubio told lawmakers on Tuesday that the Trump administration has not offered Iran sanctions relief in exchange just for opening the Strait of Hormuz, and said any sanctions relief would be based on Tehran meeting conditions relating to its nuclear program.

Trump and his supporters insist the war will have been worthwhile if it keeps Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Trump also insists that gasoline prices will come down and has insisted for weeks that he will reach a good deal to end the conflict.

Rubio told senators Iran had intended to build up its conventional weapons capabilities as a “shield” for its nuclear program. “What they tried to do is they were going to try to build a conventional shield and hide behind that conventional shield,” he said, spelling out why Trump felt it was imperative to launch the war. — Reuters

ISRAELI FIRE KILLS THREE PEOPLE IN THE PALESTINIAN ENCLAVE

CAIRO: Israeli fire killed at least three Palestinians in separate incidents across the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, Gaza health officials said. Medics said at least one person was killed and four were wounded when an Israeli air strike hit a vehicle east of Deir Al Balah in the central Gaza Strip. The blast left the vehicle a mangled skeleton.

Another strike earlier in the day killed one person and wounded another in the nearby Zawayda town, they added, while Israeli gunfire killed one man in northwest Khan Yunis, south of the enclave. The Israeli military did not immediately comment on either of the incidents.

An October ceasefire, brokered by US President Donald Trump, has failed to halt Israeli attacks in Gaza. Israel and Hamas are deadlocked

in indirect talks over implementing the second phase of the deal, which includes the group’s disarmament and Israeli army withdrawals. The ceasefire left Israel in control of more than half of Gaza, with Hamas controlling a sliver of coastal territory.

Some 930 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes since the truce came into effect, according to figures from Gaza health officials that do not distinguish between combatants and civilians. Four Israeli soldiers have been killed during the same period, the country’s military has said.

Separately, in the first quarter alone, UN’s children agency nearly exhausted annual contributions from logistics partners that donate charter flights, as it flew supplies into Lebanon and Gaza amid delays of up to four to six weeks. — Reuters



Israeli strikes continue in south Lebanon

BEIRUT: Israel kept up strikes on southern Lebanon on Tuesday, pressing its campaign against Hezbollah a day after US President Donald Trump asked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to attack Beirut to avert further escalation in the three-month-old war. Following Trump’s intervention, Lebanon’s government said Israel would refrain from carrying out threatened strikes on the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut, while the group would halt attacks against Israel. But the announcement has failed to reassure many Lebanese or halt the broader war in south Lebanon, which Netanyahu has vowed would continue. The din of an Israeli drone over Beirut kept residents on edge on Tuesday.

The Lebanese government has said it would seek to expand the ceasefire in talks with Israeli officials in Washington, the latest in a series of face-to-face meetings Beirut has attended despite Hezbollah objections. Iran has demanded a Lebanon ceasefire as part of any wider deal with the US to end the three-month-old war that began with US and Israeli attacks on Iran at the end of February.

In the south, Israeli air strikes and artillery fire hit a string of towns there and the Israeli military ordered residents of the city of Nabatiyeh to leave ahead of strikes. Hezbollah announced two operations against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon in the early hours of Tuesday, but no cross-border rocket attacks. The Israeli military overnight said it had intercepted two projectiles crossing from Lebanon into Israeli territory. If Israel’s northern communities were attacked, the Israeli military would evacuate and strike Beirut’s southern suburbs, warned Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz in remarks provided by his office. “The test of this policy for protecting our communities will be simple and will become clear in the coming days: either the attacks on Israeli communities stop, or if attacks continue and we strike Dahiyah in Beirut, this equation will be realised,” he said.



People gather at the site of an Israeli strike carried out last week, in Tyre, Lebanon. — Reuters

Israeli air strikes and artillery fire hit a string of towns there and the Israeli military ordered residents of the city of Nabatiyeh to leave ahead of strikes. Hezbollah announced two operations against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon in the early hours of Tuesday, but no cross-border rocket attacks.

Beirut resident Faten Al Chehime said the Israeli warnings led her to flee her home in the southern suburbs on Monday, just two weeks after she had returned. “Every time we return to our homes, there is a warning for us to be displaced again,” said Chehime, speaking at a camp sheltering displaced people in Beirut. More than 1.2 million people in Lebanon have been uprooted by the war, which began when Hezbollah fired on Israel in support of Tehran on March 2. Israel had pounded Beirut’s southern suburbs, known as Dahiyeh, in an early phase of the war, but carried out only two strikes there since Trump declared a Lebanon ceasefire in April.

Tensions had spiked on Monday after Netanyahu ordered strikes on Dahiyeh, with Iranian state media reporting that Tehran had stopped

indirect talks with Washington due to Israeli attacks on Lebanon and Iran’s military warning residents of northern Israel they should leave to avoid harm if Israel attacked Beirut. “If Israeli aggression on Lebanon continues, we won’t just stop the negotiation track, but we will be in a direct confrontation with the enemy,” Iran’s top negotiator, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, said he told Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, according to a post by Qalibaf on X.

A flurry of calls appeared to defuse the escalation: Trump said he had asked Netanyahu not to carry out a major raid on Beirut and that Hezbollah, through intermediaries, had pledged not to attack Israel. No US president has ever spoken with Hezbollah, with or without intermediaries. — Reuters

TARGETED VESSEL

Projectiles hit container ship off Iraq



Two projectiles hit a container vessel in the Gulf as it was leaving port in Iraq, a Swiss-based company said on Tuesday, after Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said they had targeted the ship. Both the company MSC and the British maritime security agency UKMTO reported no injuries to crew members. MSC said that the first projectile hit the vessel as it was leaving port with the pilot still on board and the second impacted the crew area soon afterwards. — AFP

TRANSPORT DISRUPTIONS

War threatens delivery of lifesaving supplies



Surging global transport costs and supply chain disruptions linked to the Middle East crisis are threatening the delivery of lifesaving aid to children, the UN children’s agency warned. Nearly 100 days after the outbreak of the Iran war, heightened insecurity around key Gulf shipping routes has driven up fuel prices and insurance premiums, while congestion at alternative ports has compounded disruptions, hampering aid deliveries. — Reuters

HALTING HOSTILITIES

Merz calls for de-escalation in Lebanon



Germany views the latest escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon “with great concern,” Chancellor Friedrich Merz said. Merz called on Hezbollah to “immediately stop attacking the people of Israel and to lay down its arms,” while demanding that Israel adhere to the ceasefire agreed in April. “We encourage Israel and Lebanon to continue along the path of direct talks they have chosen,” said Merz. — dpa

When did time start moving so fast?



HYESHA BARRETT
The writer is a Master Life Coach

IT FEELS like a blur, doesn't it? One moment, we are setting intentions, promising ourselves that this will be the year things finally change. The next moment, we glance at the calendar and realise we are already halfway through the year. Somewhere between school runs, work deadlines, family commitments, and the endless demands of daily life, six months have quietly vanished.

The strange thing about time is that it moves at exactly the same speed it always has. Twenty-four hours remain twenty-four hours. Seven days remain seven days. Nonetheless, life feels as though it is accelerating. Perhaps it is because our minds rarely get a chance to rest.

Our attention is constantly being pulled in multiple directions. Our nervous systems were never designed for the level of stimulation most of us navigate every day. As a result, many people move through life in a state of perpetual urgency, feeling busy, productive and exhausted, yet strangely disconnected from the very life they are working so hard to create.

Children often remind us of something we have forgotten. Watch a child building a fort, chasing bubbles, or becoming fully absorbed in a game. They are not worrying about

next month or replaying yesterday. They are fully immersed in the moment they are living. Adults, by contrast, spend much of life mentally somewhere else.

We revisit old conversations, anticipate future problems, and scroll through distractions while life unfolds around us. Then one day, we look up and wonder where the time went.

Perhaps the real question is not why time is flying. Perhaps the question is whether we are truly present for it.

When the nervous system is constantly focused on what needs fixing, achieving, or controlling, life becomes a checklist rather than an experience. We become so focused on the next milestone that we overlook the moments that quietly give life meaning. Years from now, it will not be the emails answered or the tasks completed that stay with us.

It will be the bedtime stories, the spontaneous hugs, the laughter around the dinner table, the conversation that made someone feel seen, and the moments of connection that seemed ordinary at the time.

This is why the middle of the year offers something far more valuable than a productivity review. It offers perspective. It invites us to pause and ask whether the life we are building on paper resembles the life

Success may be less about where we arrive and more about whether we were awake enough to experience the journey while we were on it

we are actually living. It encourages us to consider whether our days reflect our values, whether we are showing up for the people we love, and whether we are present enough to notice the moments that matter.

Success is often measured by outcomes, achievements, and goals reached.

However, there is another definition worth considering. Success may be less about where we arrive and more about whether we were awake enough to experience the journey while we were on it. It may be measured by how deeply we loved, how often we chose connection over distraction, and how willing we were to inhabit our own lives, rather than constantly postponing them.

The second half of the year will pass just as quickly as the first. Birthdays will come. Seasons will change. Children will grow. Life will continue moving forward exactly as it always has.

Time is not speeding up. Life is simply reminding us that the moments we keep delaying are quietly becoming the memories we never made.

The greatest tragedy is not that time passes. The greatest tragedy is reaching the end of a year, a decade, even a lifetime and realising that you were so busy preparing for a life that you never fully stepped into.

RACE TO DEVELOP EBOLA VACCINE HEATS UP

DANIEL LAWLER

Several non-profit organisations announced they are ramping up efforts to rapidly develop a vaccine for the rare strain of Ebola driving a deadly outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Nearly 250 people are suspected to have died and more than 1,100 are infected with the strain in the DRC and neighbouring Uganda, though the true spread of the virus is feared to be much wider.

While it marks the 17th Ebola outbreak in the DRC, it is just the third caused by the Bundibugyo strain, for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments.

The escalating nature of the outbreak has sparked a race to find a vaccine that can be quickly developed, manufactured then tested in humans during clinical trials in the affected region.

The World Health Organization said that its experts had determined “the most promising candidate vaccine” was a single-dose shot using the rVSV platform. The only licensed Ebola vaccine, which targets the more common Zaire strain, uses the same platform.

The non-profit International Aids Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) announced it had reached a deal with the University of Texas Medical Branch to develop the rVSV candidate.

The university’s Thomas Geisbert led work on both the Bundibugyo candidate and the licensed Zaire jab. Geisbert said last month that 2013 research demonstrated his jab provided very strong protection against Bundibugyo in monkeys.

However, the vaccine “just sat there” for more than a decade because of a lack of interest, in particular from pharmaceutical firms, the virologist added. The WHO estimated it would take seven to nine months before the rVSV vaccine is ready to be tested in humans.

Also on Monday, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) announced funding to “fast-track” development of three Bundibugyo vaccine candidates, including \$3.2 million towards the rVSV jab.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who visited the epicentre of the outbreak in the DRC on the weekend, said in a statement the funding was “an important step forward”.

Another vaccine candidate receiving CEPI funding was developed on the University of Oxford’s ChAdOx1 platform, which also underpinned AstraZeneca’s Covid vaccine.

This viral vector jab - which will be manufactured by the huge Serum Institute of India - could become available for clinical trials within two to three months, the WHO said. — AFP

Education and future of sustainable development

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT is a multidisciplinary concept that brings together environmental, economic and social dimensions to support long-term human well-being while maintaining ecological balance.

It focuses on meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This widely used definition originates from the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), which has since served as a cornerstone of international sustainability policy and development frameworks.

Sustainable development is commonly structured around three interrelated pillars: economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and social sustainability. Economic sustainability focuses on maintaining economic growth and resource efficiency, while environmental sustainability seeks to preserve ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources.

Social sustainability, on the other hand, emphasises social equity, inclusion, justice and the improvement of quality of life. What’s more, the concept gained substantial international recognition through a series of global conferences and summits organised by the United Nations, including the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Rio+20 Conference.

These international events contributed significantly to establishing sustainable development as a global policy framework and reinforced the importance of international cooperation in addressing environmental and developmental challenges. A central feature of sustainable development is its reliance on key guiding



DR ZAINAB AL AJMI
zeinbf@moe.om

The writer is with the Ministry of Education



The integration of education within educational systems reflects the recognition that sustainable progress cannot be achieved through isolated curricular approaches.

principles such as intergenerational equity, participatory governance, precautionary environmental management and the ‘polluter pays’ principle.

These principles support the implementation of sustainable policies that encourage responsible production and consumption, renewable energy transitions, circular economic systems and environmental accountability.

In this context, ecosystems and natural resources are viewed as essential foundations for both economic prosperity and human well-being. Furthermore, in 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, introducing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals provide a comprehensive global framework for addressing major challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, clean energy, sustainable cities, responsible consumption and quality education.

The SDGs are supported by measurable indicators that enable governments and institutions to monitor progress and evaluate

sustainability performance at national and international levels.

Despite the global commitment to sustainable development, significant contemporary challenges continue to hinder its effective implementation. These challenges include climate change, biodiversity loss, resource depletion, economic inequality and geopolitical instability.

Moreover, policymakers often face difficulties in balancing economic growth with environmental protection and social equity. Nevertheless, emerging approaches such as green finance, carbon neutrality initiatives, technological innovation and data-driven sustainability monitoring demonstrate the continued evolution of sustainable development practices in response to these global challenges.

On closer analysis, the integration of education within educational systems reflects the recognition that sustainable progress cannot be achieved through isolated curricular approaches but instead requires coherent, balanced, and comprehensive educational strategies.

Children’s protection must be priority in war zones



SAMUEL KUTTY

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

THE WORLD has increasingly witnessed hundreds of millions of heartbreaking images of children in war zones, highlighting a catastrophic global crisis and serving as stark calls to action for the international community.

“Children are far too often among the primary victims, paying a terrible and unacceptable price,” observed Nada Al Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, while delivering a speech at the annual meeting on the Rights of the Child last March.

Children, who make up nearly half of the global population affected by conflict, often remain unseen victims. They are undoubtedly among the most vulnerable and have been the most neglected.

In armed conflicts across the Middle East, Africa, and other regions, children are killed, injured, forcibly recruited as child soldiers, kidnapped, and subjected to violence. Schools and hospitals are targeted, and children often lack access to essential, life-saving humanitarian aid.

The implications extend far beyond the present moment. Decades of missed schooling, psychological trauma, and lasting emotional wounds continue to affect communities for generations to come.

The United Nations children’s organisation, Unicef, reports that hundreds of thousands of children have been killed, left permanently disabled, orphaned, or displaced due to armed conflicts.

“Children, who represent roughly half of the

world’s population affected by conflict, largely remain invisible victims. They are, without a doubt, among the most vulnerable and have been left furthest behind,” it notes.

On February 28, the first day of the US conflict with Iran, widespread bombings devastated a school in southern Iran, resulting in the deaths of nearly 170 children. Leaders in humanitarian aid and public health condemned the act as intolerable.

In Gaza, the situation is tragic. The region currently has the highest per capita rate of child amputees worldwide, with many children undergoing multiple amputations.

While heartbreaking, the loss of children during war is not uncommon. Millions of children endure prolonged conflicts in regions such as the Gaza Strip, Myanmar, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and many other areas.

Over one in five children worldwide live in countries and regions affected by military conflict, according to a 2024 report by Save the Children, often becoming unintended victims.

Reports indicate that since 2010, the number of children living in conflict zones has increased by 60 per cent. Approximately 50 million children worldwide have been forced to leave their homes.

Children’s rights are comprehensively protected by international human rights law and international criminal law. Nations are obligated to safeguard all children within their jurisdiction without discrimination based on age, gender, disability, or any other status.

Although Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every

Global leaders need to consistently condemn violations against children, regardless of who is involved. They must also ensure full compliance with international humanitarian law, including the safe delivery of humanitarian services to create safe spaces for children

child has the right to formal education, “more than 32 million children worldwide have never had the opportunity to see a teacher due to armed conflict.” However, the failure to enforce international human rights law is fundamentally political. UN member states are obligated to serve as the principal upholders of the international legal order. Yet their responses to violations against children remain inconsistent, largely passive, and often influenced by geopolitical interests.

While some condemn abuses in certain contexts, silence or ambiguity prevails in others. The selective application of norms and inconsistencies in accountability undermine the law.

Global leaders need to consistently condemn violations against children, regardless of who is involved. They must also ensure full compliance with international humanitarian law, including the safe delivery of humanitarian services to create safe spaces for children.

Children exposed to war need safety, security, and stability. They also require affection, love, and social connection - elements often overlooked in conflict situations.

While the world is set to observe International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression on June 4, to acknowledge the pain suffered by children throughout and affirm the UN’s commitment to protect the rights of children, this day too should not pass like many other days with a satirical twist that “there is now a day for everything.”

MACRON TO UNVEIL RWANDA GENOCIDE MEMORIAL

CELIA LEBUR

President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday will unveil a monument to victims of the Rwanda genocide in the presence of Paul Kagame, the leader of the east African nation, as France acknowledges its role in one of the 20th century’s worst atrocities.

Macron has recognised France’s “responsibility”, saying Paris and its Western and African allies did not have the will to halt the slaughter in 1994 of an estimated 800,000 people – mostly ethnic Tutsis – but has stopped short of issuing a formal apology.

The monument on the banks of the Seine River in the heart of Paris is a new step in France’s efforts to take responsibility for its past policies and re-engage with Africa.

The monument dubbed “L’Archive” (“The Archive”) is designed by Grada Kilomba, a Berlin-based Portuguese artist. It consists of two black brass steles and bears an engraved tribute to the hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children massacred between April and July 1994.

“Here, like an archive, rest the voices and words, the memories and experiences, the feelings and hopes of the victims and the survivors,” it reads.

One survivor, Jeanne Uwimbabazi, was to speak at the ceremony, along with Macron and Kagame.

The assassination of Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana on April 6, 1994, when his plane was shot down over Kigali, triggered a rampage by Hutu extremists.

At the time, France had been a long-standing backer of Rwanda’s Hutu-dominated government, leading to decades of tensions between the two countries including a break in diplomatic ties between 2006 and 2009.

In a speech in Kigali in 2021, Macron acknowledged France’s failure to heed warnings of the massacres. A historical commission set up by Macron and led by historian Vincent Duclert concluded in 2021 that there had been a “failure” on the part of France under President Francois Mitterrand, while adding there was no evidence Paris was complicit in the killings. Duclert said the unveiling of the monument was a “powerful” step.

“The genocide against the Tutsi is now fully part of France’s public history,” he said.

Marcel Kabanda, president of the Ibuka France genocide survivor association, praised France’s efforts to remember Rwanda’s dead and assume its share of responsibility. “We have been waiting for this for more than 30 years,” Kabanda said.

“It is like oxygen, because civil society has long carried this struggle alone, and we finally feel understood and supported.” The French courts, acting on the principle of universal jurisdiction to try the most serious crimes committed outside French territory, have convicted several Rwandans for their part in the massacre. — AFP

Making immigration harder, all will pay price

FOR DECADES, France has promoted itself as a country of opportunity, education and cultural exchange. It has attracted students, workers, researchers and families from around the world, many of whom have contributed significantly to the country’s economy and society.

Yet recent immigration reforms suggest that France is moving in the opposite direction. Instead of making integration easier, the government appears determined to make life more difficult for immigrants already living in the country and for those considering building a future there.

Since May 2026, the cost of obtaining or renewing a residence permit has increased significantly. According to the French government, the tax stamp required for a first residence permit has risen from €225 to €350, while renewal fees have increased from €225 to €250.

Even reduced rate permits for students and certain categories of migrants have doubled from €75 to €150 for first issuance and increased from €75 to €100 for renewals.

While government officials may present these increases as administrative adjustments, the message received by many immigrants is different: staying in France is becoming more expensive and more complicated.

The financial burden is only one part of the story. Recent reforms have also expanded language and civic integration requirements that were traditionally associated with long-term residency or citizenship applications. Historically, applicants for ten-year resident cards were required to demonstrate a B1 level of French and pass a civic integration examination.

New reforms are gradually extending stricter integration requirements to additional residence categories, creating more hurdles for people who are already working, studying and contributing to French society.



OMAN AL YAHYAI

The writer is a multilingual writer and media professional based in Paris. She specialises in human rights and immigration

While government officials may present these increases as administrative adjustments, the message received by many immigrants is different: staying in France is becoming more expensive and more complicated.

The main objective seems difficult to ignore. Taken together, higher costs, stricter language requirements and additional administrative obligations create an environment that discourages people from remaining in France long term. The goal may not be openly stated, but the effect is clear.

The same logic can be seen in higher education. France has long attracted international students because it offers high-quality education at relatively affordable prices. Public university tuition was traditionally among the lowest in Europe, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to pursue degrees without accumulating enormous debt.

For the 2025-2026 academic year, non-European students were charged €2,895 per year for a bachelor’s degree and €3,941 for a master’s degree, compared with €178 and €254 respectively for French and European students. Recent government reforms have also restricted universities’ ability to exempt international students from these higher fees. The consequences are already becoming visible.

Universities that once broadly exempted international students from these fees are now facing pressure to limit exemptions. In April 2026, the University of Strasbourg announced measures affecting dozens of international students who were unable to pay the higher tuition costs.

This approach seems economically counterproductive. International students are not simply consumers of education; they are contributors to the local economy.

They rent apartments, use public transport, purchase food, travel and support local businesses. Their economic contribution extends far beyond tuition fees. Countries such as Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom actively compete for international students because they recognise the long-term economic benefits these students bring.

France appears to be forgetting this.

The broader debate surrounding immigration often suffers from the same contradiction. Anti-immigration rhetoric frequently portrays immigrants as people who come to exploit social services or take jobs from local workers. Yet numerous studies across Europe have demonstrated that immigrants contribute significantly through taxation, entrepreneurship and labour market participation.

The claim that immigrants “steal jobs” is particularly misleading. Labour laws already prioritise local hiring in many sectors. Furthermore, immigrants frequently fill positions facing labour shortages, jobs that are essential to society but often difficult to recruit for. Healthcare workers, construction workers, cleaners, farmers, delivery drivers and caregivers all play crucial roles in keeping economies functioning. Without immigration, many sectors would struggle to meet demand.

What makes France’s current direction particularly striking is that it contrasts sharply with developments elsewhere in Europe. Spain, for example, has recently moved towards regularising hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants, recognising their importance to the country’s labour market and long-term economic growth. Rather than viewing immigrants as a burden, Spain is treating them as part of its future. France, meanwhile, seems increasingly focused on deterrence.

For immigrants already living in the country, these policies add to existing frustrations.

Residence permit appointments are notoriously difficult to obtain in many prefectures, waiting times can stretch for months.

Delays in issuing renewed permits often leave people with expired documents while they wait for appointments or card collection. This creates uncertainty around travel, employment, housing and interactions with the police.

SPORTS

‘**LIFETIME**DEAL’



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) smiles on the court after defeating the Los Angeles Clippers during the play-in rounds of the 2026 NBA Playoffs at Intuit Dome. — **Imagn Images**

NBA STAR CURRY SIGNS 10-YEAR DEAL WITH CHINA’S LI-NING

SAN FRANCISCO, United States: Four-time NBA champion Stephen Curry ended his sneaker free agency on Monday, announcing a 10-year deal with Chinese company Li-Ning after leaving Under Armour last November.

Curry, 38, revealed the deal on social media and called it “the partnership of a lifetime” that will include global expansion of his Curry Brand, basketball products, a golf line, leisure clothing and the ability to sign other athletes to his brand.

“This is bigger than a show deal, bigger than a signature series,” Curry said in a video, saying Li-Ning will deliver “sneakers that I believe in that will continue to deliver at the highest level.”

“It’s amazing to see how he’s grown his namesake company as an athlete founder, knowing I have those same hopes and aspirations for Curry Brand,” Curry said.

Other Li-Ning athletes with their shoes include Dwyane Wade and Jimmy Butler, Curry’s Golden State Warriors teammate.

Curry had been a partner with Under Armour for 13 years before the split and had worn various brands through the NBA season. — **AFP**

Oman to compete in Asian Games Esports Qualifiers in Malaysia

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 2

The Oman National Esports Team will participate in the Asian Games Esports Qualifiers for League of Legends, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from June 12 to 14, bringing together some of Asia’s top national teams.

The Omani squad consists of Mohammed bin Mohsin bin Saif al Rashdi, Ghassan bin Harith bin Mohammed al Battashi, Majid bin Zuhair bin Haider al Zaabi, Khalid bin Waleed bin Ali al Balushi, Anas bin Sharif

bin Mohammed al Bakri and Moel bin Mohammed bin Saud al Rawahi. The team is coached by Ahmed bin Salim bin Rashid al Wahaibi, while Maitham bin Younis bin Ali al Zadjali will serve as Team Manager. Members of the national team expressed their pride in representing the Sultanate of Oman in this continental event, describing the participation as an opportunity to compete against some of Asia’s strongest teams. They also highlighted the growing importance of esports in developing



The League of Legends qualifiers for Asian Games will be held in Kuala Lumpur from June 12 to 14.

Knicks aim to end 53-year title drought against Spurs

KNICKS ENTER FINALS ON 11-GAME WINNING STREAK

NEW YORK DESPERATE TO END DROUGHT

YOUNG SPURS TEAM REACH FINALS EARLIER THAN EXPECTED

THE NEW YORK KNICKS will try to deliver the city its first NBA title since 1973 when they face a Spurs team looking to launch a new dynasty behind Victor Wembanyama in a highly anticipated Finals match-up beginning on Wednesday in San Antonio.

Led by versatile point guard Jalen Brunson, the Knicks have powered their way to their first Finals appearance since 1999, winning 11 straight games and posting a record point differential of plus-271 through 14 playoff contests.

The run has electrified long-suffering Knicks fans, including courtside regulars Spike Lee, Ben Stiller and Timothee Chalamet, who have watched New York move within four wins of ending one of the NBA’s longest championship droughts.

There is reason for optimism. The Knicks won two of their three meetings with the Spurs this season including a 114-89 rout on March 1 at Madison Square Garden, where they made 17 three-pointers and forced 22 turnovers to snap San Antonio’s 11-game winning streak.

New York’s biggest challenge will be slowing the 7-foot-4 Wembanyama, whose blend of rim protection, shooting range and ball handling has made him one of the league’s most difficult match-ups.

The Knicks will lean on Karl-Anthony Towns, OG Anunoby and Mitchell Robinson to make life difficult for the Frenchman, while also trying to keep Towns out of foul trouble.

San Antonio will need more than Wembanyama to counter New York’s size and physicality.

The Spurs are at a size disadvantage on the perimeter, but De’Aaron Fox’s speed gives them a way to pressure the Knicks’ defense and create openings in transition and the halfcourt.

The Spurs will also hope Fox is fully recovered from the ankle injury that kept him out of the first two games of the Western Conference Finals.

San Antonio will need his burst and playmaking against a Knicks team who have overwhelmed opponents with depth and force.

AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

While the Knicks, who won titles in 1970 and 1973, are desperate to end a 53-year wait, the Spurs have reached the Finals ahead of schedule behind one of the league’s most promising young cores.

Wembanyama, 22, is joined by 21-year-old guard Stephon Castle and 25-year-old Devin Vassell, giving San Antonio the foundation of a team that could contend for years.

The series may ultimately hinge



Oklahoma City Thunder’s Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) controls the ball against San Antonio Spurs’ Julian Champagnie (30) during game seven of the western conference finals for the 2026 NBA playoffs at Paycom Center. — **Imagn Images**

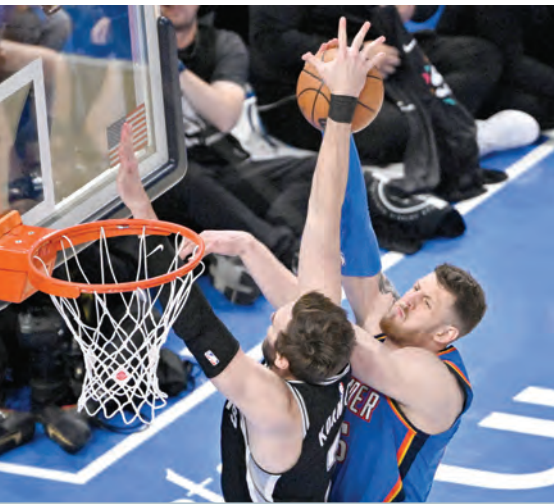


San Antonio Spurs’ Victor Wembanyama (1) celebrates with the MVP trophy after defeating the Oklahoma City Thunder in game seven of the western conference finals for the 2026 NBA playoffs at Paycom Center. — **Imagn Images**

on Wembanyama, who won Western Conference Finals MVP after dethroning the Oklahoma City Thunder in a Game Seven on the road.

Known as ‘Wemby’, he has already emerged as a potentially transformational player — a Defensive Player of the Year capable of blocking shots at one end and pulling up from near midcourt or Euro stepping to the rim at the other.

The Spurs will also lean on the memory



San Antonio Spurs’ Luke Kornet (7) blocks Oklahoma City Thunder’s Isaiah Hartenstein (55) during game seven of the western conference finals for the 2026 NBA playoffs at Paycom Center. — **Imagn Images**

of beating the Knicks 4-1 in the 1999 Finals to capture the first of the franchise’s five championships.

Whatever the outcome, the NBA will crown a different champion for the eighth straight season, extending the longest such streak in league history.

Game One of the best-of-seven Finals tips off at 8:30 p.m. Eastern Time (0030 GMT) on Wednesday at Frost Bank Center in San Antonio. — **Reuters**

youth skills and promoting mutual understanding, cooperation, sportsmanship and fair competition among nations. Maitham bin Younis bin Ali al Zadjali, Team Manager, said: “We are proud to represent the Sultanate of Oman in the Asian Games Esports Qualifiers and look forward to delivering a performance that reflects the progress of esports in Oman. We are working with a strong sense of unity and discipline to achieve a respectable result against some of Asia’s leading teams and to further strengthen

Oman’s presence on the international esports stage.” The national team is aiming to secure qualification for the esports competitions at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, which will take place in Japan later this year. A successful campaign would underline the rapid development of esports in Oman and the readiness of its players to compete at the highest continental level, while supporting the continued growth of the sector and creating broader opportunities for emerging national talent.

INTENSECRITICISM



Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun, the third-highest scorer in the history of the Iranian national team, is not among the players selected for the World Cup by the country's football federation. — AFP

VETERAN STRIKER AZMOUN OMITTED AS IRAN ANNOUNCE WORLD CUP SQUAD

TEHRAN: Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun, the third-highest scorer in the history of the Iranian national team, is not among the players selected for the World Cup, according to a list published on Monday by the country's football federation.

Azmoun faced intense criticism in the Iranian media in March after posting a photo on his Instagram account of himself alongside the premier of the United Arab Emirates, a US ally and supporter of Washington in its war against Iran.

Some Iranian state media outlets at the time called it a "betrayal," given that Azmoun plays and lives in Dubai.

The 31-year-old forward, who previously played for Bayer Leverkusen and AS Roma and has scored 57 goals in 91 international appearances, had already drawn criticism in 2022 for his support of protesters during the widespread demonstrations following the death of Mahsa Amini.

The 2026 World Cup is being co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Iran is scheduled to play its first match on June 15 against New Zealand in Los Angeles. However, according to the Iranian ambassador to Mexico, the national team players have not yet received visas to travel to the United States.

The Iranians have relocated their training camp, initially planned to be in Tucson in the US state of Arizona, to the northwestern Mexican border city of Tijuana. — AFP

IRAN SQUAD (all Iran-based unless stipulated):
Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand, Payam Niazmand, Hossein Hosseini
Defenders: Ehsan Hajsafi, Milad Mohammadi, Ali Nemati, Shojae Khalilzadeh, Hossein Kanaanizadegan, Danial Eiri, Ramin Rezaeian, Saleh Hardani
Midfielders: Saman Ghoddos (Kalba/UAE), Saeid Ezatolahi (Shahab Al Ahli/UAE), Mohammad Ghorbani (Al Wahda/UAE), Rouzbeh Cheshmi, Amirmohammad Razzaghinia, Mohammad Mohebi (Rostov/RUS), Mehdi Torabi, Mehdi Ghayedi (Al Nasr/UAE), Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Aria Yousefi
Forwards: Mehdi Taremi (Olympiakos/GRE), Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh, Ali Alipour, Shahriyar Moghanlou (Kalba/UAE), Dennis Eckert (known in Iran as Dennis Dargahi, Standard Liege/BEL)



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli lifts the trophy as he celebrates with team-mates after winning the Indian Premier League. — Reuters

Kohli dubbed 'heartbeat' of IPL champions RCB

VIRAT KOHLI was hailed as the "heartbeat" of the Royal Challengers Bengaluru dressing room after his unbeaten 75 secured a second straight IPL championship.

The 37-year-old Kohli was there at the end as Bengaluru chased 156 to beat Gujarat Titans by five wickets in Sunday's final in Ahmedabad.

Dubbed the "chase master", Kohli finished with a six and a total of 675 runs in the T20 tournament.

"Virat, I know you get a lot of attention and quite rightly," head coach Andy Flower said in a Royal Challengers Bengaluru video tribute released Monday.

"But I don't want to downplay that, because you are a heartbeat in this dressing room."

Kohli got the team off to a flying start in a 62-run opening stand with Venkatesh Iyer and later anchored the chase.

He hammered Gujarat pace bowler Kagiso Rabada for two fours and a six to set the tone for his team's domination at the 130,000-capacity Narendra Modi Stadium, which was packed with Kohli fans.

"He relishes these situations, he looks forward to these situations where he can show how good a player he is," former India captain Sunil Gavaskar told Sports Today.

"What kind of a temperament he has, the winning mindset that he has."

IPL chairman Arun Dhimal said: "Virat doesn't need any trophies. He is a trophy himself."

Bengaluru and Kohli have been on a roll in the T20 tournament since winning their first



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli celebrates with team-mates after winning the Indian Premier League title at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad . — Reuters

IPL crown at the 18th attempt last year.

Bengaluru finished top of the 10-team table after the league stage and hammered Gujarat in the first play-off for a direct entry into the final.

A majority of the 90,000 crowd seemed to be wearing Kohli's number 18 shirt, with chants of "Kohli, Kohli" filling the air.

"I always say we don't have seven home games, we probably have 14," Kohli said after being named player of the match.

"Everywhere we go, we have fans cheering the team and really getting behind us.

"I mean, GT are probably the home side, but you see 90 percent of the guys are RCB

fans. Their support is priceless."

The team will not stage any public homecoming with the trophy on Monday.

A victory parade for their inaugural title win a year ago resulted in a stampede and crush outside Bengaluru's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium that killed 11 people.

"Obviously, you feel bad — you lost your fans after winning the game," Bengaluru captain Rajat Patidar said after this year's win.

"Not just fans, they are the family members. I always want to dedicate this trophy to them. I don't have words to express that feeling." — AFP

Sooryavanshi sweeps IPL awards — but is too young to drive prize

AHMEDABAD: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi swept the end-of-season IPL awards and in doing so won an SUV — but the 15-year-old cricket prodigy will have to wait three years to drive it.

The Indian batting sensation plundered 776 runs at an average of 48.50 and a punishing strike-rate of 237.30 in 16 matches.

On Sunday, he was named most valuable player, despite his team Rajasthan Royals narrowly failing to reach the final, and he also scooped the Orange Cap for leading the batting charts. He was also named emerging player of the season, among other prizes.

The boy wonder was gifted a car, a TATA Sierra SUV, which at top price comes in at 2.1 million rupees (\$22,000).

His total prize money was over \$57,000.

However, he won't be able to get behind the wheel in the near future because the minimum driving age in India is 18.

"It feels good, but I'm feeling a little pressure because I'm here for an interview," Sooryavanshi said on winning the awards.

"But yes, it's a proud moment, it feels great, and I'll try to do even better next season."

Virat Kohli led Royal Challengers



Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is awarded the Orange Cap for being the highest run-getter by BCCI Vice-President Rajeev Shukla. — Reuters

Bengaluru to their second straight title after they beat Gujarat Titans in the final in Ahmedabad.

Player of the match Kohli was seen speaking to Sooryavanshi during the presentation ceremony well past midnight.

Sooryavanshi struck 97 and 96 runs in his final two innings of this edition of the IPL, adding to the growing clamour for him to earn a maiden call-up to the senior national team.

According to Indian media, Sooryavanshi has been included in a 30-member of probables for the Asian Games in September-October in Japan. — AFP

SPORTS



Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk reacts to her victory over Ukraine's Elina Svitolina at the end of their quarterfinal match on day 10 of the French Open tournament on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland-Garros Complex in Paris. — AFP



Russia's Mirra Andreeva celebrates her victory at the end of her quarterfinal against Romania's Sorana Cirstea on Day 10 of the French Open tournament on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland-Garros Complex in Paris on Tuesday. — AFP

Zverev powers into semis, Kostyuk to face Andreeva

ALEXANDER ZVEREV breezed past Rafael Jodar to stay on course for an elusive Grand Slam title at the French Open, where Marta Kostyuk and Mirra Andreeva will meet for a place in the women's final. Zverev, the highest-ranked player left in the men's draw, put an end to Spanish teenager Jodar's impressive Roland Garros debut, easing to a 7-6, (7/3), 6-1, 6-3 win on Tuesday.

The 29-year-old Zverev is the clear favourite for a maiden Grand Slam title. He has finished runner-up on three occasions, including at the 2024 French Open.

"I want to win the matches that are ahead of me, that is my goal, that is my aim," said Zverev, who has only dropped one set en route to the last four. It is the fifth time in six years he has made it to this stage in Paris. "I'm happy to be in the semifinals, for now."

Zverev will play the winner of the night-time encounter between Brazilian sensation Joao Fonseca and Czech youngster Jakub Mensik. For Jodar, the grind of back-to-back five-setters appeared to take its toll as he struggled to cope after blowing a 5-2 lead in the opening set. The 19-year-old Jodar was featuring at just his second major.

KOSTYUK HOLDS NERVE Earlier, the in-form Kostyuk held her nerve to withstand a comeback from compatriot Elina Svitolina in the first all-Ukrainian women's quarterfinal at a Grand Slam in the Open era, winning 6-3, 2-6, 6-2. The 23-year-old Kostyuk extended her unbeaten run on clay this



Germany's Alexander Zverev in action during his quarterfinal against Spain's Rafael Jodar. — Reuters

season to 17 matches to reach her first Grand Slam semifinal.

"I'm very happy I found a way. It was very difficult in the first two sets," said Kostyuk, who again dedicated her victory to the people of Ukraine. "We had another difficult night in Ukraine, especially in Kyiv where so many people died, so I want to give this match to Ukraine," said Kostyuk.

Andreeva breezed into her second French

Open semifinal earlier in the day with a 6-0, 6-3 rout of Romania's Sorana Cirstea, who plans to retire at the end of the season.

The eighth seed needed less than an hour to dispatch the 36-year-old Cirstea, appearing in the last eight in Paris for the first time since 2009. "I'm super happy that I'm going to be playing in semis again," said Andreeva.

"I felt like it was one of my best matches so far this tournament." — AFP

Talismanic Kane holds key to England's World Cup fate

MANCHESTER, England: England's World Cup hopes revolve around striker Harry Kane, their captain, talisman and, more often than not, the difference maker in major tournaments.

Since emerging as England's leading forward a decade ago, Kane has been a constant in a team burdened by the weight of expectation, with its hopes increasingly tied to his influence.

Yet for all the talk of a more balanced squad, of dynamic wide players and midfield depth, the equation remains simple: if Kane fires, England flourish. If he falters — or is unavailable — the entire structure begins to creak. His importance is both statistical and psychological. He is England's record scorer with 78 goals in 112 appearances, their penalty taker, focal point and increasingly chief creator, dropping deep to link play and release runners such as Bukayo Saka.

He arrives at the tournament in formidable form after another prolific campaign at Bayern Munich, finishing as Bundesliga top scorer for a third successive season with 36 goals.

On the World Cup stage, where fine margins usually decide knockout ties, having a forward capable not only of finishing chances but also creating them is invaluable and Kane ticks both boxes.

His tournament pedigree underlines that point: Golden Boot winner and semifinalist at the 2018 World Cup and key contributions to England's run to the Euro 2024 final.

Even when England have struggled to click, Kane has retained the ability to



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane celebrates with the top goal scorer trophy in the Bundesliga after Bayern won the title in Munich. — Reuters

produce decisive moments, masking shortcomings elsewhere. But that reliance cuts both ways.

The 32-year-old missed England's March 31 friendly defeat by Japan due to injury, a reminder of how exposed the team can look without him.

Should that scenario play out at the World Cup, the options are limited. There is attacking depth in the squad, but no like-for-like replacement capable of replicating Kane's all-round game and composure under pressure.

His absence would also leave a sizeable leadership vacuum, with few teammates

able to match his experience, authority and calming influence on the biggest stage. Without him, England would not just lose goals, they would lose their emotional anchor.

The challenge for manager Thomas Tuchel, whose first task will be to lead his team out of a tricky group with Croatia, Ghana and Panama, is to ensure reliance on Kane does not become over-dependence by encouraging tactical flexibility.

Without him, the margins narrow, the structure is less stable, and the pursuit of a first World Cup triumph since 1966 looks even more difficult. — Reuters

وزارة الإعلام
Ministry of Information

May 31
إلى
June 07

الدختر طومس

Don't miss the chance
to watch the film in cinemas

Grand Mall – Muscat , 04:00 PM | Oman Mall – Muscat , 04:00 PM
Salalah Oasis Mall 06:30 PM | Grand Mall – Nizwa ,04:00 PM | City Centre Sohar ,04:00 PM

Free Tickets

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
7,772.178

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$91.76
BRENT \$93.85
LIGHT \$91.16



BUSINESS

SHORTTAKES



The MoU establishes a strategic framework for identifying and pursuing joint investment opportunities in oil and gas exploration.

OQEP AND LIBYA FORGE OIL AND GAS PARTNERSHIP

TRIPOLI: OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Libya's Investment Authority (LIA), marking a significant step towards strengthening energy cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and Libya and opening new avenues for joint investment in the oil and gas sector.

The agreement was signed in Tripoli by Ashraf bin Hamad al Maamari, Chairman of OQEP, and Dr Ali Mahmoud Hassan, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the LIA, in the presence of Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, Prime Minister of Libya's Government of National Unity.

The MoU establishes a strategic framework for identifying and pursuing joint investment opportunities in oil and gas exploration and production projects in both countries as well as in international markets.

The partnership aims to support the growth ambitions of both organisations while creating long-term economic value through high-quality and sustainable investments.

The agreement comes as OQEP continues to advance its international growth strategy, which focuses on expanding its asset portfolio, increasing production and reserves, and securing attractive investment opportunities in promising energy markets.

The initiative is aligned with the company's broader vision of strengthening its position as an Omani energy company with an expanding regional and global footprint.

The partnership also reflects growing interest in energy investment opportunities amid ongoing changes in the global energy landscape.

OMIFCO plans MSX debut with 25 per cent IPO

BALARAB AL TAMIMI
MUSCAT, JUNE 2

OMAN India Fertiliser Company (OMIFCO) plans to offer 25 per cent of its shares in an initial public offering (IPO), bringing one of Oman's largest industrial exporters to the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). The subscription period is expected to open in June 2026, subject to approval from the Financial Services Authority, with listing targeted for July.

The offering will consist of existing shares held by Omani state-owned integrated energy group OQ, and Indian public sector fertiliser cooperatives Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) and Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO).

The planned float comes as Oman continues to deepen its capital market through listings of state-linked and strategic companies.

For investors, OMIFCO offers exposure to an export-led fertiliser producer with strong margins, a debt-free balance sheet and a stated dividend policy.

The company operates the largest fertiliser complex in Oman and one of the top five in the GCC. Its plant in Sur Industrial City has annual nameplate capacity of about 1.15 million tonnes of ammonia and 1.65 million tonnes of urea.

OMIFCO generated revenue of \$802.3 million in 2025, with



Top officials representing OMIFCO and its principal shareholders, along with Muscat Stock Exchange, pictured at a media briefing at the company's Sur complex on Tuesday.

an EBITDA margin of 50.6 per cent and a net profit margin of 40 per cent. In the first quarter of 2026, revenue stood at \$207.4 million, while EBITDA margin was 50.5 per cent and profit margin reached 40.4 per cent.

The company said it has maintained a net cash position for several years, with no interest-bearing debt.

Its business model is supported by long-term gas supply arrangements, offtake agreements and export infrastructure, including a dedicated deep-water jetty in Sur.

Urea is OMIFCO's main revenue driver. It accounted for 92.8 per cent of revenue in 2025 and 95.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2026. The company sold 2.1 million tonnes of urea in 2025, with

98.3 per cent exported.

India remains OMIFCO's largest export market. From 2023 to 2025, India accounted for 71 per cent of exported urea volumes and 61 per cent of ammonia export volumes. OMIFCO produced 1.35 million tonnes of ammonia and 2.07 million tonnes of urea in 2025, exceeding nameplate capacity utilisation rates for both products.

The company has set an expected dividend of about RO 71.2 million, equivalent to \$185 million, for FY2026, to be paid in two equal instalments in September 2026 and April 2027.

For FY2027 and FY2028, dividends are expected to be the higher of 90 per cent of net profit or a minimum annual compounded increase of 3 per cent from the FY2026

dividend.

OMIFCO is also studying medium-term expansion that could add about 2.05 million tonnes per year of urea capacity and 1.19 million tonnes of ammonia capacity.

The company said no final investment decision has been taken and any expansion would depend on feasibility, gas allocation and approvals.

In a statement, Chairman Sunder Singh Yadav said the proposed listing marked an important stage in OMIFCO's development and reflected the company's role in supporting global food supply.

Chief Executive Officer Dr Ahmed al Marhoubi added that OMIFCO had delivered strong financial and operational performance and remained focused on long-term shareholder value.

As global trade fragments, Oman's long logistics bet gains relevance

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, JUNE 2

For decades, global trade was built around a simple formula: maximise efficiency, minimise costs and concentrate activity through a limited number of major hubs. That model is now being challenged.

A recent analysis published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) argues that an increasingly fragmented world requires more diversified trade hubs and stronger supply-chain resilience as geopolitical tensions, shipping disruptions and economic uncertainty reshape international commerce.

The analysis, authored by Ominvest economist Azza al Habsi, comes at a time when businesses worldwide are reassessing their dependence on concentrated trade routes and just-in-time logistics systems that have long underpinned global supply chains.

"The global trade system is too reliant on concentrated supply routes," Al Habsi wrote, arguing that complementary regional hubs are becoming increasingly important to ensure continuity when primary routes are disrupted.

For Oman, the message carries particular significance. Over the past two decades, the Sultanate



AZZA AL HABSI
Ominvest Economist

has invested heavily in ports, industrial zones, logistics corridors, airports and transport

infrastructure as part of a long-term strategy to position itself as a gateway linking Asia, Africa and Europe. At the time, some questioned whether additional logistics capacity was necessary in a region already home to some of the world's busiest ports and most established trade centres.

Today, the global conversation appears to be shifting. Rather than relying on a small number of dominant hubs, companies are increasingly seeking diversified supply chains, alternative routes and additional logistics nodes capable of improving resilience during periods of disruption.

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Trade Observatory Annual Outlook Report 2026, based on a survey of more than 3,500 senior supply-chain and logistics executives worldwide, supplier diversification emerged as the leading strategic priority for 2026, selected by 51 per cent of respondents.

Meanwhile, 42 per cent



Oman has emerged as an important alternative to traditional regional chokepoints.

identified improvements in infrastructure and transport capacity as key drivers of future growth.

The trend reflects a broader transformation taking place across international trade. Multinational corporations are increasingly moving away from traditional just-in-time models towards more regionalised and flexible supply networks designed to reduce exposure to geopolitical risk and supply-chain disruptions.

Oman's infrastructure investments may therefore be

entering a more favourable global environment than the one in which they were originally conceived.

The World Economic Forum analysis specifically cites Oman as an example of a country whose long-term investments in ports, logistics, industrial zones, road connectivity and digital infrastructure have enhanced its strategic value during periods of disruption.

The article notes that Oman has emerged as an important alternative to traditional regional

chokepoints because the necessary infrastructure was already in place before crises occurred.

The opportunity, however, is far from guaranteed. Competition across the Gulf remains intense as countries race to attract trade, investment, manufacturing and logistics activity.

The United Arab Emirates continues expanding its global logistics footprint, while Saudi Arabia is investing heavily to establish itself as a leading transport and industrial hub under Vision 2030.

For Oman, geography alone will not be enough. Future competitiveness will depend on customs efficiency, regulatory certainty, industrial depth, workforce capabilities and the ability to convert infrastructure assets into sustained investment, trade flows and job creation.

Yet the broader direction of travel appears increasingly clear. The era in which trade could rely on a handful of dominant gateways is gradually giving way to a more distributed model built around resilience, redundancy and diversification.

If that shift continues, the strategic value of Oman's ports and logistics infrastructure may prove greater than many anticipated when those investments were first made.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



CALO offers a range of tailored meal plans designed to suit diverse lifestyles.

CALO OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES IN OMAN

MUSCAT: CALO, the region’s leading and fastest-growing personalised meal subscription platform, has now officially launched in Oman, marking a major milestone in its growth journey.

Following a highly successful initial rollout, the brand has removed waitlists, expanded delivery coverage, and increased operational capacity, making healthy, personalised meals more accessible than ever to customers across Greater Muscat, including Al Amerat and Al Mabela, with more areas across Oman coming soon.

Powering this nationwide rollout is CALO’s newly inaugurated flagship kitchen. This state-of-the-art facility ensures consistent, high-quality meal production six days a week, enabling the brand to meet rising customer demand without compromise.

Ahmed al Rawi, Co-Founder & CEO of CALO said, “With demand exceeding expectations since our soft launch, we’re proud to now be serving all customers across Greater Muscat.

At CALO, our focus is on simplifying healthy eating by combining personalisation, convenience, and quality in a way that fits into everyday life.

Whether it’s having full control over your meals, aligning with specific nutritional goals, or simply saving time, we are enabling people to build healthier habits without having to think twice about it. Ultimately, our goal is to make healthy eating easy and accessible for everyone.”

CALO offers a range of tailored meal plans designed to suit diverse lifestyles, from balanced nutrition and high-protein options to chef-curated selections, all prepared using fresh, natural ingredients.

Customers can fully customise their meals, pause and resume subscriptions at any time, track calorie intake, and enjoy weekly rotating menus, providing unmatched flexibility and variety.

With more than 280,000 customers served and over 18 million meals delivered across the GCC, CALO’s full-scale launch in Oman marks a defining moment for the country’s food-tech landscape.

By combining personalisation, operational scale, and seamless convenience, CALO is not only expanding access to healthy eating, but is setting a new benchmark for how nutrition is delivered, experienced, and sustained in everyday life.

CALO is a direct-to-consumer foodtech startup revolutionising personalised meal subscriptions to a growing base of health-conscious customers.

The company is vertically integrated and built on a strong technology infrastructure allowing it to optimise the operation of its multiple kitchens and bridge consumer preferences with tech-driven analysis, production, and delivery of data-driven meals.

MUZN ISLAMIC BANKING UNVEILS COMPETITIVE FINANCING OFFERS

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman’s Muzn Islamic Banking has introduced a new range of financing offers designed to give customers greater flexibility, value and convenience.

With competitive financing rates starting from 4.5 per cent, flexible repayment plans and streamlined procedures, the offers support customers across a wide range of personal financing needs.

Commenting on the offers,



Salima bint Obaid bin Issa al Marzoqi, Assistant General Manager and Chief Islamic Banking Officer at NBO, said, “At Muzn Islamic Banking, we remain committed to providing Shari’a-compliant financial solutions that respond to the changing needs of our customers.

These offers have been introduced to provide customers with more choice, greater flexibility and added value across different stages of life.”

‘Ford Festive Overdrive’ campaign launched

ARABIAN

Car Marketing Company, the official distributor of Ford vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman, has officially launched its high-energy summer promotion, “Ford Festive Overdrive.”

Running from May 14 to July 12, 2026, this campaign invites drivers to shift into an experience where the momentum of the season never slows down. Designed to power every journey with confidence, the initiative offers an extensive package of benefits including 5 years of comprehensive service and warranty, free registration, accessories and an exclusive assured gift of 3M protection pack.

Adding to the thrill, the campaign features a special raffle draw where participants who test drive a Ford stand a chance to win one of four iPhone 17 units. (Terms & Conditions Apply)

The “Ford Festive Overdrive” is structured to ensure a worry-free ownership experience during the warmer months by providing ultimate peace of mind.

For most models, including the Territory, Taurus, Everest, Mustang, Mustang Mach-E, Expedition, Explorer, Bronco, and the rugged truck line-up, customers receive a 5-year or 100,000 km service package covering 10 services alongside a matching



The initiative offers an extensive package of benefits.

manufacturer’s warranty.

To further enhance the drive and join the excitement of the season, the campaign provides complimentary one-year registration and the 3M Golden 7 Pack, which features high-quality window tinting and ceramic protection. Selected models also come with free accessories, ensuring every vehicle is personalised and ready for the road.

This seasonal promotion showcases a diverse range of models starting with the Ford Taurus, a bold blend of modern luxury

and intelligent technology powered by a 185-horsepower EcoBoost engine. The Ford Territory stands out with its integrated grille and spacious interior, while the Everest 4x4 SUV offers a sophisticated, home-inspired cabin for seven passengers.

For family adventures, the All-New Ford Explorer (Active & Platinum) delivers 300 horsepower and an Intelligent Terrain Management System with a specialised Sand Mode, while the Ford Expedition provides best-in-class towing and space for up to eight passengers.

Al Husn Hotel Muscat appoints new hotel manager

MUSCAT: Al Husn Hotel Muscat announces the appointment of Eugène de Rooze as Hotel Manager (pictured), bringing a wealth of international luxury hospitality experience to one of Oman’s most distinctive coastal retreats.

Set high above the Gulf of Oman within the wider Hilton Muscat, Barr Al Jissah Resorts destination, Al Husn Hotel Muscat is known for its quiet elegance, elevated service and strong sense of place.

With Eugène’s appointment, the hotel enters its next chapter with a continued



focus on thoughtful luxury, operational excellence and guest experiences that reflect the beauty and character of Oman.

A Dutch-national with more than 20 years of experience across leading hospitality destinations, Eugène has

held senior roles across the Middle East, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, Mexico and the United States.

His career spans some of the world’s most recognised luxury hotel brands, including Kempinski, Waldorf Astoria, The Ritz-Carlton, Hyatt and Fairmont, giving him a global perspective shaped by both landmark resorts and complex city hotels.

Most recently, Eugène served as Hotel Manager at Kempinski Palace Cairo, where he oversaw the hotel’s key operational divisions across rooms, food

and beverage, culinary, security, spa and recreation, training and quality.

Prior to this, he was Director of Operations at Waldorf Astoria Kuwait where he played a pivotal role in the hotel’s pre-opening and early success, contributing to Forbes Five-Star recognition for both the hotel and spa within its first year of operation.

Known for his hands-on leadership style and focus on developing high-performing teams, Eugène brings a people-first approach to luxury hospitality.

Bank Muscat launches new edition of EAGLEs programme

MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing commitment to nurturing national talent and providing sustainable professional development opportunities that prepare future-ready leaders, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has launched a new edition of its EAGLEs programme.

The initiative reflects the Bank’s strategic focus on institutional excellence and leadership development, contributing to the creation of a more cohesive, agile, and empowered workforce.

Launched annually, the EAGLEs programme stands for Engage, Align, Grow, Learn, Evolve, and it forms a key pillar of the Bank’s broader strategy to invest in



The programme forms a key pillar of the bank’s strategy to invest in employee capabilities.

employee capabilities and support its vision of empowering young Omani talent.

Each of the programme’s five pillars delivers a deliberate message: engaging leaders to take ownership, aligning them with strategic priorities, enabling growth through

experience, fostering continuous learning, and encouraging evolution in response to a dynamic banking landscape.

Aimed at strengthening the strategic leadership skills of branch managers across the Bank’s retail, corporate, and Meethaq Islamic

banking branches, this year’s edition will include 93 branch managers.

At the programme launch, Ahmed bin Faqir al Bulushi, Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Banking, highlighted the vital and impactful role branch managers play in business growth and in delivering best-in-class customer service.

He said: “The EAGLEs programme represents a significant milestone in the Bank’s journey toward embedding a culture of excellence, innovation, and continuous development. A key objective of the programme is to broaden participants’ exposure to diverse market dynamics, enabling them to better understand evolving customer expectations and industry trends.

This exposure strengthens their

ability to lead with a customer-centric approach, enhancing service delivery while deepening their knowledge, adaptability, and leadership impact in an increasingly competitive environment.

Aligned with Oman Vision 2040, the EAGLEs programme also plays a vital role in empowering Omani talent and advancing Omanisation. It underscores the Bank’s dedication to developing national capabilities and encouraging open communication between branch leadership and senior management. This strategic commitment helps in ensuring that Omani professionals are well-prepared to take on strategic leadership roles and contribute meaningfully to the country’s economic progress.”

SHORTTAKES



The offering attracted strong investor demand, generating an orderbook exceeding \$1.1 billion.

OAB marks successful \$400 million AT1 bond listing on LSE

MOHAMED AL BATTASHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 2

Oman Arab Bank (OAB) hosted a media briefing to celebrate the successful listing of its \$400 million Additional Tier 1 (AT1) bond on the London Stock Exchange (LSE), marking a significant milestone in the bank’s capital management strategy and reinforcing its position in regional and international financial markets.

The issuance was structured as a perpetual non-call 5.5-year instrument with a fixed resettable coupon of 6.75 per cent. Despite heightened geopolitical tensions and challenging conditions across global capital markets, the offering attracted strong investor demand, generating an orderbook exceeding \$1.1 billion and achieving an oversubscription rate of approximately 2.75 times the targeted amount.

Sulaiman al Harthy, CEO of OAB, said the successful issuance and listing represent an important strategic milestone for the bank and reflect the confidence placed in OAB by regional and international investors.

“This was not merely a financing transaction, but a strategic step within the bank’s long-term plans to strengthen capital efficiency and reinforce its presence in international financial markets,” Al Harthy said during the briefing.

He added that the LSE listing further enhances the bank’s standing among regional financial institutions capable of accessing global investors with credibility and confidence.

Speaking to the Observer, Al Harthy explained that the transaction’s primary impact lies in strengthening the bank’s capital base, enabling it to undertake larger financing transactions and support broader economic activity.

“When we strengthen OAB’s capital, it enables the bank to do bigger financing transactions. These larger transactions will have a positive impact on the economy, and that will ultimately benefit individuals and businesses,” he said.

Oman tops global export supply chain ranking

THE Sultanate of Oman has secured leading regional and international positions in the World Bank’s 2025 Logistics Performance Index (LPI), underlining the strength of its logistics ecosystem and reinforcing its standing as a global trade and logistics hub.

Among the report’s key findings, Oman ranked first globally in the “Starting the Export Supply Chain” indicator, recording a benchmark time of just 0.8 days. The result highlights the efficiency of the country’s trade procedures and the speed of operations at its ports.

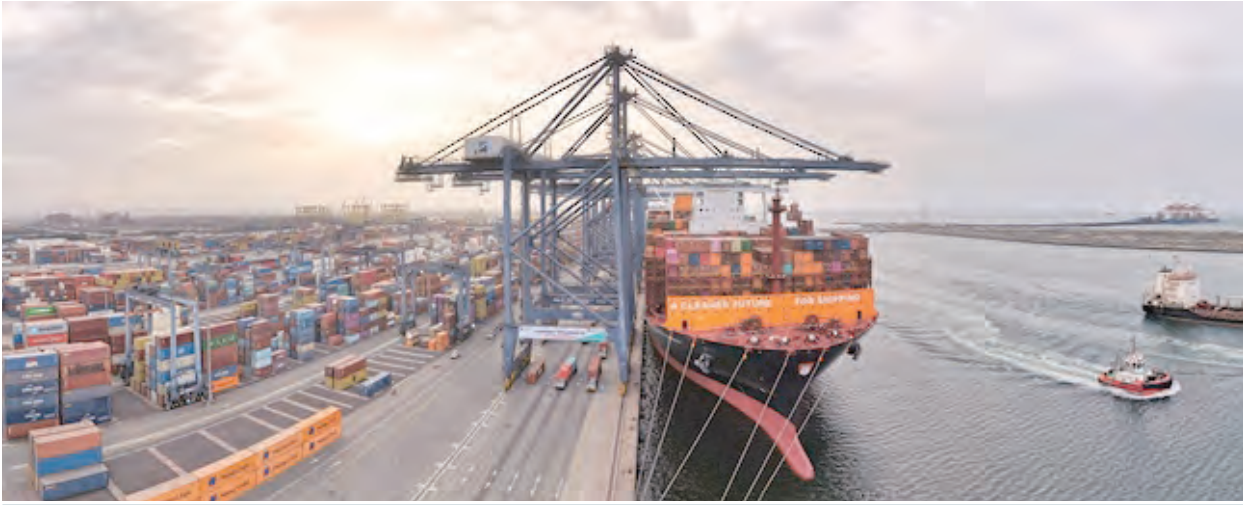
The indicator measures the time required for an empty container to complete the export cycle, from departure to its return fully loaded and ready for shipment.

Oman also achieved ninth place globally among 165 countries in the “Completing the Import Supply Chain” indicator, reflecting the efficiency of import processes and the smooth movement of goods through the supply chain.

The metric measures the time taken from the delivery of imported goods to the consumer until the empty container is returned to the warehouse.

At the Gulf level, Oman ranked second in the “Export Container Dwelling Time at Port” indicator, which measures the period containers remain at ports before being loaded onto vessels.

Oman also secured third place regionally in the “Direct Shipping Line Services” indicator, reflecting the extent of scheduled maritime



Oman is 1st globally in the Starting the Export Supply Chain indicator, recording a benchmark time of just 0.8 days.

The result highlights the efficiency of the country’s trade procedures and the speed of operations at its ports. The indicator measures the time required for an empty container to complete the export cycle, from departure to its return fully loaded and ready for shipment.

connections between Omani ports and destinations worldwide. In maritime connectivity, Oman ranked 25th globally out of 169 countries and second in the GCC in the “Number of Shipping Alliances” indicator.

The ranking reflects the level of cooperation among international shipping lines, enabling wider network coverage and access to more global destinations.

The Sultanate of Oman also placed 39th globally and third in the Gulf region in the “Number of Direct Shipping Connection Partners” indicator, which measures the number of markets directly linked to Omani ports through scheduled shipping services.

Oman recorded another strong performance in postal services, ranking 16th globally out of 190 countries and first in the Gulf region in the “Business-to-Business Mail Delivery Time” indicator,

highlighting the efficiency and reliability of commercial mail services.

The achievements reflect sustained national efforts to strengthen logistics infrastructure, expand port capacity, enhance maritime and postal services, and improve operational efficiency.

These initiatives continue to support trade and investment while advancing Oman’s ambitions to become a leading international logistics centre.

The World Bank’s updated Logistics Performance Index measures the efficiency of global supply chains using actual shipment-level operational data rather than traditional surveys.

The index evaluates performance across three key dimensions — connectivity, speed and reliability — providing a comprehensive assessment of logistics competitiveness worldwide. — ONA

OMAN CRUDE OIL RISES TO \$91.76/ BARREL

MUSCAT: The official price of Oman crude oil for August delivery rose by 35 cents on Tuesday to reach \$91.76 per barrel, compared with Monday’s price of \$91.41.

The increase reflects continued movement in global oil markets,

with Omani crude maintaining its position above the \$90-per-barrel mark.

Meanwhile, data showed that the average monthly price of Oman crude for June delivery stood at \$104.73 per barrel. This represents

a decline of \$19.32 per barrel compared with the average price recorded for May delivery. Oman crude prices are closely watched as a key indicator of Oman’s energy revenues and broader economic performance. — ONA

Block 61 gas output tops 547.5 bcf in 2025: BP Oman

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JUNE 2

Natural gas produced from Block 61 – home to the prolific Khazzan and Ghazeer tight gas fields in central Oman – totalled around 547.5 billion cubic feet (bcf) in 2025, equivalent to a daily output of 1.5 bcf per day, according to BP Oman.

Announcing the figures in its newly published 2025 Socioeconomic Review, BP Oman – which operates the concession with a 40% interest – described Block 61 as representing a “major milestone in BP’s partnership with Oman”.

Together with partners OQ Exploration & Production (30%), PTTEP (20%) and PETRONAS (10%), production from the block accounted for roughly one-third of



Natural gas output from Block 61 accounts for roughly one-third of Oman’s total gas demand.

Oman’s total gas demand, BP noted.

Najla bint Zuhair al Jamali, President – BP Oman, commented: “In 2025, Block 61 delivered around a third of Oman’s total gas demand, supported by strong operational performance and a relentless focus on safety and reliability. This dependable delivery underpins Oman’s energy security and enables continued economic growth.”

Al Jamali added: “We are doing this while actively protecting the block’s environment, achieving leading global standards in methane reporting, and advancing water conservation and biodiversity protection.”Also in 2025, BP drilled a total of eight wells and tested 17 wells using a green completion process designed to reduce environmental impact by capturing

and managing gas, oil and fluids during testing, rather than releasing or flaring them unnecessarily.

Highlighting progress on its other major investments in the Sultanate, BP said the Hyport Duqm project – centred on the development of a large-scale green hydrogen venture in Al Duqm – is currently in the pre-FEED stage. BP, as operator, holds a 49% stake in the project, alongside OQ and DEME.

Furthermore, a nine-year LNG offtake agreement with Oman LNG, covering the supply and purchase of 1 million tonnes per annum (mtpa), began in 2026, following a previous supply deal that ended in 2025, the company added.

In other highlights of the year, BP said it continued to drive innovation in methane reduction across its

Oman operations. “BP Oman was one of the first upstream operators in the Middle East to achieve Oil and Gas Methane Partnership (OGMP) Level 5, the highest global standard for methane reporting.

Building on this, the team is developing one of the region’s most accurate methane measurement systems at Block 61, combining real-time flare insights, enhanced turbine data and more than 50 drone surveys with Omani partner Esbaar.

The results confirm strong alignment across methods, no major unidentified sources, and improved understanding of fugitive emissions, supporting BP’s emissions management while contributing to Oman Vision 2040 and local capability building,” the company stated.

TRADE POLICY

Trump revises metal tariffs



US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order revising tariffs on selected steel, aluminium and copper imports.

The changes introduce new tariff categories for certain products and offer reduced rates for using high levels of US-made steel or aluminium. The measures, effective from June 8 through 2027, are intended to encourage investment in domestic manufacturing. — ONA

ENERGY MARKETS

Oil retreats on Iran talks



Oil prices fell more than 1 per cent on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump said negotiations with Iran were continuing, easing concerns over an immediate escalation in tensions.

Brent crude dropped 1.6 per cent to \$93.45 a barrel, while US crude fell 1.5 per cent to \$90.74.

However, restrictions on oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz continue to support prices. — Reuters

MANUFACTURING ACTIVITY

UK factory growth accelerates



UK manufacturing activity expanded at its fastest pace in more than four years in May. The Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index rose to 53.9 from 53.7 in April, reaching its highest level since February 2022.

Growth was supported by stronger demand, rising production and increased new orders, although firms continued to face higher input costs and inflationary pressures. — Reuters

OPINION

America’s gas surge is rewriting the global economic map



DR ZIAD ALZAIDI

The writer is a Strategic Management & Organisational Transformation Consultant

FOR decades, the global energy order looked relatively stable. Russia supplied pipelines to Europe. The Gulf supplied oil and liquefied natural gas to Asia. The United States consumed more energy than it produced. Factories followed cheap labour. Energy security was largely about geography. That world is fading quickly.

The United States is no longer simply an energy superpower. It is becoming the central balancing force in the global gas market, and the consequences extend far beyond energy itself. They now touch industrial competitiveness, artificial intelligence, shipping routes, inflation, geopolitics, and even the future location of global manufacturing.

By the first half of 2026, the United States had firmly established itself as the world’s largest producer of natural gas and the largest exporter of LNG. American LNG exports exceeded 15 billion cubic feet per day, supported by massive investments in export terminals, pipelines, storage facilities, and petrochemical infrastructure across Texas and Louisiana.

At the same time, Europe’s dependence on Russian gas has undergone a historic reversal. Before the Ukraine war, Russia supplied more than 150 billion cubic meters of gas annually

to Europe. Today, those volumes have fallen dramatically as Europe diversified suppliers and accelerated LNG imports.

However, the real story is not simply that American gas replaced Russian gas. The deeper transformation is that the global gas market itself has changed shape.

The old system was built around fixed pipelines and long-term regional dependency. Geography created stability, but also vulnerability. Europe discovered this painfully after 2022, when energy suddenly became a geopolitical weapon.

The new system is more flexible, more global, and arguably more unstable. Liquefied natural gas can move almost anywhere. Cargoes can be redirected between Europe and Asia within days depending on prices and political risks. Energy is no longer tied only to pipelines and borders. It is now tied to ports, shipping lanes, LNG terminals, insurance costs, and maritime chokepoints.

This is one reason why disruptions in the Red Sea or tensions around the Strait of Hormuz immediately affect markets from Frankfurt to Tokyo. Yet these disruptions have also strengthened America’s position.

Unlike Gulf exports, most US LNG shipments to Europe do not depend on Hormuz, making American supply increasingly attractive during periods of

The United States is no longer simply an energy superpower. It is becoming the central balancing force in the global gas market, and the consequences extend far beyond energy itself.

regional uncertainty. The shift has also exposed a harder economic reality for Europe.

For years, European industry benefited from relatively cheap Russian gas. Germany’s manufacturing success was partly built on this foundation. Today, chemicals, fertilisers, aluminium, and other energy-intensive sectors face significantly higher costs than many American competitors.

Some European companies are already redirecting investment toward the United States, where energy remains cheaper and industrial incentives more attractive. Washington’s Inflation Reduction Act accelerated this trend by combining energy abundance with large-scale support for advanced manufacturing and clean technology.

French President Emmanuel Macron once complained that Europe was paying “four times more” for American gas than US domestic buyers. His remarks reflected growing concern that Europe may have escaped dependence on Russian pipelines only to enter a less visible dependence on American energy and industrial power.

This is where the energy story becomes a geo-economic story. Cheap gas is no longer only about heating homes or powering factories.

Financial regulation: Catalyst for sustainable economic development

MURTADHA M J IBRAHIM AL JAMALANI

There is a pivotal role for supervisory and regulatory authorities in the financial, business, banking, and insurance sectors, as sustainable development goals and economic growth cannot be achieved without a well-developed infrastructure and qualified national human capital in the respective countries.

The insurance and banking industries rely heavily on international standards, governance, risk management, and regulatory compliance.

One of the key advantages of these standards is that they safeguard the interests of the regulator and the supervisory framework, particularly in relation to financial stability and the protection of stakeholders’ rights, despite the differences in interests between regulators and the targeted groups of shareholders, policyholders, bank account holders, and creditors.

On the other hand, one of the main challenges associated with some of these standards is that they tend to focus more on financial products and services rather than on the nature of markets and their developmental needs, meaning they are more: Product-Oriented rather than

Market-Oriented Companies and Banks.

Hence, there is a need to review certain regulatory policies to achieve a better balance between supervision and economic development, and to move towards a framework of: Risk-Based & Development-Oriented Supervision, which combines risk management with economic growth objectives.

Emerging markets also require flexible and gradual regulatory frameworks that take into account the size of the local economy and its stage of development, along with a strong focus on developing national capabilities in actuarial science, risk management, compliance, and financial technology (FinTech).

Ultimately, the success of the financial and insurance sectors should be measured by their contribution to protecting the national economy, enhancing investment, increasing insurance penetration, and raising their contribution to GDP, rather than focusing solely on profitability or regulatory compliance.

The real objective should be to transform the insurance sector into one with real economic and developmental impact.

WHY MUSCAT IS REINVENTING ITSELF

EVERY morning in Muscat begins with movement, long commutes, crowded highways and neighbourhoods separated by the gradual disappearance of shared urban life.

For decades, Muscat grew long rather than cohesive, while infrastructure struggled to keep pace with its expansion. As the capital stretched more than 100 kilometres from east to west, the cost of delivering roads, water, electricity and basic services grew more complex and expensive with each passing year.

More critically, the social fabric of the city — despite a steadily rising population — became harder to sustain.

Today, Oman is attempting to rewrite that equation through the Greater Muscat Structure Plan, an ambitious two-decade urban development initiative aimed at transforming the capital into a more organised, connected and resilient city — one capable of weathering economic and climatic pressures alike.

Spanning approximately 137,000 hectares and linking the historic district of Muttrah in the east to the Wilayat of Barka in the west, the plan creates a new urban corridor through which the government hopes to address one of Muscat’s most persistent problems: horizontal sprawl.

For years, the city has grown outward rather than inwards, producing a patchwork of isolated districts rather than an integrated urban whole.

Yet the true shift in how planners think about Muscat did not begin with maps and engineering blueprints alone. It began with a crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic, six years ago, laid bare the fragility that decades of sprawl had quietly produced.

When traffic stopped and some wilayats went into lockdown, Muscat was exposed as a city almost entirely reliant on the private car. Residents found themselves in neighbourhoods lacking nearby daily services, public spaces, or amenities reachable on foot.

That experience pushed the new



The Greater Muscat Structure Plan occupies an uncertain space in public consciousness — suspended between the hard reality of engineering figures and the pull of ambitious visions.



TURKI AL BALUSHI

The writer is a storyteller, journalist and founder of @alqissahlab

master plan to adopt the concept of the ‘15-minute neighbourhood’ — an urban model built on placing essential needs within easy reach of residents: work, education, shopping and leisure, all accessible without long commutes. The idea is to make the city not only more livable day-to-day, but more adaptable in the face of future crises.

Planning studies estimate that near-total dependence on private vehicles has driven congestion on Muscat’s main arteries — Sultan Qaboos Street and Muscat Expressway among them — to between 30 and 40 per cent above capacity during peak hours.

Against this backdrop, the Greater Muscat Structure Plan does not merely seek to redistribute buildings and roads. It aims to reshape the relationship between people and their city — transforming the capital from a collection of isolated districts functioning as separate islands into a coherent, flexible and sustainable urban fabric.

Central to this vision is the idea of “connected communities”, something that has been conspicuously absent from Muscat’s lived experience, where the sheer geographic expanse of the city has imposed a way of life defined more by constant movement than by daily interaction between residents, neighbourhoods and public spaces.

The new plan seeks instead to build a city that does not merely provide roads and services, but creates urban environments

that encourage community life — through neighbourhoods that are more human in scale, more walkable and more conducive to work and social exchange.

The urgency of this transformation is sharpened by demographic projections. Official forecasts anticipate that Muscat’s population will rise from roughly 1.5 million today to more than two million by 2040.

That growth presents the capital with a clear choice: continue on the path of unplanned outward expansion, with its mounting pressures on traffic and services, or get ahead of the curve through long-range strategic planning.

To that end, the master plan includes the provision of more than 313,000 new residential units — not as isolated concrete complexes, but distributed across interconnected neighbourhoods supported by public transport and future metro networks.

In this way, Oman hopes to turn population growth from a burden on infrastructure into a driver of economic activity, connecting residents more efficiently to labour markets and services.

The economic ambitions of the project run deeper still. The government’s vision points towards reorganising Muscat’s older, unplanned pockets to raise their spatial value — converting what have been service-draining areas into well-ordered centres of attraction.

That urban reorganisation, in turn, is intended to lay the ground for specialised economic clusters, bringing together companies and innovators in technology, logistics and tourism within defined zones, raising operational efficiency and drawing in foreign capital.

The end goal is sustainable economic growth capable of generating quality, well-paid jobs for young Omanis — rather than dependence on traditional employment or ageing administrative structures.

The Greater Muscat Structure Plan occupies an uncertain space in public consciousness — suspended between the hard reality of engineering figures and the pull of ambitious visions.

CLASSIFIEDS

SIT. WANTED

SALES professional with 5 yrs Experience in Medical sector. Graduate, Available in Muscat. akhilmanu777@gmail.com Contact: 76323324

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

INDIAN male MBA Graduate with 15yrs experience in Oman seek suitable senior position in finance office admin., sales DTC. Contact: 94158080

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

LOOKING for Pipeline Engineer with 8 Years Experience offer salary: 200 OMR Phone : +96896965333 Email : sultanalhabsi701@gmail.com

LOOKING for warehouse manager role. Indian male, 14 years GCC experience with driving licence. Available to join immediately. Please contact: 92991621

Looking for part time OR full time Accounts/ Finance job. 20yrs experience in Muscat. Upto finalization & Audit. Please contact: 92065499

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (Cockroaches), Public Health Chemicals, Agriculture Chemicals, Snake Repellent, Rodent Baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

Tel: 24787606, 24787503 Direct Line: 24786077 GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

Driving School Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat) Contact No: 99074072

WJ Towell Group Company Quality car rentals at competitive prices. Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684 Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325 www.orbit-oman.com

FOR RENT

10000 sqm plus area of open yard fully blacktop with compound wall, wide gate & CCTV for immediate rent in Jifnain. Contact: 99853040

4 Ready made office space for rent in Bank Melli Iran building MBD area Ruwi, opposite Centre point. Contact: 99011352.

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN male civil engineer with more than 30 years experience in different ministers, seek immediate suitable position. Contact: 94158080

SIT. WANTED

LOOKING for SUPPLY CHAIN / SALES jobs Indian male 24 years. Commerce graduate, Experience in logistics, procurement and sales in reputed company in Oman. Valid Oman D/L. Contact +96891121694, issacantony2002@gmail.com

SALES Executive required For working in oil and gas / building materials industry Vehicle Driving license preferred Email: kirit@bustaninternational.com Mobile: 95544641

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

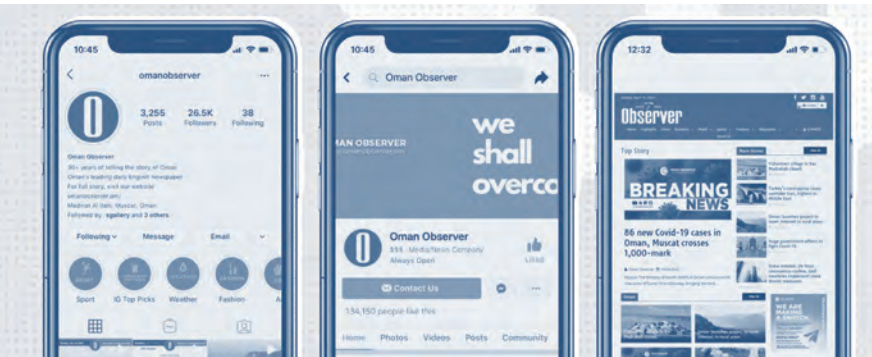
The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Panchakarma, Yoga, Kalari, Massage Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Marma Therapy & Post Delivery Care Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khwair Service Road, Near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-King Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com

SALE OF PONTOONS AND GANGWAY SCRAP

APPROX. 80 TONS

LOCATION: Quriyat Fishing Port

Contact Person: Mr. Basith Nazar +968 9267 1720



SIT. WANTED

LOOKING for part time or full time Accounts/ Finance job. 20yrs experience in Muscat. Upto finalization & Audit. Please contact: 92065499

INDIAN male, 10 year experience in Oman as Coordinator have Driving licence. Contact: 95645241

PROJECT management professional with 20+ years' experience in tendering, business development, business systemisation, ISO QMS, planning and procurement. Possesses managerial and team lead skills. Seeking an opportunity. Contact: 91799438

OMAN DAILY

Observer

FREE*
CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

* NOW FREE CLASSIFIED IN OMAN DAILY OBSERVER ON THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ONLY

Send your advertisement (Only one per coupon & no photocopies), either by mail or in person, with your local identity.

To advertise please contact:

Tel: 71455532/ 71455531/ 71455530

Email: adv@omaninfo.om

To advertise in Ministry of Information channels



To advertise

71455532- 71455531- 71455530
adv@omaninfo.om
izdihar_info izdihar.info

ازديهار
izdihar



ART/LIFE



ON SECOND **THOUGHT** SHOULD PARENTS HELP THEIR CHILDREN FIND JOBS?



Yeru Ebuén
The writer is a luxury media strategist and a creative director

A few days ago, over coffee that had long gone cold from conversation, a new friend admitted something that many parents quietly fear but rarely say aloud. Her son had just graduated from university, and while she wanted to help him find work through a few contacts, she hesitated. “What if,” she asked, “I make life too easy for him? What if he never learns to stand on his own?”

It is an understandable concern. There is a growing belief today that too much parental support produces fragile adults, young people unable to cope with rejection, discomfort or failure because someone has always stepped in to soften the landing. The modern term for it is “helicopter parenting”, though the reality is often less dramatic and more human. Most parents are not trying to control their children’s futures. They are simply trying to spare them unnecessary hardship.

Still, the concern is not without merit. There is value in struggling through the awkwardness of interviews, unanswered applications and difficult beginnings. Independence is not an abstract virtue; it is built through experience. A young adult who learns how to navigate uncertainty develops resilience, confidence and initiative in ways that cannot be taught from the sidelines. There is also the ethical discomfort surrounding excessive parental intervention, particularly when opportunities begin to resemble inheritance rather than merit.

But this is also where idealism collides with reality.

The world young graduates are entering today is vastly different from the one their parents knew. Entry-level jobs demand years of experience. Housing costs continue to rise faster than salaries. Entire industries now operate through networks and referrals before a CV is even read. To pretend that success is achieved entirely through individual effort ignores how modern systems actually work.

The truth is that nearly everyone is helped by someone. A recommendation, an introduction, guidance on navigating an industry, these are not signs of weakness. They are often how professional life functions. Human advancement has rarely been a solitary act.

Perhaps the problem is not support itself, but the nature of that support.

There is a difference between opening a door and carrying someone through it. A parent who offers advice, encouragement or a valuable introduction is not necessarily raising a dependent child. The danger begins when support removes accountability, consequence and the need for effort.

Perhaps the better statement is not: “Parents should not help their children find jobs.”

But rather: “Parents should help in ways that prepare children to eventually stand without them.”

Because adulthood is not proven by isolation. Nor is it strengthened by permanent rescue.

The healthiest transition into adult life may come when support exists in the background, present enough to provide stability, but distant enough to allow struggle, failure, initiative, and growth.

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



HOLLYWOOD
US Actress and beloved ‘Deadpool’ star Morena Baccarin attends the New York Fan Screening for “Masters of the Universe” in New York City, US.
—Reuters



STAGE
Japanese ballet dancer Haruka Takemi performs in “Magical night” play at the Nizhny Novgorod Opera and Ballet Theatre in Nizhny Novgorod. —AFP



SUMMER HEAT
A woman protects herself from the sun with an umbrella and a sun face mask while walking on a street at the financial district of Lujiazui in Shanghai. —AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



The chick of a black-winged stilt



A tourist poses within Al Bait Al Sharqi

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

‘AI SIMPLY CAN’T REPLICATE IT’: JAPAN EMBRACES ZINE TREND



Despite the decline of the publishing industry, self-published magazines and “zines” are gaining popularity, reflecting Japan’s continued cultural attachment to physical print in a digital world.

At a print factory in Kyoto, two creators watched their photo essay come to life in broadsheet form as part of a growing movement to revive handmade publishing in Japan during the age of AI.

Despite the decline of the publishing industry, self-published magazines and “zines” are gaining popularity, reflecting Japan’s continued cultural attachment to physical print in a digital world. The creators, photographer Kazuma Obara and writer Akihico Mori, used a printing press operated by the Kyoto Shimbun newspaper, which is now seeking new uses for its equipment as subscriptions fall.

Obara said print engages all five senses in a way digital media cannot, describing social media as “insular” compared to physically sharing printed work. Mori added that holding a printed piece allows readers to feel the creator’s passion, something he believes AI cannot replicate.

Their work was later featured at the Kyotographie photography festival, part of a wider resurgence of interest in independent publishing. Kyoto Shimbun Printing staff noted that their services are now used by artists across generations, from teenagers to people in their 70s, with younger audiences

particularly drawn to the format’s “old” feel. Japan’s print industry has seen a steep decline, with book and magazine sales falling to around 40 per cent of their 1996 peak, and newspaper circulation dropping by more than half since its 1997 high. Similar concerns exist globally, with many writers fearing AI and social media will further reduce demand for traditional publishing. However, DIY publishing continues to grow, with Japan’s self-publishing market nearly doubling in recent years. Zine fairs in cities like Tokyo now attract large crowds, showcasing handmade works ranging from illustrations to personal essays and experimental design. Visitors and creators alike say the appeal lies in having something tangible, contrasting with algorithm-driven digital content. Some young artists argue that zines offer diverse perspectives not shaped by online feeds. Bookstores such as Sanseido in Tokyo’s Jimbocho district have also begun stocking zines to reach new audiences. Creators remain hopeful that printed media will endure, emphasising the unique warmth and emotional connection that only paper can provide. — AFP



Tributes to Tinseltown’s legendary daughter began on Sunday, with the Academy Museum opening “Marilyn Monroe: Hollywood Icon,” an exhibit celebrating her film career and life cut short.

Hollywood honours Marilyn Monroe, 100 years after her birth



MARILYN Monroe’s hometown of Hollywood kicks off a series of special events marking the 100th anniversary of the movie icon’s birth. At the historic Chinese Theatre, where Monroe’s handprints are immortalised alongside co-star Jane Russell, fans plan to sing “Happy Birthday”. One hundred roses and a cake will be placed at the site, a symbol of Hollywood’s golden age and a popular tourist hotspot. Tributes to Tinseltown’s legendary daughter began on Sunday, with the Academy Museum opening “Marilyn Monroe: Hollywood Icon,” an exhibit celebrating her film career and life cut short. After shooting to superstardom in the 1950s, the actress and model died of an overdose at her Brentwood home in August 1962, aged 36. The Academy Museum will host special screenings of her prolific filmography throughout the month, including “The Asphalt Jungle” (1950), “Niagara” (1953), “The Seven Year Itch” (1955) and “The Misfits” (1961). The exhibit, which runs until February 2027, includes hundreds of original pieces, some rarely on display - such as Monroe’s famed



pink dress worn during her iconic performance of “Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend”. Later in the week, on June 4, Julien’s Auctions will put nearly 200 pieces of Monroe memorabilia under the hammer as part of its special “100 Years of Marilyn” sale. The items include unpublished photographs, a script with notes from her final production, the unfinished short film “Something’s Got to Give,” and personal items such as handwritten recipes and her Elizabeth Arden lipstick. **IMAGE MAKER** Born in Los Angeles on June 1, 1926, Monroe had an unstable childhood spent between orphanages and foster homes. She married for the first time at age 16. She had her first brush with show business in 1944, while working in a factory, when a photographer arrived to capture photos of women working on production lines during World War II. Launching into the world of modelling soon after, she divorced her husband and made a history-defining decision: dyeing her brown hair platinum blonde. She landed her first contract with Fox, and by the age of 30 had established herself as a global star. — AFP

FEATURES

OMAN’S HIDDEN
SUMMER GEM

THE
SEASON
OF
AL ZAM
FRUIT



IDRIS AL BALUSHI &
MOHAMED AL BATTASHI

AS Oman enters the Qaydh season (date harvest season when temperatures begin to swelter), attention often turns to the country’s famous summer produce. Yet among the mangoes and ripening dates, another seasonal gem quietly emerges from mountain valleys and family farms: Al Zam.

Known internationally as jambolan or Java plum, Al Zam is one of Oman’s lesser-known summer fruits. Oval-shaped and deep purple when fully ripe, the fruit has a juicy flesh with a sweet flavour and a slight astringent note. For many Omanis, however, its appeal goes far beyond taste.

Environmental activist and Green Branch Award recipient Mohammed bin Said al Hinai describes it simply as “the fruit of summer in Oman.”

The harvest season typically begins in May and June and continues through July, occasionally extending into August depending on weather conditions and water availability. The trees are commonly



found in mountain valleys and wadis, particularly in areas such as Wadi Bani Kharous in Al Awabi and Wadi Al Saq in Al Hamra, where they thrive in the local environment.

For Yahya al Battashi, whose farm has been home to many Al Zam trees for more than 30 years, the arrival of the season is an annual family event.

“The fruiting season is something we look forward to every year,” he says. “The fruits begin green, then gradually turn pink or light purple before reaching their final dark purple, almost black colour when fully ripe.”

According to Al Battashi, the best time to harvest the fruit is when it becomes dark and separates easily from the branches, signalling peak flavour and quality.

Despite being planted more than three decades ago, his tree continues to produce generous harvests each year. Beyond its fruit, the tree provides broad shade and remains a valued feature of the farm.

For many people, Al Zam is closely linked to childhood memories. Generations grew up picking the fruits directly from the branches during summer holidays. One of its most recognisable traits is the purple stain it leaves on the tongue and lips, a familiar sight among anyone who has enjoyed the fruit fresh from the tree.

Interestingly, the tree’s adaptability extends beyond Oman. Saudi environmental consultant and wildlife volunteer Obaid al Ouni notes that Al Zam has been successfully cultivated in Riyadh despite the city’s harsh direct sunlight, even though the species is generally associated with more humid environments.

Today, the fruit is becoming increasingly visible in local markets and fruit shops. Khairat Mazareana recently announced the availability of large quantities of Omani Al Zam, with 600-gram boxes selling for RO 2.400.

As interest grows in local produce and agricultural heritage, Al Zam serves as a reminder that some of Oman’s most remarkable seasonal treasures remain hidden in plain sight. More than just a fruit, it represents a connection to nature, family traditions and the agricultural rhythms that have shaped Omani life for generations.

