

OMANI CITIZENS
ARRIVE HOME VIA
LAND BORDERS
FROM SEVERAL
GCC COUNTRIES

OIL-LOADING
OPERATIONS HAVE
BEEN SUSPENDED
IN FUJAIRAH AFTER
A DRONE ATTACK

US FORCES
HAD “TOTALLY
OBLITERATED” ALL
MILITARY TARGETS
ON IRAN’S KHARG

ASSAULT SHIP
USS TRIPOLI TO
THE REGION
ALONG WITH 2,500
MARINES

THE US NAVY TO
START ESCORTING
TANKERS
THROUGH
HORMUZ STRAIT

HAMAS CALLED ON
IRAN TO REFRAIN
FROM TARGETING
NEIGHBOURING
GCC COUNTRIES

OIL IN THE CROSSHAIRS OF WAR

IRAN, US THREATEN ATTACKS ON OIL FACILITIES AS CONFLICT ENTERS DAY 15

IRAN THREATENED on Saturday to reduce US-linked oil facilities to “a pile of ashes” as the two-week-old Middle East war spilled over into a global oil price crisis.

Iranian armed forces issued the warning after US President Donald Trump said he may decide to “wipe out” Iran’s largest oil export hub on its Kharg Island.

Waves of drone, missile and aerial bombing have displaced millions in the region and reportedly killed more than 1,200 people in Iran since the United States and Israel opened hostilities on February 28.

Despite facing superior US and Israeli firepower, Iran has retaliated with missile and drone attacks against at least 10 countries.

Tehran has also squeezed the world economy by threatening to strike oil tankers on the Strait of Hormuz, bringing traffic to a virtual halt on a route that normally carries one fifth of global oil supplies.

Crude oil prices have surged by more than 40 per cent since the war began.

Trump said Friday US forces had “totally obliterated” all military targets on Iran’s Kharg Island oil export hub, describing it in a social media post as “one of the most powerful bombing raids in the History of the Middle East.” The US leader said he had chosen not to “wipe out” oil infrastructure on the Iranian island, for now.

“However, should Iran, or anyone else, do anything to interfere with the Free and Safe Passage of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz, I will immediately reconsider this decision,” he said. Trump said the US Navy would start escorting tankers through the Strait of Hormuz “very soon” to restore oil exports.

The Iranian military responded that oil and energy infrastructure owned by US-linked firms would be “immediately be destroyed and turned into a pile of ashes” if the United States struck its oil facilities, according to Iranian media.

US and Israeli attacks have killed more than 1,200 people in Iran, according to health ministry figures that could not be independently verified. The UN refugee agency has estimated that up to 3.2 million people



An Iranian man reacts after his house was damaged by a strike in Tehran on Saturday. — Reuters

have been displaced inside Iran since the war started.

BLASTS HIT TEHRAN

Heavy blasts shook Tehran late Friday after the United States vowed to step up air strikes.

Trump described Iran as “totally defeated” and in search of a deal he was unwilling to consider. According to the Pentagon, the US and Israel have struck more than 15,000 targets in Iran over the past two weeks.

Israel’s military said it conducted 7,600 strikes on the country, most of them against its missile programme.

Iran appears intent on showing it will come through the war intact and in control, despite its supreme leader Ali Khamenei being killed at the start of the US-Israeli campaign.

Khamenei’s son Mojtaba Khamenei was named the new supreme leader, but has been absent from public view and said to be wounded.

Within Iran, the Revolutionary Guards have warned of a strong response to any anti-government protests, after demonstrations in January in which several thousand people were killed.

Iranian authorities have maintained an internet blackout since the war started.

A drone struck the US embassy in Baghdad on Saturday, an Iraqi security official and a security source said. An AFP journalist saw smoke rising from the complex.

The attack took place shortly after two Iran-backed fighters were killed in strikes on Iraq’s capital, according to several sources.

After 14 days of war, the United States is reportedly sending reinforcements that could open up options beyond the airborne campaign.

The Wall Street Journal and New York Times said on Friday the Pentagon had dispatched the Japan-based amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli to the region along with its complement of some 2,500 Marines. The US military has lost 13 personnel since the war started. They include six who were aboard a refuelling aircraft that crashed in Iraq, an incident that US officials said was not the result of hostile fire. — AFP

SEE ALSO P6&P7

25

RAMADHAN
1447 AH
SUNDAY
MAR 15, 2026



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ASR
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MAGHRIB
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إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

(يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي
وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي)

The Board of Directors of Oman Telecommunications Company [Omantel], the Executive Management, and all employees extend their deepest condolences and sincere sympathies to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Royal Family, and the people of the Sultanate of Oman on the passing of

His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said.

His Highness will be remembered for his distinguished service to the nation and his longstanding contributions to Oman's development.

Throughout his distinguished career, he dedicated himself to serving the homeland and supporting the path of the Blessed Renaissance.

Omantel pays tribute to his legacy of dedication and service to Oman and its people and extends its heartfelt sympathies during this time of loss.

عمانتل
Omantel

SHORT TAKES

REGISTRATION BEGINS
FOR RAM'S ETIMAD
PROGRAMME TODAY

MUSCAT: The Royal Academy of Management (RAM) has announced the opening of registration for the National Leadership Development Programme for Middle Management in the Private Sector, known as 'Etimad.'

The programme aims to prepare national leaders capable of driving sustainable institutional growth and keeping pace with future demands, in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040. Applications open today, March 15, through the academy's online registration platform and its official website.

The initiative reflects the strong emphasis placed by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq on developing human capital and empowering national competencies across sectors. The effort seeks to strengthen the private sector's role as a key partner in economic development and in building a competitive, knowledge-based economy.

The programme will target 100 participants from middle management in private sector institutions, including department heads, managers and those in similar roles.

Participants will undertake a six-month leadership learning journey combining in-person modules and online sessions.

The training will also include a leadership camp, career guidance and mentoring sessions, as well as applied learning projects designed to develop practical leadership skills.

The curriculum is based on the latest leadership development methodologies and will feature applied workshops, field experiences and 'meet with a leader' sessions.

Key topics include leading oneself and others, financial and entrepreneurial mindset, strategic foresight, and exploring the future of business from innovation to impact. — ONA

PUBLIC
PROSECUTION
CALLS FOR
RESPECTING
PUBLIC ORDER

MUSCAT: *The Public Prosecution commended citizens and residents for their sense of responsibility and respect for laws and regulations which contribute to maintaining public order and enhancing security.*

In a statement issued on Saturday, the Public Prosecution stressed the importance of preserving public peace and the security of citizens and residents, urging everyone to adhere to

applicable regulations and laws and to refrain from any acts that could affect public order, disturb people or endanger their safety.

The statement said that it has been observed recently that some individuals have been using fireworks, particularly in residential areas. Additionally, some people install substandard exhaust systems on their vehicles and drive them on the roads, resulting in loud noises that disrupt community

tranquillity.

This act constitutes a violation of Article (25) of the Weapons and Ammunition Law and Article (49), paragraphs (5) and (7) of the Traffic Law. In light of these practices, the Public Prosecution said it is committed to taking decisive legal action against the perpetrators, bringing them to justice, and demanding the imposition of the most severe penalties prescribed by law. — ONA

Seniors enjoy first hotel Iftar

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, MARCH 14

FOR many elderly guests gathered at the Sheraton Oman Hotel last Thursday, it was an Iftar experience unlike any they had known before.

The group included retired teachers, fishermen, farmers and drivers aged between 65 and over 80. What made the evening particularly special for many of them was that they had never before visited a luxury hotel or experienced a traditional Ramadhan Iftar in such a setting.

The elderly guests, members of the Al Ihsan Association, a non-profit voluntary organisation dedicated to caring for senior citizens across several governorates, were invited for the special Iftar through an initiative by Sheraton Oman Hotel.

For many, the evening marked their first opportunity to savour a wide variety of dishes and experience the attentive service and hospitality of a five-star hotel.

"I don't know how many more years are left for me on this earth, but if I had gone



About 60 elderly men and women attended the Iftar.

without experiencing such an Iftar, it would have been a great loss,” said Khalifa bin Mohammed bin Nasser al Qarni from Al Seeb with a cheerful smile.

Several of his contemporaries, including Abdullah bin Marhoon al Hadhrami and Ziyad bin Abdullatheef, a retired teacher from Al Khuwair, shared similar sentiments about their memorable experience.

“We have experienced hundreds of Iftars in our lives, thanks to Allah. But this Iftar definitely stands out for the thought behind it – the thought of caring for the elderly and giving them a different Ramadhan

experience," they said.

The gathering was organised as part of Marriott Serve 360 – Doing Good in Every Direction, a community initiative by Marriott International aimed at honouring and supporting senior members of the community.

"Doing business is not always about making money; it is also about giving back to society and thinking about those who are less privileged," said Rejin Thomas, General Manager of the hotel.

“Through this first-of-its-kind initiative, we hope this meaningful event will bring happiness to many people, especially during the holy month,” he added.

Around 50 to 60 elderly men and women from the association attended the gathering, accompanied by volunteers and members of the hotel team. They were hosted in the Oman Ballroom, where a special Iftar buffet was arranged. Besides the meal, the evening included interactive sessions between volunteers, hotel associates and guests, allowing participants to share stories and enjoy warm conversations in a spirit of Ramadhan fellowship.



بنك الاستثمار العُماني
Oman Investment Bank

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا ايها النبي قد علمت ان محمداً صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم قد جاءكم بالبينات والهدى الى صراط مستقيماً

Oman Investment Bank extends
its heartfelt condolences to
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik,
the Royal Family, and the
people of the Sultanate of Oman
on the passing of

His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said

who dedicated a lifetime of loyal service to the nation.

May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may patience and comfort surround his family and loved ones during this time of loss.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

RAMADHAN

Strength and faith through fasting

KABEER YOUSUF

AS THE world navigates difficult and uncertain times, fasting during Ramadhan can help people develop inner strength and compassion, says Paula Antelo, an Argentinian volunteer at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque who observes the fast every day.

“Sometimes it is difficult to understand conflicts that claim to seek freedom, yet often leave behind death, devastation and pain,” says Paula, who also serves as General Manager of Ayuni Travel Agency.

“I have also found myself calming those far away from me who worry when they watch the news. In those moments, we learn to be strong for others as well,” she adds.

For Paula, the arrival of Ramadhan each year brings a sense of joy that she finds difficult to fully express.

“At home, we begin with small preparations — decorating, setting our intentions for the month, and praying that it will be a time of ease and blessings for everyone,” says Paula,



who has been living in Oman for the past nine years after marrying an Omani.

“Sometimes it is hard to tune, and the volume suddenly rises unexpectedly, but it has become our beloved ‘Ramadhan radio,’” she says with a smile.

This year, Paula says she also made a conscious effort to focus on healthier food habits during the holy month.

“One of my goals was to pay more attention to what we eat. We are not getting

any younger, so our Iftar meals have been simpler and healthier — always enough to share, but without waste. Having a plate of food is truly a blessing.”

Although the fasting days have felt easier than she expected, the month has also brought moments of personal trial.

“Still, the tests also arrived — the kind of moments that somehow make us stronger. This Ramadhan I had to say goodbye to my father-in-law. Because of his health condition, his passing was merciful for him, but it still hurts,” she reflects.

For Paula, Ramadhan ultimately remains a time for patience, compassion and faith.

“All that remains is to pray that we can complete this month of fasting, charity and kindness with strength,” she says.

“May all our fasting and prayers be heard, and may we live in peace in a world that sometimes feels harsh and bleeding, even when we do not always see it.”

As the Quran reminds believers: ‘Allah does not burden a soul beyond what it can bear.’ (Quran 2:286)



وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ
الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Shahi extends its heartfelt condolences on the passing of

His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said

who dedicated a lifetime of loyal service to the nation.

May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may patience and comfort surround his family and loved ones during this time of loss.

صَدَقَ اللهُ الْعَظِيمُ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ صَلِّ عَلَى نَبِيِّكُمْ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَاجْعَلُوا فِي عِيَادَتِهِمْ وَاجْعَلُوا فِي عِيَادَتِهِمْ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

DEEPEST CONDOLENCES

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Moosa Abdulrahman Hassan & Co. LLC

expresses it's deepest condolences on the passing of

His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al-Said

We pray that Allah grants him His mercy and eternal peace, and gives his family and the people of Oman patience and strength.



موسى عبد الرحمن حسن وشركاه ش.م.م.
MOOSA ABDUL RAHMAN HASSAN & Co. LLC

SHORT TAKES



100 JOBS FOR THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour on Saturday announced the availability of 100 job opportunities for people with disabilities in several government entities as part of the

approved job opportunities for 2026. The ministry invited all eligible individuals from this specific society segment to apply for these job opportunities to enhance their active participation in the labour market and support sustainable national development. The ministry said that registration, according to the specific data and requirements for each position, is open from March 14 to 31. — ONA

Taaruf Nizwa promotes dialogue and culture

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, MARCH 14

THE Directorate of Endowments and Religious Affairs in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate held the fourth edition of ‘Taaruf Nizwa’ in Nizwa. Organised under the auspices of Shaikh Sultan bin Hilal al Alawi, Wali of Izki, the event aimed to introduce the values of Islam and foster cultural understanding among non-Muslim residents of Al Dakhiliyah. The gathering offered an open space for dialogue and interaction, allowing visitors to learn about Islamic teachings and Omani culture. Conversations with new Muslims highlighted personal journeys of discovering Islam. Yusef from Kenya said his first encounter with Islam came after visiting a mosque in Oman. “I was inspired by the humility and devotion of Muslims in prayer. My conversion has been a path of light in worship,” he shared. Yusef added that Oman offered him “a sense of calm and spiritual comfort.” Sulaiman, who embraced Islam five months ago, learned about the religion through a friend and social media. “What inspired me most was the love and brotherhood among Muslims. Islam connected me to humanitarian values,” he said. British participant Uzma Alnaji spoke about rediscovering Islam through personal study. “What touched me most was the position of



The event featured an exhibition on Omani culture, traditional dress, and multilingual informational materials about Islam.

women in Islam and how the religion honours them. Understanding Islam deeply gave me safety and peace,” she said. Sarah Kangwa, a recent convert, explained that research and curiosity sparked her journey. “Islam’s belief in one God inspired me. Praying five times a day has brought greater spiritual balance to my life,” she said. Participants from Myanmar also shared their experiences and expressed appreciation for Oman’s welcoming environment. Said bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Head

of the Introduction to Islam and Cultural Exchange Section, said the event aims to present Islam’s core values of mercy, tolerance, and mutual respect while promoting cultural exchange. The event featured an exhibition on Omani culture, traditional dress, and multilingual informational materials about Islam. It concluded with a traditional Ramadhan Iftar, fostering friendship and dialogue. Several women embraced Islam after learning more about the faith and interacting with participants.

NIZWA LAUNCHES 7TH ‘MY HOME’ HOUSING INITIATIVE



The ceremony showcased a presentation highlighting the initiative’s journey.

NIZWA: The seventh edition of the ‘My Home’ initiative, implemented by the Nizwa Volunteer Team affiliated with the Social Development Committee in the wilayat, was launched on Friday in Nizwa. The ‘My Home’ project aims to provide dignified housing for underprivileged families and orphans in Nizwa through a range of sustainable housing initiatives. These include constructing new homes for families who are homeless or living in uninhabitable conditions, renovating and maintaining damaged houses, and purchasing ready-made homes in emergency situations requiring intervention to house eligible families. Ali bin Nasser al Busaidy, Vice-President of the Nizwa Volunteer Team, said the ‘My Home’ initiative represents a model of community work built on cooperation and solidarity among members of society. He explained that since its launch six years ago, the project has helped provide housing stability for several deserving families in Nizwa, thanks to the support of philanthropists and partner institutions. The ceremony featured a video presentation highlighting the initiative’s journey since its inception and its achievements. It also included a recorded address by Shaikh Ahmed bin Saud al Siyabi, Secretary-General of the Office of the Grand Mufti, who underscored the importance of charitable work in strengthening the values of solidarity and compassion. The programme also included an artistic segment — a theatrical sketch performed by students of the University of Nizwa — portraying the spirit of the initiative and the transformative impact of volunteer work on the lives of needy families. — ONA



الروبيان الطبيعي للإستزراع السمكي ش.م.م
Natural Shrimp Aquaculture L.L.C

الروبيان الشرقي للإستزراع السمكي ش.م.م
Oriental Shrimp Aquaculture L.L.C

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDER

Natural Shrimp Aquaculture LLC and Oriental Shrimp Aquaculture are subsidiaries of Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) inviting you to share offers for the below table.

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Collection of RFP	Last Date of Submission	Tender Fee
NSA/ORAT/002/2026	Catering Services for Qurun and Khuweymah Shrimp Farms	23 rd March 2026	1 st April 2026	OMR 200

Please note:

- You may request for tender document by sending an email to osara.tenders@nsa.om
- All proposals should be submitted via email to bidopening_osara@nsa.om. Failure to submit the bid to this email address will automatically disqualify the submission, and no further correspondence will be entertained.
- Any inquiries regarding the tender should be directed to Osara.tenders@nsa.om. Responses to queries will be provided in writing and shared with all suppliers approached for this tender.



The Global Omani Investment Company SAOC

NOTICE AND INVITATION TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of THE GLOBAL OMANI INVESTMENT COMPANY SAOC has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Annual General Meetings, which will be held on Tuesday at 03.00 PM on 31/03/2026, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (www.mcd.om) and will be held in this location (Online), if the quorum requirement for holding the Annual Ordinary General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Annual Ordinary General Meeting Shall be held on Sunday at 03.00 PM on 05/04/2026, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the Website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om) and will be held in this location (Online) to discuss the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors’ report for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
- To consider the Auditors’ Report and to approve the Financial Statements, Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Account, for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
- To consider and approve the transactions entered into by the Company with related parties during the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
- To consider and approve the transactions the company will enter into with related parties during the financial year ending on 31 December 2026.
- To approve the sitting fees of the Board meetings paid to the Board members for the financial year ended on 31/12/2025, and to determine the sitting fees for the next financial year ending on 31/12/2026.
- Discussion and approval of postponing the disbursement of the second installment (2%) of the cash dividends decided in the Ordinary Annual General Meeting of the fiscal year ending on 31/12/2024 from 2026 year to 2027 year.
- Election of new members of Board of Directors among the shareholders or others. Anyone who wishes to nominate himself for membership of the Board of Directors must fill out the nomination form prepared for this purpose, which can be obtained from the company, and submit the completed form of the company Five (5) working days before the date of the General Assembly meeting. The company will not accept any form submitted after that.
- To appoint the Auditors for the Company for the financial year ending 31 December 2026, and to determine their fees.

According to the Company’s Articles of Association and the controls of holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

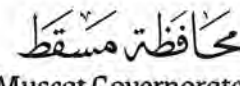
- Legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCDG.
- Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder’s shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information, please contact Mr. Jamal Ahmed Al-Shanfari on office 24489009

Chairman

Auditors

Legal Consultante



Muscat Governorate



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (8/2026)

In reference to Advertisement No. (5/2026), Muscat Municipality informs you of the modification of the dates related to the Bids as follows:

Sr.	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Deadline for Submission
1	1/2026	Management & Operation of Café (A) at the Oman Botanic Garden – Wilayat Al Seeb	25/03/2026
2	2/2026	Management & Operation of Café (B) at the Oman Botanic Garden – Wilayat Al Seeb	25/03/2026
3	3/2026	Management & Operation of Four (4) Pop-Up Carts at the Oman Botanic Garden, Wilayat Al Seeb	25/03/2026
4	4/2026	Management & Operation of the Gift and Souvenir Shop at the Visitor Center of Oman Botanic Garden (Shop No. 1)	25/03/2026
5	5/2026	Management & Operation of Restaurant No. (3) at Oman Botanic Garden – Wilayat Al Seeb	25/03/2026

Muscat Municipality informs you of the modification of the dates related to the Bids as follows:

Sr.	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Document fee LO/RE	SMEs	Deadline for Obtaining Bidding Docs.	Deadline for Inquires Submission	Deadline for Submission
1	6/2026	Management and operation of the cafe located on plot number (205) square (M/1) in Al Khoudh area, Seeb	25/- OMR	10/- OMR	24/03/2026	31/03/2026	20/04/2026

Registered companies with Muscat Municipality which are Specialized in above bids are invited to participate as per the following procedures:

- Company registration with Muscat Municipality must be valid to obtain the bid document.
- Pay the specified document fee for the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality’s Bank account as follows:

Bank Muscat

0423010702710024
- A copy of the transaction’s receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (SQ.QS@mm.gov.om), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name, office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commercial registration number of the company).
- The tender document will be provided to the company via email.
- 2:00 PM** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents.
- Submission details will be shares later.

NOTES:

- Companies which are not registered in Muscat Municipality or their registration has been expired shall register through the municipality’s website (www.mm.gov.om).
- For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality through this email (crm@mm.gov.om).
- If the bidders have any inquiries regarding the scope of the work, they have to sent their inquiries through the following e-mail (Nashwa.h.alsinani@mm.gov.om)
- 10:00 AM** on the above submission mentioned dates, is the last timing for receiving bids. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason.
- Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om

1

UAE ENERGY HUB HIT

Smoke could be seen rising on Saturday from the direction of a major United Arab Emirates energy installation.

2

TEHRAN WARNS UAE RESIDENTS

Iran's military warned that it considers ports in the UAE to be legitimate targets and urged residents to "evacuate" port areas.

3

FRANCE THANKS IRAQ

President Emmanuel Macron said he had expressed gratitude to the Iraqi prime minister for taking measures to protect French forces, after a drone strike killed a French soldier.

4

'IRAN OIL INFRASTRUCTURE INTACT'

Iran's Fars news agency said there had been no damage to oil facilities after President Donald Trump said US strikes had destroyed only military targets there.

5

ISRAELI STRIKES

The Israeli army told people in an industrial zone in the west of Iran's northern city of Tabriz to leave ahead of military operations on Saturday.

6

US EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD ATTACKED

A drone struck the US Embassy in Baghdad on Saturday, an Iraqi security official said. A journalist saw smoke rising from the complex.

7

TRUMP SAYS IRAN 'DEFEATED'

US President Donald Trump said that Iran has been "totally defeated," despite Iranian officials pledging to continue the fight.

8

HAMAS PLEA

Palestinian movement Hamas called on Iran to refrain from targeting neighbouring countries, while affirming Tehran's right to defend itself.

9

QATAR EVACUATES 'KEY AREAS'

Qatar's interior ministry said that it was evacuating a number of "key areas" as Iran presses its retaliatory air campaign against Gulf countries.

10

IRAN TARGETS ISRAEL

Iran launched a fresh round of missiles towards Israel, but Israeli rescue workers said there were no reported casualties following the strikes.

US President Donald Trump threatened to strike the oil infrastructure of Iran's Kharg Island hub unless Tehran stopped attacking vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, a warning that could further roil markets coping with a historic supply disruption. Trump paired his ultimatum with a social media post saying the US had "totally obliterated" military targets on the island, the export terminal for 90% of Iran's oil shipments, which lies about 300 miles (500 km) northwest of the strait.

United States forces executed a large-scale precision strike on Kharg Island in Iran on Friday night, the US Central Command said on Saturday. "US forces successfully struck more than 90 Iranian military targets on Kharg Island, while preserving the oil infrastructure," CENTCOM said. The strike destroyed naval mine storage facilities, missile storage bunkers and multiple other military sites, the US military said in a post on X.

President Donald Trump threatened on Friday to strike the oil infrastructure of Iran's Kharg Island hub, unless Tehran stopped attacking vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. US strikes did not target Kharg's oil infrastructure, but "should Iran, or anyone else, do anything to interfere with the Free and Safe Passage of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz, I will immediately reconsider this decision," Trump wrote. As the war entered its third week, Iran, however, struck a defiant note, playing down the extent of the damage on Kharg while threatening to step up its use of more powerful weapons and warning parts of the United Arab Emirates were a legitimate target. "We declare to the leaders of the UAE that Iran considers it a legitimate right to defend its national sovereignty and territory by targeting the origin of American enemy missile launches in the shipping ports, docks and military shelters of the US hidden in some cities of the UAE," a spokesperson for Iran's Revolutionary Guards said.

In a statement, the IRGC urged residents in the UAE to evacuate ports, docks and US military shelters to avoid civilian casualties. Nine ballistic missiles and 33 drones were launched from Iran towards the UAE on Saturday, the Ministry of Defence said, making a total of 294 ballistic missiles, 15 cruise missiles and 1,600 drones launched from Iran since the war started. Behind the scenes, resentment had already been mounting in Gulf Arab capitals at being drawn into a war they neither initiated nor endorsed but are now paying for economically and militarily, regional sources have said.

Iran also vowed to increase its usage of upgraded weapons, particularly ballistic missiles and other missiles with greater destructive power, a defence ministry spokesperson was quoted as saying in state media. Oil exports from Kharg Island were continuing normally despite the US attack, a senior provincial governor was quoted.

Trump told reporters the US Navy will "soon" start escorting tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, a conduit for 20% of the world's fossil energy supplies. Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, who replaced his slain father, has said the strategic waterway should remain closed as a tool of pressure.

Some oil loading operations have been suspended in the UAE's Fujairah emirate, a major bunkering hub after a fire broke out there on Saturday.

The fire occurred after debris fell during the interception of a drone, but no injuries were reported, the emirate's media office said. — Reuters

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US strikes did not target Kharg's oil infrastructure, but should Iran, or anyone else, do anything to interfere with the Free and Safe Passage of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz, I will immediately reconsider this decision.

DONALD TRUMP

”

We declare to the leaders of the UAE that Iran considers it a legitimate right to defend its national sovereignty and territory by targeting the origin of American enemy missile launches in the shipping ports, docks and military shelters

IRAN'S REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS

IRAN SIGNALS DEFIANCE AS TRUMP THREATENS TO HIT OIL NETWORK

US STRIKES MORE THAN

90

IRANIAN MILITARY TARGETS ON KHARG ISLAND

Smoke rises from the direction of an energy installation in the Gulf emirate of Fujairah. — AFP

Two India-bound tankers cross Strait of Hormuz

NEW DELHI: Two Indian-flagged tankers carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) have safely passed through the Strait of Hormuz, India's shipping ministry said on Saturday, marking a rare exception in the critical naval chokepoint disrupted by the Mideast war. "They crossed the Strait of Hormuz early morning safely and are en route to India," Rajesh Kumar Sinha, India's special secretary of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, told reporters at a news briefing in New Delhi on Saturday.

The tankers "Shivalik" and "Nanda Devi", carrying around 92,700 metric tonnes of LPG, are expected to arrive in the next couple of days and are bound for the western ports of Mundra and Kandla. India is the world's fourth-largest buyer of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and second-largest buyer of LPG, which is used for cooking and predominantly sourced from the Middle East. As supplies dwindle, New Delhi ordered tighter controls on Tuesday over natural and cooking gas following import disruptions. — AFP



An LPG gas tanker at anchor as traffic is down in the Strait of Hormuz. — AFP



US soldiers inspect a site at the US Embassy, after a missile attack, in Baghdad. — Reuters

Strikes hit US Embassy in Baghdad

BAGHDAD: The US Embassy in Baghdad was hit by an attack following strikes that killed three members of a powerful group in the capital, security sources said. A cloud of black smoke rose above the US diplomatic mission shortly after the sound of explosions on Saturday morning. Two security officials said that the embassy complex was struck by a drone. The US Embassy did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the incident. It is the second time the US Embassy has come under attack in Baghdad since the start of the war. Several armed groups, which Washington has designated as "terrorist organisations", allied under an umbrella movement known as the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, have claimed daily drone and rocket attacks against US bases in Iraq and the region. Since the start of the war, several attacks targeting members of those groups across Iraq have been blamed on the US and Israel. — AFP

Macron urges Israel to hold 'direct talks' with Lebanon

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday said Lebanon was ready to engage in "direct talks" with Israel and offered to host negotiations in Paris. "The Lebanese government has signalled its willingness to engage in direct talks with Israel," he said on X, adding that "all sections of society must be represented in these talks." "France is ready to facilitate these talks by hosting them in Paris," Macron said.

"Everything must be done to prevent Lebanon from descending into chaos," Macron

added. "Hezbollah must immediately halt its reckless course. Israel must abandon plans for a large-scale offensive and cease its massive air strikes."

Meanwhile, Lebanon's health ministry said on Saturday that Israeli strikes had killed 26 paramedics and wounded 51 others since the conflict erupted between Israel and Hezbollah. It came after Lebanese authorities said an overnight Israeli strike killed 12 doctors, paramedics and nurses working at a healthcare centre in Burj Qalawiya. — AFP



UN peacekeepers drive past a destroyed healthcare centre building, in southern Lebanon. — AFP

Hamas urges Iran to stop 'targeting neighbouring countries'

GAZA: Palestinian movement Hamas called on Iran on Saturday to refrain from targeting neighbouring countries, while affirming Tehran's right to defend itself against Israel and the United States. In a rare appeal, Hamas also urged the international community to take steps to end the war that has gripped the Middle East since it began on February 28.

"While affirming the right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to this aggression by all available means in accordance with international norms and laws, the movement calls on the brothers in Iran to avoid targeting neighbouring countries," Hamas said in a statement, its first such public appeal to Tehran. Hamas, which fought a devastating two-year war with Israel in Gaza, also called on the international community to "work towards halting" the Middle East conflict immediately. The group previously condemned

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While affirming the right of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to this aggression by all available means in accordance with international norms and laws, the movement calls on the brothers in Iran to avoid targeting neighbouring countries

HAMAS

the killing of Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, on the first day of the war as a "heinous crime", openly acknowledging his longstanding support for the Palestinian movement. "He provided all forms of political, diplomatic and military support to our people, our cause and our resistance," the movement said soon after his death.

A Hamas official said that the movement has been in contact with Iranian officials regarding the Gulf attacks. "The Israeli occupation seeks to sow discord between Iran and its Arab and Islamic neighbours," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to brief the media. "Hamas's leadership has also reached out to officials in several countries, including Qatar, Türkiye and Iraq, urging them to work towards halting the American and Zionist aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added. — AFP



Palestinians pray outside the Al Talbani Mosque, destroyed by the Israeli military in Khan Yunis. — AFP

OPINION

The hidden psychological cost of war news



DR HAMED
AL SINAWI

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at SQU Hospital

WHEN the attack on Iran began, I happened to be on a short visit to Saudi Arabia. Between a busy schedule and the rhythm of Ramadhan, I had not been following social media or the news as closely as I usually do.

It was only when my older brother called and suggested that I interrupt my visit and return to Muscat immediately that I began to feel alarmed.

His concern caught me off guard. After the call, my mind quickly drifted towards worst-case scenarios: airports closing, flights being cancelled and the possibility of being stranded abroad.

Fortunately, I returned to Muscat as planned, and airport operations continued normally. Yet the episode left me reflecting on how quickly uncertainty and alarming news can trigger anxiety, even before anything has actually happened.

Psychologists tell us that, during times of crisis, our brains respond to perceived threats by activating the body's stress system. This reaction aims to protect us from danger.

However, in the modern information age, our brains often struggle to distinguish between direct danger and repeated exposure to distressing news. Watching violent images, reading alarming headlines and constantly refreshing news feeds can trigger the

same physiological responses as being in a threatening environment.

As a result, many people report symptoms such as anxiety, irritability, difficulty sleeping and an inability to concentrate. Some feel a persistent sense of fear about the future, while others experience emotional numbness after prolonged exposure to tragic events. These reactions are not signs of weakness; they are normal psychological responses to abnormal circumstances.

One of the most significant contributors to this phenomenon is social media.

Unlike traditional news cycles, digital platforms provide a constant stream of updates, images and opinions. Algorithms are designed to keep users engaged, often prioritising emotionally charged content.

Unfortunately, this can lead to a cycle in which we repeatedly expose ourselves to distressing information, amplifying our sense of fear and helplessness.

Psychologists, therefore, recommend setting boundaries around news consumption. Being informed is important, but continuous monitoring of distressing content can be harmful. Limiting news exposure to specific times of the day and relying on credible sources can help reduce psychological overload.

Maintaining daily routines helps us keep mental balance. Engaging in work, exercise,

Limiting news exposure to specific times of the day and relying on credible sources can help reduce psychological overload

hobbies and social activities can provide a sense of stability during uncertain times. These routines remind us that life continues even when global events feel overwhelming.

Talking with friends, family members, or colleagues about one's concerns can reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety. Humans are social beings, and sharing emotions is one of the most powerful ways of coping with stress.

Children require particular attention during times of conflict. Exposure to graphic images or intense discussions can cause confusion and fear. Adults should therefore explain events in a calm and age-appropriate way, while reassuring children that they are safe.

Persistent anxiety, severe sleep disturbances, or feelings of hopelessness may indicate that additional support is required. Mental health professionals can help individuals develop coping strategies and restore emotional balance.

While we cannot control global events, we can control how we engage with them. By limiting harmful exposure, maintaining routines and supporting one another, we can protect our mental well-being even during uncertain times.

In my opinion, caring for our psychological health is a necessity especially in an era when the world's crises can reach us with a single notification on our phones.

WAR DISRUPTS
GLOBAL SHIPPING

ISABEL MALSANG

As the war rages into its third week, the effective closure of the strategic Strait of Hormuz has upended not just the oil and gas industries but worldwide transport via container ship, the symbol of globalised trade.

Just ask French importer Emmanuel Benichou, who is nervously watching the war's impact on prices for the lawn furniture he imports from China and sells online.

"Our prices haven't gone up yet, but if the war goes on for months, we'll either have to cut our margins or raise our prices," he said.

The Middle East accounted for just 9.8 per cent of global container trade last year, according to British maritime consultancy Clarksons, cited by Bloomberg.

But in a world of intricate trade links, the chaos unleashed by the war has knock-on effects around the globe. Iran's de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz has blocked thousands of commercial ships, meaning many cannot reach the right port at the right time.

"There's merchandise sitting in India that's supposed to be delivered in Saudi Arabia," the chief executive of maritime transport giant CMA CGM, Rodolphe Saade, told French newspaper Le Figaro.

The fact that civilian ships have become targets in the Gulf exacerbates the situation.

Twenty commercial ships, among which nine oil tankers, have been attacked since the war began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, or have signalled incidents, according to agency monitoring with British maritime security group UKTMO and other sources.

And the surge in fuel prices caused by the blockade of the trait - the usual shipping lane for around 20 per cent of global oil and liquefied natural gas - is causing transport companies to impose surcharges.

Both CMA CGM and its competitor Hyundai Merchant Marine (HMM) have jacked up prices because of the war, Benichou said.

"HMM is charging an extra \$230 per container in emergency fuel surcharges," he said. "CMA CGM is charging a \$155 surcharge."

He is no stranger to the market. His business savvy, he said, consists of "knowing how to buy and how to transport".

His company Aosom imports around 400 containers a month. "I know how to take advantage of shipping opportunities," he said.

In peacetime, he jumps at the chance whenever shipping companies with spare capacity offer discounts in freight rates. — AFP

The strength of Oman's quiet influence, stability



KARIM
EASTERBROOK

The writer is a former Cambridge School Principal and author

Oman understands that avoiding escalation is not an abstract principle but a practical necessity. Calm is not just an ideal; it is also protection for its people. This explains why Oman maintains friendly relations with countries that openly oppose one another.

It speaks to Iran, works closely with the United States, keeps solid ties with its Gulf neighbours and maintains channels with others often excluded from dialogue. To some outsiders, this might look like fence-sitting.

In reality, Oman's goal is simple: prevent regional tensions from spilling over into instability at home. One of Oman's greatest strengths is that it does not seek power over others. It does not arrive at diplomatic meetings with demands, conditions, or hidden agendas. It does not attempt to export its political system or claim moral authority.

Countries trust Oman because it does not profit from their weakness or exploit their isolation. Its foreign policy is consistent, steady and carefully considered. Over time,

this builds confidence and trust — often more valuable than military strength. This is why Oman is able to act as a mediator when louder, more powerful states cannot.

Oman also understands the limits of force. Trying to dominate others is costly, risky and often creates lasting enemies. Oman has chosen a different path: focusing on stability at home and respectful engagement abroad. Dialogue may be slow, but it is more likely to reduce hostility than pressure, punishment, or isolation. In a world where many countries compete to be noticed, Oman works quietly. By keeping doors open, lowering tensions and treating all states with dignity, it has secured a role far larger than its size would suggest.

Oman matters not because it seeks to dominate but because it understands that long-term stability at home and abroad is built through restraint rather than force. Moreover, living here among Omanis, I feel both blessed and privileged to witness their wisdom, generosity and welcoming spirit every day.

Forgive them: For in their rage, they know not...



RAY PETERSEN
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The writer is a media consultant

It was Shakespeare, in ‘Hamlet,’ Act 5, Scene 2, whose titular character spurns his earlier fear of death, and, rejecting the possibility of knowing the future and what it holds for him, accepts the inevitability of his mortality, his eventual demise, saying, “Not a whit, we defy augury. There’s a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, ’tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all.” He ponders that even the most insignificant of events, such as the demise of a sparrow, has meaning, impact and consequence, somewhere, and to someone, or something. This may have been drawn, it seems, from the book of Mathew, which purports to suggest the authenticity of God’s ‘great plan,’ for us all, that nothing happens without a greater, divine purpose. He riddles that whether now, or later, “it will come,” and we must be ready when it does. I’m not certain that Shakespeare suggests we should simply go quietly when our time appears to be near, but that we should be at peace, spiritually.

In fact, another great literary entity, Welshman Dylan Thomas, urges us, “Do not go gentle into that good night,” that, “Old age should burn and rave at close of day;” and that we must, “Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” Thomas, in fact, was urging his ill father not to accept his mortality, but

that with every fibre of his being he should instead go, to “blaze like a meteor,” and not go gently. Ironically, before the next year was out, Thomas, his father, his premature son, and three of his closest friends would all have passed away.

Hamlet’s reflections come as he is forced to confront his own torrid treatment of Ophelia, telling her one moment, “I did love you once,” and then soon after, “I loved you not,” before exhorting her to “Get thee to a nunnery,” so she could not have children. It’s no wonder she went mad, is it? He was later, of course, to regret what would today be called mental cruelty towards, even ‘gaslighting’ of Ophelia, but not before she had descended into insanity, and eventually, either in a tragic accident or suicide, perish by drowning in a river. It very much sounds as if the fragilities and foibles of the younger generation of today are nothing new, doesn’t it? So, where is this literary diversion taking us? In a roundabout way, I’m reflecting on the realities, the future possibilities for the people of Iran, given that Trump and Hegseth are adamant they can deliver ‘freedom,’ to a long-suffering population, when I’m not so sure it is a genuine possibility.

Iran has been societally oppressive since the 1979 Revolution, when Ayatollah Khomeini created a 125,000 strong Iranian

Whether any of us know, “tis to come, or not to come,” surely this conflict, that will affect those inside and outside Iran much more than the Vietnam War did

Republican Guard Corps, based on Hitler’s ‘ShutzStaffel,’ with a mandate to prevent the established military forces from political activity (coups), to deny opportunities for foreign ‘interference’ in the Republic, and to crush ‘deviant,’ which meant all, political opposition to the Supreme Leader. Their control has proven absolute, and answerable only to that Supreme Leader, they have ‘ruled’ with an iron hand. However, notably since 2009, strengthened by the patronage of president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the IRGC has morphed into a largely autonomous social, political, and economic powerhouse that is beyond reason or control.

It is under this yolk that Iran has, for want of a better word, ‘evolved’ for almost half a century. Beaten, bowed, and deprived, they have suffered, but they only see what America left behind in Afghanistan and Iraq, political instability, death, destruction, warlords and tribal antagonism, so maybe they feel better with the devil they know? Certainly, the dancing in the streets will stop as soon as the music stops... but America knows all this... so why strike now? Whether any of us know, “tis to come, or not to come,” surely this conflict, that will affect those inside and outside Iran much more than the Vietnam War did, demanded more respect and introspection than the pomposity, petulance and hubris it got.

Leaders determined to prove Iran’s staying power in war

STUART WILLIAMS

Iran’s leaders are seeking to show the staying power of their nearly half-century-old clerical-based system and prove that it can withstand the killing of its longtime ruler and war with the United States and Israel, analysts said.

Thomas Juneau, a professor at the University of Ottawa, said that “the system is resilient and it remains able to implement well-developed contingency plans”.

“Continuity is built into the system and its institutions, and so far, there is no indication that the collapse of the Islamic republic is imminent.”

While he has been a low-profile figure rarely seen in public, Mojtaba Khamenei is seen by analysts as a hardliner close to the Revolutionary Guards who took a lead role in the suppression of protests.

“The selection of Mojtaba as his father’s successor is an additional indication that the regime’s leadership intends to remain defiant and does not plan to compromise on what it perceives as its core values and interests,” said Juneau.

In a show of defiance, several key surviving figures in the government and security forces took to the streets of Tehran on Friday for a rally even as explosions went off nearby.

Sporting dark sunglasses despite heavy rain, national security chief Ali Larijani said US President Donald Trump did not understand that “the more he presses, the stronger the nation’s determination will become”.

Judiciary chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei, meanwhile, barely flinched as an explosion rocked an area close to the demonstration, in images widely broadcast on state TV.

Not present was Mojtaba Khamenei, who has not been seen in public since his appointment.

Another notable absentee from the rally was parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who some commentators believe is at the heart of the war effort.

Torbjorn Soltvedt, associate director at risk analysis firm Verisk Maplecroft, said that the conflict was “locked in a dangerous pattern that’s unlikely to change anytime soon” as Iran hits back with its own attacks in the region that have sent energy prices surging.

“Right now, there are no clear off-ramps. Despite intense US and Israeli air strikes, Iran is able to target shipping and critical energy infrastructure with concerning regularity,” Soltvedt said.

Barbara Slavin, a fellow at the US-based Stimson Center, said Mojtaba Khamenei’s authority would “depend heavily on continued backing from the Revolutionary Guards whose political and economic influence has expanded dramatically over the past two decades”.

“It is unlikely Mojtaba will be predisposed to make any concessions” to the United States and Israel, she said, given their responsibility for the killing of Iranians and the destruction of Iran’s infrastructure. — AFP

A war for one man

BENJAMIN Netanyahu has spent much of his political life trying to make war with Iran seem not only inevitable but overdue. Thus, for the Israeli prime minister, the latest conflict was a victory the moment it began. Not because every consequence is good for Israel, but because he can sell almost every conceivable result as proof that he was right all along: that Iran had to be confronted, that force was unavoidable and that delay would only have made the threat more treacherous.

Netanyahu does not need a clean victory — he just needs a durable narrative. This is not just about distracting Israeli voters when they head to the polls this year. This is also about cementing an Israeli national security doctrine that always trumps diplomacy. He needs Israelis talking about Tehran rather than October 7, about existential enemies rather than political accountability or the unresolved disaster in Gaza — where, after nearly two and a half years of indiscriminate destruction, Hamas still remains — or the crisis in Lebanon, where the renewed conflict with Hezbollah shows no signs of waning.

A war with Iran does not erase those failures, but it does slide them into the background. It also moves the political conversation back onto emotional and political terrain where Netanyahu has always felt strongest: using fear with the claim that only he truly grasps the scale of the threat to Israel from Iran, and the (empty) promise that he can remove it through force.

For all these reasons, any day-after scenario is a win for Netanyahu. If Iran capitulates under military pressure, he can say that force succeeded where diplomacy failed. If Iran refuses but emerges militarily weaker, he can say that Israel bought time by degrading the country’s nuclear and missile capabilities. If the Iranian government survives but is bloodied, isolated and more consumed by internal tensions, he can claim that he has neutered an implacable foe. A prolonged period of chaos and bloodshed in Iran could be cast in Jerusalem not as a tragedy that might have



MAIRAV ZONSZEIN

The author is a contributing writer at The New York Times Opinion

Israel, having demonstrated overwhelming force, is once again mistaking domination for security and tactical escalation for a sustainable regional order — even as the region continues to burn

been prevented but as a problem to be managed from afar. Even a hardened Iranian regime can work into the narrative that the country must continue to be confronted.

Back in 2010 and 2011, when Netanyahu weighed striking Iran’s nuclear facilities, Israel’s security chief and top government advisers pushed back. They argued that the Israel Defence Forces were not prepared for such a strike and that it could undo the progress Israel had made in its covert campaign.

Fifteen years later, there are no longer dissenting voices present in Israel’s military or government, because Netanyahu has surrounded himself with loyalists and ideological politicians. And, in Washington, there is a trigger-happy president. Netanyahu thus got what he wanted: a joint US-Israeli campaign led by a willing White House, beginning with the spectacle of the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Launching a war against Iran last June helped lay the groundwork. Israel’s initial — and operationally impressive — intelligence and military success seems to have persuaded President Trump to join in and strike Iran’s key nuclear facilities with massive “bunker buster” bombs.

Eight months later, it is clear that Netanyahu did not want Trump to take the first exit ramp and leave the job unfinished.

The longer-term costs for Israel are not incidental, either. They go to the heart of the question that has animated Israeli politics for decades: whether or not military dominance in the Middle East can actually be converted into lasting security. An Israel that emerges from this war looking militarily unrivalled may also emerge even more politically isolated.

The risks of that resentment extend far beyond the Middle East. Even before the current war on Iran, which most Americans oppose, US public opinion had shifted dramatically on Israel. A Gallup poll found last month that Americans now sympathise more with Palestinians than with Israelis, by 41 per cent to 36 per cent, a striking reversal from recent years.

There is also broader erosion in support for Israel and for American military aid to the Jewish state. If

this war produces more civilian catastrophes in Iran or mounting military casualties and financial costs for the United States, that will likely further deteriorate the relationship.

An atmosphere of anger and blame against Israel also runs the risk of morphing into conspiratorial and antisemitic narratives about Jewish and Israeli power. That concern has grown higher with the American media’s preoccupation with the question of whether Israel pushed the United States into this war, and after comments made by US officials indicating that the American reasoning for entering the war was related to Israel’s intentions.

There is yet another danger that Israeli leaders are less willing to state openly, one that has to do with the long-term human consequences of the war — for Iranians, of course, but also for Israelis. Israel’s National Security Council has already warned that terrorist elements affiliated with Tehran are seeking to harm Israelis abroad, and Israeli authorities have increased security at embassies and in places where Israelis and Jews congregate. States can absorb strategic shocks; civilians can become casualties of the afterlife of wars in train stations, synagogues, airports and restaurants when terrorist cells or individuals choose softer targets for revenge. That phenomenon has already begun as a result of Israel’s actions in Gaza.

And yet, none of this means that Netanyahu and the Israeli state apparatus cannot claim success. On the contrary, that is precisely the problem.

They have manoeuvred into a political position in which, at least for the moment, declaring success no longer requires a stable peace, or even a more secure Israeli future. It requires only that Israel continue what analysts call “mowing the grass” — its repeated actions to degrade adversaries’ capabilities — and that no one in the Israeli establishment propose any alternative strategic vision.

Israel, having demonstrated overwhelming force, is once again mistaking domination for security and tactical escalation for a sustainable regional order — even as the region continues to burn.

SPORTS

SHORTTAKES



File picture of the championship in Kuwait 2024.

GULF BASKETBALL YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP IN QATAR POSTPONED

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, MARCH 14

The Oman Basketball Association has received an official letter from the Gulf Basketball Federation confirming the postponement of the Gulf Youth Basketball Championship, which was scheduled to be hosted by Qatar at the end of April. The decision came following a request from the Asian Basketball Federation to delay the tournament in light of current security developments that may affect travel and the safety of participating delegations.

In its letter, the Gulf federation stated that the decision was taken to ensure the safety of all participating teams, as well as the technical and administrative staff and fans, stressing that the security and well-being of participants remain a top priority for the organisers of the championship.

The federation added that the tournament will be postponed until the situation stabilises, after which coordination will take place with the Qatar Basketball Federation to determine a new date for hosting the event under suitable technical and organisational conditions.

It also noted that all national federations will be officially informed of the new schedule once it is confirmed, allowing teams sufficient time to prepare for the championship.

The postponement decision comes as a precautionary measure aimed at ensuring the highest levels of safety for all participants, reflecting the Gulf federation's commitment to organising sports competitions in a secure and stable environment.

CHINA WOMEN BEAT TAIWAN, S KOREA THRASH UZBEKISTAN



China Wang Yanwen (10) and teammate Shao Ziqin (23) look at the ball as it sails past. — AFP

China stayed in the hunt for a 10th Women's Asian Cup title with a 2-0 win over Taiwan after extra time in Perth on Saturday, booking a semi-final match against Australia, while South Korea claimed a comfortable 6-0 victory over Uzbekistan.

Defending champions China thought they had gone ahead in the 39th minute but Wang Shuang's effort was ruled out by VAR. With the teams level at 0-0 after 90 minutes, China finally got the breakthrough four minutes into extra time through Shao Ziqin.

China had a golden opportunity to add to their lead 10 minutes later but Wurigumula's penalty was saved. They got their second thanks to an own goal from Taiwan's Chen Ying-hui four minutes later.

SOUTH KOREA PUT SIX PAST UZBEKISTAN

South Korea found it much easier going in their quarter-final against Uzbekistan, taking the lead in the ninth minute through Son Hwa-yeon, whose shot from a tight angle took a heavy deflection and looped over goalkeeper Maftuna Jonimqulova.

Ten minutes later, defender Ko Yoo-jin picked up the ball on the edge of a crowded penalty area and scored with a curling effort to double South Korea's lead at Sydney's Stadium Australia.

— Reuters

Dhofar vanquish Bahla to boost survival hopes in JL

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MARCH 14

DHOFAR secured an important 2-1 victory over Bahla on Friday at Al Saada Sports Complex in Salalah, as the curtain came down on Round 17 of the Jindal League (JL).

Dhofar entered the contest with clear determination, making full use of home advantage and strong crowd support, and applied high pressure from the opening minutes in search of an early breakthrough that would give the team greater confidence.

The home side opened the scoring in the fourth minute after a well-worked passing move ended with Omar al Dahi delivering a precise cross into the box, where Sultan bin Bader al Marzooq rose to meet it with a fine header into the net.

After conceding, Bahla tried to regain their balance and find a quick way back into the match, but their attacking efforts lacked the cutting edge needed to trouble Dhofar's goal, with the hosts showing solid defensive organisation.

Sultan al Marzooq nearly doubled both his tally and his team's advantage in the 11th minute after capitalising on a defensive lapse inside the area, but Ghanaian defender Luke intervened at the right moment to clear the ball off the line.

Dhofar continued to enjoy the upper hand and maintained their organised attacking movements, adding a second goal in the 20th minute when Abdullah Zaher sent in a well-placed cross that was met by Hamood al Saadi, who guided a header into Bahla's net to underline Dhofar's superiority in the first half.

Despite falling two goals behind, Bahla did not give up and looked to reduce the deficit before the break. They came close in the 40th minute when Faisal al Balushi dribbled his way past Dhofar's defenders and fired a powerful shot, but Dhofar goalkeeper Mazin al Kassabi produced an excellent save to preserve his side's lead, as the first half ended with Dhofar 2-0 ahead.

Bahla showed improvement after the restart, raising the tempo and increasing the pressure through the midfield and wide areas in a bid to get back into the game. Their improvement paid off in the



Dhofar and Bahla match at Al Saada Sports Complex in Salalah.



Sultan bin Bader al Marzooq celebrates after putting Dhofar ahead against Bahla.

55th minute when Abdullah al Nabhani delivered a precise high ball from midfield

to Abdulsalam al Shukaili, who controlled it brilliantly before finishing confidently into the net.

The goal gave Bahla a strong psychological lift, but Dhofar did not retreat and instead looked for a third goal to seal the result. They almost found it in the 60th minute through a powerful low strike from Abdullah Zaher, but Bahla goalkeeper Salah al Hanthali was equal to it and made a fine save.

The match sprang back to life in the 89th minute when Bahla nearly grabbed an equaliser through Abdulsalam al Shukaili after a fine individual run and strong shot, but Mazin al Kassabi once again came to Dhofar's rescue with another important save.

With the win, Dhofar moved up to 17 points in 10th place, earning a crucial result at a sensitive stage of the season, while Bahla remained on 28 points in sixth place.

Seeb overcome Nizwa, Salalah beat Al Amerat in YBL

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MARCH 14

Seeb Club secured an important 58-49 win over Nizwa Club in the Oman Under-18 Youth Basketball League for the 2025-2026 season, while Salalah Club defeated Al Amerat Club 76-70 in the two matches held at the secondary hall of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher on Friday.

With these results, Salalah moved to 9 points, Seeb to 7 points, Nizwa to 9 points and Al Amerat to 7 points.

Seeb and Nizwa match was evenly balanced and highly competitive before Seeb managed to seal victory in the final quarter through a strong collective display and standout performances from several players. Abdulrahman al Maamari led Seeb's scoring with 14 points, followed by Azad al Bahlani with 13 points, while Azzan al Ajmi and Qaid al Kindi added 7 points



Action from Salalah's impressive win in the Oman Youth Basketball League. — PHOTO BY AMMAR AL MUSAFRI

each. Al Farouq al Husseinini contributed 5 points.

For Nizwa, Nasser Anbo Saidi and Al Mulham al Aboudani were the top scorers with 11 points each, while Adam al Hinai added 7 points.

Seeb held a slight edge in the first quarter, ending it ahead 10-9, before maintaining their narrow advantage in the second quarter to take a

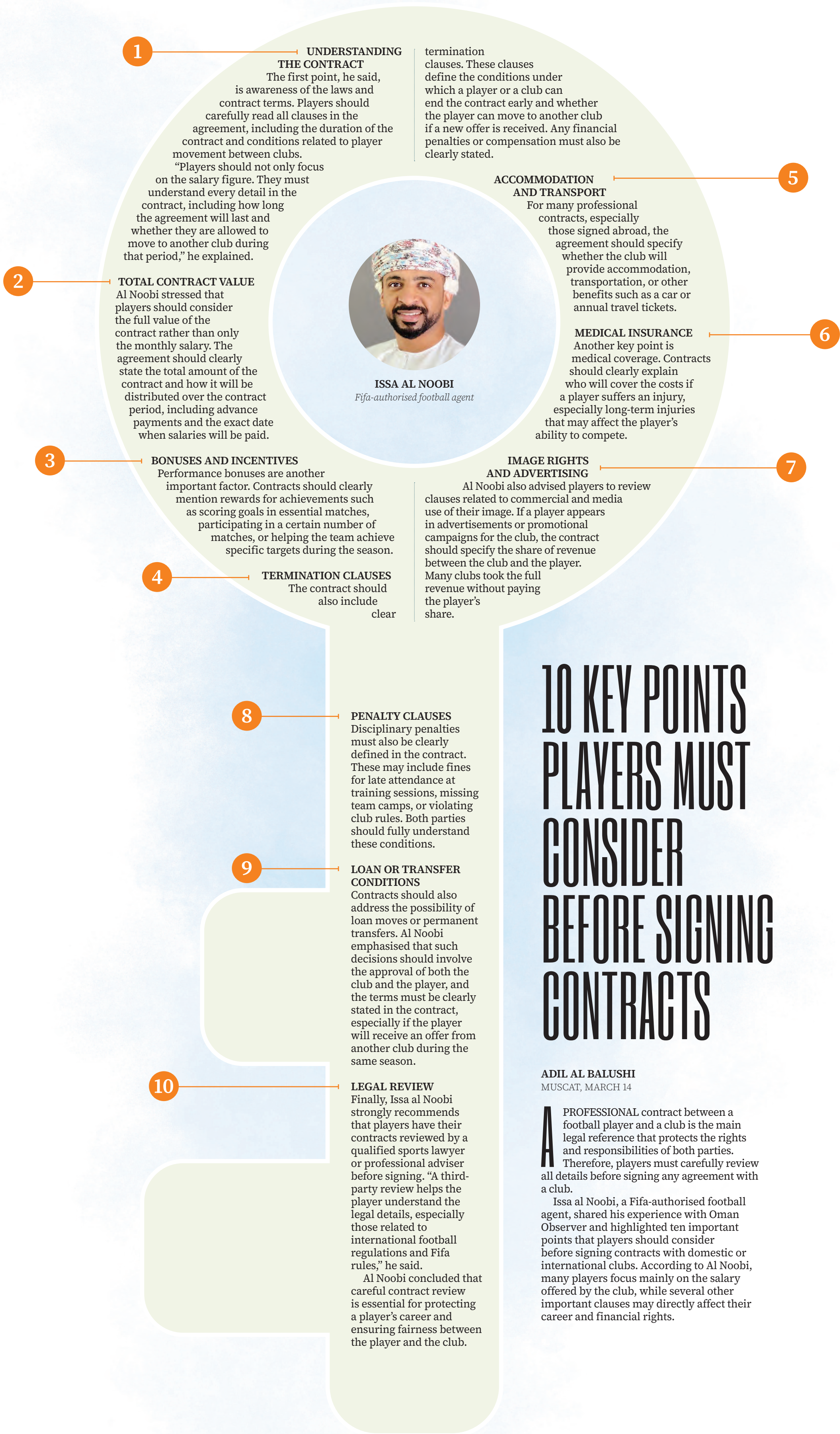
24-22 lead into halftime. In the third quarter, Nizwa regained momentum and overturned the score after putting up 16 points compared to Seeb's 13, moving ahead 38-37. However, Seeb responded strongly in the fourth quarter, asserting their attacking superiority by scoring 21 points against Nizwa's 11 to claim a 58-49 victory. The match was officiated by a refereeing crew consisting of Thani al Khalasi as first referee, Wafa al Samri as second referee and Taha al Amri as third referee. The scorers' table included Omaima al Hajri, Rayan al Dhabouni and Yaqoub al Nadabi.

In the second match, Salalah claimed a deserved 76-70 win over Al Amerat after a strong contest in which both teams produced a good technical performance. Mishaal Kafkaf starred for Salalah with 27 points, followed by Mahab al Balushi with 16 points, Qaisar al Balushi with 14 points and

Haitham Bait Mubarak with 8 points. For Al Amerat, Noah Brink impressed with 27 points, while Mazin al Alawi scored 17 points and Ibrahim al Balushi added 8 points.

Salalah started strongly and took the first quarter 17-13, before the closely contested second quarter ended with Salalah leading 38-36 at halftime. In the third quarter, Salalah imposed their advantage and widened the gap after scoring 22 points against Al Amerat's 15, ending the period in front 60-51. Although Al Amerat improved in the fourth quarter and scored 19 points compared to Salalah's 16, it was not enough, as Salalah held on to win 76-70.

The second match was officiated by Rashid al Mushaifiri as first referee, Ali al Sulaimani as second referee and Thabit al Hinai as third referee, while the scorers' table featured Ghalib al Hasani, Yaqoub al Nadabi and Hafez Awlad Ahmed.





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SABALENKA DOWNS NOSKOVA TO SET INDIAN WELLS TITLE REMATCH

ARYNA Sabalenka roared past Linda Noskova on Friday to book an Indian Wells title showdown with Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina.

Sabalenka beat 14th-ranked Czech Noskova 6-3, 6-4 and Rybakina downed Ukraine's Elina Svitolina 7-5, 6-4 to set up a mouth-watering rematch of their Melbourne final.

Rybakina also beat Sabalenka in the 2023 championship match in Indian Wells — where the Belarusian star has come up empty in two prior trips to the final.

“I want that match,” said Sabalenka, who has been in imperious form in the California desert this year.

She fired 37 winners with 11 aces, applying relentless pressure from the baseline in a commanding win over Noskova.

She broke the big-serving Czech twice as she powered to a 5-1 lead in



Elina Svitolina hits a shot against Elena Rybakina in her semifinal match.



Aryna Sabalenka in her the semi final match defeating Linda Noskova.

the opening set. There was a hiccup as she tried to serve out the set, and Sabalenka, who had lost just one point in her first three service games, was broken. Noskova kept the set alive with a battling hold in a marathon eighth game, fending off a

set point with a service winner and sealing the game with an ace.

Serving for the set again, Sabalenka opened with a double fault and went down 0-30, but a pair of big serves and a backhand winner brought her to set point, and she

claimed it with an ace.

Sabalenka broke Noskova to open the second and was on her way. Noskova fended off a second break, but she was unable to convert a break opportunity in the eighth game as Sabalenka brought it home, capping the victory with a forehand winner on her third match point.

“I think I really played great tennis,” Sabalenka said. “I was serving well. I was playing well. I like the way I put her under pressure on her serve.”

Rybakina, who is set to rise one spot to number two in the world on Monday, had too much firepower for ninth-ranked Svitolina, who was coming off a three-set win over two-time champion Iga Swiatek in the quarter-finals.

Rybakina recouped an early break in a tight first set and seized control with a break for 6-5, her steady pressure on Svitolina's serve provoking too many mistakes from the Ukrainian.

TOP-10 STREAK

Rybakina won seven straight games from 4-5 down in the first, breaking Svitolina twice on the way to a 4-0 lead in the second set.

The experienced Svitolina made her keep grinding, saving a match point on her own serve then saving another on the way to a break for 5-3 as she won three straight games.

But Rybakina made no mistake as she served for the match a second time, nabbing her 12th straight victory over top-10 opponents.

“Not, maybe, my best performance, but I'm super happy to win this match and be in the final again,” Rybakina said.

Although she trails Sabalenka 8-7 in their career head-to-head, she has won their last two meetings, in the title match of last year's WTA Finals and at the Australian Open — where she claimed her second Grand Slam crown. Despite those recent successes, Rybakina was expecting a battle on Sunday. — AFP



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BUSINESS

Construction of Duqm steel project advances

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, MAR 14

A key piece of hardware destined for the low-carbon steel project of Jindal Steel Duqm has arrived at the Port of Duqm, marking an important milestone in the construction of the landmark venture.

Well-known marine logistics provider Kanoo Shipping announced over the weekend that it oversaw the delivery of a mammoth 935-metric-tonne reactor for the Duqm steel project. The shipment marks the project's progression from heavy civil works into major equipment installation.

Jindal Steel Duqm, a subsidiary of India's Naveen Jindal Group, is developing a 5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) low-carbon steel complex in the Duqm Special Economic Zone (SEZAD) with an investment of about \$3 billion.

The project comprises two Direct Reduction Iron (DRI) plants, each with a capacity of 2.5 MTPA, operating on Energiron technology — a gas-based DRI process that converts iron-ore pellets or lump ore into high-purity metallic iron, known as DRI or hot-briquetted iron (HBI), by removing oxygen with a reducing gas made mainly from natural gas or hydrogen, instead of using coal in a blast furnace.

The technology was originally developed by Italian engineering firms Tenova and Danieli Group and is marketed jointly under the Energiron brand.

Last September, the Italian firms announced that they had secured firm orders for the construction and delivery of a second DRI plant for the Duqm project. Featuring zero-reformer Energiron



935 MT reactor arrives at Port of Duqm en route for Jindal Steel Duqm's site (Credit: Kanoo Shipping).

technology, the plant is designed to deliver an average metallisation rate of 94 per cent.

“This project will leverage Oman's natural gas and renewable-energy potential, converted into hydrogen. Carbon capture facilities — a naturally embedded feature of the technology — will allow for the reuse of captured carbon and will be integrated seamlessly into Jindal Steel Duqm's larger green steel complex”, the equipment manufacturers noted at the time.

In a recent interview with The Energy Year, a UK-based news portal, Harssha Shetty, CEO of Jindal Steel Oman, said the first phase of the Duqm project is planned for launch early in 2027.

“Our green steel project in Al Duqm will be operational by Q1 2027. We have already made significant progress towards reaching key milestones, released all long-

lead item orders and made payments to contractors.

We now have the right partners in place and on-site to ensure that the project begins production within the next 15 months”, he was quoted as saying.

SHORT TAKES



Natural gas demands in industries rose by 5.9%.

Gas output in Oman reaches 4.455 bcm

MUSCAT: Natural gas production in the Sultanate of Oman, including domestic output and imports, declined by 3.2 per cent by the end of January 2026 to reach 4.455 billion cubic metres (bcm), compared with 4.603 bcm during the same period in 2025, according to data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Associated gas production fell sharply by 17.4 per cent to 899.5 million cubic metres, down from 1.089 bcm recorded during the same period last year.

In contrast, non-associated gas production, including imports, increased by 1.2 per cent to 3.556 billion cubic metres, compared with 3.514 billion cubic metres in January 2025.

On the consumption side, demand for natural gas in industrial projects rose by 5.9 per cent to reach 2.566 billion cubic metres, compared with 2.423 billion cubic metres a year earlier. — ONA

MCDC launches SWIFT financial messaging service

MUSCAT: Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (MCDC) has launched the SWIFT financial messaging service to strengthen the infrastructure of the capital market sector in the Sultanate of Oman and enhance connectivity with global financial institutions.

The service provides a unified and secure communication channel for exchanging financial messages between market participants using internationally recognised encryption standards and protocols for data protection and confidentiality.

SWIFT serves as a standardised platform for financial messaging, enabling institutions to exchange financial instructions in a secure and consistent format.

By joining the network, Oman will connect to more than 11,000 financial institutions across over 200 countries, improving transparency and facilitating cross-border financial transactions.

The launch forms part of MCDC's five-year strategy for 2024–2028, which aims to automate financial processes, standardise operational procedures



MOHAMMED
BIN SAID AL
ABRI

CEO of Muscat
Clearing and
Depository Company.

and reduce risks associated with manual transactions.

The initiative also supports efforts to integrate Oman's capital market infrastructure with global financial systems.

The project will be implemented in two phases under the company's digital transformation programme. The first phase focuses on enabling the exchange of SWIFT messages between users and applications and is expected to be fully implemented by the second quarter of 2026.

The second phase will integrate SWIFT with financial applications and systems to establish a comprehensive end-to-end electronic transaction

network by the end of the year. Mohammed bin Said al Abri, Chief Executive Officer of Muscat Clearing and Depository Company, said the initiative forms part of broader efforts to strengthen the capital market's role in supporting Oman Vision 2040 and facilitating the upgrade of the Muscat Stock Exchange to emerging market status.

He added that the SWIFT service will provide secure operational solutions capable of handling large transaction volumes while improving communication between market participants, including custodians, settlement banks and regulatory institutions.

The system will also serve as a reliable backup communication channel in the event of operational disruptions.

MCDC recently announced plans to replace its current central depository system with a more advanced platform capable of supporting new financial products and integrating advanced global technologies such as SWIFT, thereby enhancing market efficiency and helping attract foreign investment to Oman.

— ONA



TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C invites interested companies to participate in the following tenders:

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (OMR)
NESC/2026/006	Candidate Competency Assessment Services Covering Leadership, Technical, and Behavioral Capabilities	29/03/2026	07/04/2026	Specialist	26.250
NESC/2026/007	Provision and Maintenance of Coffee Machines and Supply of Ingredients for 2 years	29/03/2026	07/04/2026	Specialist	26.250

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -					
Participation	• Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may obtain Tender documents. • The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. • The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply). • To obtain the tender document and payment procedure, please visit www.supply.nama.om , under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.				
Enquiries	• Any inquiry can be sent to procurement@supply.nama.om , using the inquiry form found in the tender document (05) Five working days before bid submission date. • Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.				
Tender Submission	• Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER and supplier guidelines available at NESC Website www.supply.nama.om , under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.				
Guarantee	• The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (1%) of the tender value valid for a period of not less than Ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE, Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C. • The hard copy of the bid bond should be deposited in the Tender Box at the Nama Electricity Supply Company Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 10:00 AM on the day specified for bid submission or any extended deadline. • Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.				
Terms and Conditions	• The Tender shall be valid for a period of (90) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. • If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. • NESC is not bound to accept the lowest (or highest) Tenderer. • A certificate confirming a minimum Omanization level of 30% within the organization is obligatory, bidder who fails to submit this certificate will result in exclusion from the tender evaluation process. • Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization • NESC gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. • Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.				
Incentives and exemptions	• Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from Tender fees • Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from bid bond requirements. • Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from registration fees on business opportunities platform and supplier registration with Nama Group.				



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records@supply.nama.om | www.supply.nama.om



ADVERTORIALS

SHORT TAKES



The evening brought together a distinguished group of journalists, editors and media professionals.

Sohar International hosts Iftar gathering for media community

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its continued commitment to nurturing meaningful partnerships across key sectors, Sohar International recently hosted a dedicated Ramadhan Iftar gathering for the media community in Muscat.

The special evening brought together a distinguished group of journalists, editors, media professionals, as well as social media influencers and content creators representing leading Arabic and English publications and digital platforms, underscoring the Bank’s deep appreciation for the media’s role as a trusted partner in communicating its journey, milestones and vision for the future.

Held in a warm and welcoming Ramadhan setting, the gathering served as an opportunity for Sohar International to express its gratitude to media partners who have consistently supported the Bank’s communications and storytelling efforts. Over the years, the media has played a pivotal role in conveying Sohar International’s growth story, amplifying its strategic initiatives and highlighting its contributions to Oman’s rapidly evolving financial sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulwahid bin Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, stated: “Since its inception, Sohar International has viewed meaningful engagement with the media as an essential pillar of transparency and trust.

The media continues to play a vital role in communicating the Bank’s transformation journey and highlighting the broader economic progress taking place across the Sultanate of Oman. Our relationship with journalists, editors and content creators extends beyond traditional communication — it represents a strategic partnership grounded in mutual respect and a shared commitment to informing the public and supporting national development.

As Sohar International continues to advance its growth and innovation agenda, we deeply value the media’s role in shaping constructive dialogue that contributes to Oman’s future”.

The evening reflected the spirit of the Holy Month, bringing together media representatives and the Bank’s leadership in a warm and engaging setting that encouraged meaningful dialogue and connection.

Guests enjoyed a curated Iftar experience accompanied by a live musical performance, while the gathering also served as a platform to strengthen collaboration, foster open communication and further reinforce Sohar International’s longstanding partnership with the media community.

Al Mouj Muscat concludes young entrepreneur market

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat has successfully concluded the Young Entrepreneur Market, a three-day Ramadhan initiative that brought together 51 ambitious young entrepreneurs aged 11 to 18 at

The Walk, Al Marsa Plaza. Attracting more than 30,000 visitors, the initiative transformed a community destination into a live commercial incubator, demonstrating the growing confidence, commercial acumen and innovation potential of Oman’s emerging generation.

Officially inaugurated on its opening evening by Halima bint Rashid al Zari, Chairperson of the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED), the market blended cultural celebration with enterprise, reinforcing the role of entrepreneurship as both an



Three-day Ramadhan marketplace attracts 30,000 visitors and reinforces youth enterprise as a national priority.

economic driver and a community-building force. Over three consecutive evenings, participants

operated real businesses within a structured marketplace environment: managing pricing

Unmatched Ramadhan rewards with Toyota Yaris

THE holy month brings with it the perfect opportunity to drive home the stylish and efficient Toyota Yaris, as Saud Bahwan Automotive presents the “Toyota’s Biggest Excitement” campaign.

This limited-time window offers the most rewarding path to ownership, combining the Yaris’s world-class engineering with a spectacular array of seasonal benefits. For those seeking a vehicle that blends sporty energy with significant value, there is no better time than now to experience the Yaris.

The Ramadhan benefits (Terms & Conditions Apply) are structured to provide unmatched value throughout the ownership journey. The Zero Per cent Interest offer for three years makes the Yaris more accessible than ever, complemented by a comprehensive 5-year/50,000 km service package to ensure total peace of mind for the road ahead.

Customers also receive one year of free insurance, one year of registration and RO 50 in Thiqah Loyalty Points.

Adding to the excitement of the season, every Yaris purchase during the campaign period — running until April 8, 2026 — offers a chance to win in spectacular raffles.

This includes the Grand Raffle for a legendary Toyota Supra GR and a Weekly Raffle where five lucky buyers will drive home a brand-new Toyota Urban Cruiser GL.

The Toyota Yaris stands out with a sleek, aerodynamic profile and a bold front fascia featuring a distinctive grille and sharp headlamps. Its design strikes a perfect balance between sporty energy and refined sophistication, complemented by a sculpted rear with wraparound tail lamps.

Under the hood, the Yaris is powered by a responsive 1.5-litre Dual VVT-i engine, delivering 104 HP paired with a smooth CVT



The Toyota Yaris stands out with a sleek, aerodynamic profile and a bold front fascia featuring a distinctive grille and sharp headlamps.

automatic transmission.

This ensures spirited acceleration and exceptional fuel efficiency for both city traffic and open roads.

Inside, the Yaris prioritises a premium experience with a spacious cabin, ample legroom and a modern 8-inch infotainment system paired with a 4-speaker audio setup.

The interior is designed for versatility, making it ideal for family trips and daily errands alike. Safety is central to the Yaris, with the top-of-the-line 1.5 Limited featuring Toyota Safety Sense, including a Pre-Collision System, Adaptive Cruise Control and Lane Departure Alert.

Standard safety across the range includes multiple airbags, Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake Force Distribution (EBD), Vehicle Stability Control (VSC) and Tyre Pressure Monitoring (TPMS).

With these exclusive benefits and high-end features, this Ramadhan stands as the premier moment to visit a Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom and secure a Toyota Yaris.

Specifications of vehicle imported from Toyota Motor Corporation are as per the GSO Conformity Certificate applicable to the model/grade. Parameters such as vehicle weight, dimensions & fuel economy could vary from the GSO Conformity Certificate due to fitment of dealer installed accessories. Pictures and colours shown may differ from actual specifications.

For the latest Press Releases, Test Drive requests and more, please visit [www.toyotaoman.com](#), [www.youtube.com/toyotaoman](#), [www.facebook.com/toyotaoman](#), and [instagram.com/toyotaomanofficial/](#).

NBO makes Eidiya planning easier

MUSCAT: As part of its preparations for the upcoming Eid Al Fitr, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) has relaunched its Eid note service, enabling customers to pre-book their preferred denominations through the NBO app while also accessing cash through its dedicated Eid Note Dispensing Machines.

The initiative is designed to provide a smooth, innovative and convenient experience during the busy pre-Eid period.

Starting from March 15-17, customers can pre-book their Eid notes directly through the NBO app and collect them from their selected branch between March 15-17.



Customers can simply log in to the NBO app, select “Eid Notes Booking”, choose their preferred denominations and collection branch.

Customers can simply log in to the NBO app, select “Eid Notes Booking”, choose their preferred denominations and collection branch; and confirm the request.

Available denominations for pre-booking include 100 baisa, 500 baisa, RO 1, RO 5 and RO 10 notes. Bookings will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, with limited quantities available per denomination

Accessible using NBO debit cards, NBO’s Eid Note Dispensing Machines will be available at five different branches including Al Athaiba HQ, Suhar, New Salalah, Bahla and Ibra.

Commenting on the service, Dr Ali bin Salim al Shekaili — Assistant General Manager and Head of Digital and E-Channels — said: “Eidiya is a meaningful tradition that brings joy to families and communities.

By offering booking through the NBO app alongside our Eid Note Dispensing Machines, we are providing customers with a simple and convenient way to prepare for Eid while making everyday banking easier”.

By combining digital booking with convenient on-ground access, NBO continues to deliver practical, customer-focused solutions that enhance the banking experience during important occasions.

SHORTTAKES



The figure covers spending related to transportation, accommodation and tourist excursions.

CHARTER FLIGHTS IN OMAN GENERATE 30 MILLION TOURISM INCOME

MUSCAT: The charter aviation sector generated more than RO 30 million in economic returns during the 2025 tourist season in the Sultanate of Oman, according to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

The revenue figure covers spending related to accommodation, transportation and tourist excursions, excluding airport-related charges such as aircraft landing, parking and refuelling fees. Abdullah bin Saif al Saadi, Head of the Maritime and Air Tourism Department at the ministry, said

Charter flight segment supports the ministry's efforts to expand international tourism by diversifying source markets and attracting visitors from a broader range of countries.

the season witnessed the operation of 588 charter flights, reflecting strong growth in operational activity and rising demand for travel to Oman. Passenger numbers on charter flights during the same period reached around 93,000 travellers.

Al Saadi noted that the charter flight segment supports the ministry's efforts to expand

international tourism by diversifying source markets and attracting visitors from a broader range of countries.

He added that the sector plays an important role in promoting Oman's heritage sites and tourism destinations while contributing to higher hotel occupancy and stronger economic returns.

The Polish market ranked first among source markets for charter flights, followed by the Czech Republic and Italy. Promotional campaigns have also succeeded in attracting new markets such as Russia and Belarus. The ministry is also encouraging investment in tourism infrastructure, particularly beachfront hotels, to meet the needs of charter flight travellers. — ONA

Al Buraimi Industrial City attracts 30m projects

AL Buraimi Industrial City, managed by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), attracted 14 investment projects worth a combined RO 30 million during 2025.

The industrial city received around 17 investment applications during the year, with approved projects spanning several sectors including battery manufacturing, iron production and tyre recycling.

Saeed bin Abdullah al Balushi, Director General of Al Buraimi Industrial City, said the cumulative investment value approved in the city reached about RO 267.2 million by the end of the first half of 2025. The total leased area now exceeds 1.7 million square metres out of more than 4.5 million square metres of developed and leasable land.

Madayn is also implementing several infrastructure projects within the National Industrial Cities Development Programme, including a new addressing system designed to name and number streets and roundabouts within the industrial city.

The initiative is expected to improve traffic management and facilitate access for emergency services, visitors and service vehicles. The authority has also announced



The industrial city received around 17 investment applications during the year.

an investment opportunity to develop an integrated fuel station in the second zone of the industrial city on an area of around 10,000 square metres.

The project will include fuelling facilities, a diesel station, retail outlets, a motel, vehicle maintenance



SAEED BIN ABDULLAH AL BALUSHI

Director General of Al Buraimi Industrial City.

services and a car wash. Meanwhile, work is continuing on the dual carriageway project linking Mahadha and Al Buraimi, which will serve as a key transport artery connecting the Wilayat of Mahadha with Al Buraimi Governorate.

The road will link the first and second phases of Al Buraimi

Industrial City, facilitating movement for investors and strengthening integration with the Special Economic Zone in Al Rawdah in Mahadha.

The industrial city also hosts the "Masar" Services Centre, which operates as a one-stop investment window enabling investors to obtain permits, approvals and licences through a unified system, further enhancing the investment environment in Al Buraimi Governorate and the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA

HOTEL GUESTS RISE AS TOURISM STRENGTHENS IN OMAN

MUSCAT: The number of guests staying in classified hotels rated between three and five stars in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 6.1 per cent by the end of January 2026 to reach 242,106 guests, compared to 228,183 guests during the same period in 2025, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The number of Omani guests rose by 12.7 per cent to 76,709, while

visitors from other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries declined by 7.3 per cent to 13,478. Guests from other Arab countries recorded a marginal increase of 0.8 per cent to reach 8,306. Visitors from Asian countries grew by 9.4 per cent to 33,232, while the number of guests from Africa declined slightly by 0.5 per cent to 1,715.

European guests continued to account for the largest share among

international visitors, increasing by 2.8 per cent to reach 89,173. Visitors from the Americas rose by 11.1 per cent to 8,790, while arrivals from Oceania declined by 41.7 per cent to 2,747.

Hotel revenues also recorded strong growth, rising by 29.1 per cent to RO 35.95 million by the end of January 2026, compared with RO 27.85 million during the same period in 2025. — ONA

Airport traffic in Oman rises 8.8 per cent in January

MUSCAT: Passenger traffic through the Sultanate of Oman's airports grew by 8.8 per cent by the end of January 2026, reaching 1,452,911 passengers compared with 1,334,825 during the same period in 2025, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

International flights across the country's airports totalled 8,032 by the end of January, marking a 2.7 per cent increase from 7,820 flights a year earlier. At Muscat International Airport, international flights reached 7,594, up 2.5 per cent from 7,410 flights in January 2025. Passenger numbers on these flights rose 7.2 per cent to 1,189,938, compared with 1,109,650 a year



International flights across the country's airports totalled 8,032 by the end of January.

earlier. Domestic flights through Muscat International Airport reached 773 during the same period, while the number of domestic passengers increased to 107,423 from 93,895, representing growth of 14.4 per cent.

Salalah Airport also recorded strong growth, with total international and domestic flights rising 11.4 per cent to 916 flights, compared with 822 flights in January 2025.

Passenger numbers increased by 19.2 per cent to 150,785, up from 126,506. International flights at Salalah reached 428, while domestic flights totalled 488.

Suhar Airport handled 18 international and domestic flights

by the end of January, compared with 10 flights during the same period last year, representing an 80 per cent increase.

At Duqm Airport, domestic flights totalled 52 by the end of January, while passenger numbers declined slightly by 0.5 per cent to 4,749, compared with 4,774 during the same period in 2025.

Data also showed that Omani nationals accounted for the largest share of passenger traffic at Muscat International Airport during January 2026, with 195,657 passengers, including 98,339 arrivals and 97,318 departures. Indian nationals ranked second with 187,904 passengers, followed by Pakistani nationals with 48,546 passengers. — ONA

CURRENCY VOLATILITY

Japan, Korea warn over currency slide



Japan and South Korea have voiced concern over the sharp depreciation of the yen and the Korean won, pledging readiness to act against excessive foreign-exchange volatility.

Their finance ministers said authorities will closely monitor currency markets and take appropriate action if needed. The declines follow rising global tensions and a stronger US dollar, driven partly by safe-haven demand. — Reuters

AUTO TRADE

US auto groups oppose Chinese entry



Major US automotive trade groups have urged the government to block Chinese carmakers from entering the American market. In a letter, the groups warned that China's expansion in global automotive manufacturing threatens US competitiveness and national security.

They called for maintaining a planned cybersecurity rule expected to restrict Chinese vehicles. — Reuters

OIL MARKETS

Oil rises as Hormuz stays closed



Crude prices rose as the Strait of Hormuz remained closed amidst ongoing regional conflict. Brent crude settled at \$103.14 a barrel while US West Texas Intermediate reached \$98.71.

Prices initially dipped following an incorrect report that a tanker had crossed the strait. After confirmation that the vessel had departed from Oman and not transited Hormuz, oil markets rebounded strongly. — Reuters

OPINION

Economic diplomacy and its role in supporting the economy



DR HILAL AL SAWAI

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert

ECONOMIC diplomacy is becoming more prominent due to the reliance of countries on one another economically. Countries need to protect their economies and one of the best ways to do that is through economic diplomacy, which is using various methods to advance their economic goals. These economic goals may include, but are not limited to, creating more trade and investment opportunities, providing more jobs and increasing the overall economic stability of the nation. Competition within the global economic landscape has made the need for economic diplomacy to protect and grow people's economies more imminent. Economic diplomacy has many facets and one of the more prominent ones is promoting more trade within a country and between other countries. Trade diplomacy has been able to stimulate growth within a country and also has the potential to foster growth in another country. Trade diplomacy has also been able to lead to the development of value chains, which promote economic stability in a nation. More developed value chains also promote the creation of more jobs in a nation. Trade diplomacy can also help national producers reach global consumers, which in turn can help countries develop their economies in various sectors. Investment made by foreign entities in a business in the host country known as Foreign Direct Investment, or FDI, significantly affects the nature of business

in a host country of an investing country. Diplomatic missions act as business promoters by advertising potential investment opportunities. Building trust, negotiating transparency of legislation and securing investment protection agreements are ways to reassure governments of the investment safeguards. Countries in various stages of development depend on the FDI received, as found, in all instances, the FDI received created a positive effect on the economy of the country by stimulating development of a new, or significantly, enhancing the existing, economic system. Economic diplomacy is critical in meeting the development goals; and fosters innovation and the needed changes to modernise the economy through the deliberate productive use of the most recent technologies. Economic diplomacy tackles securing vital resources and reinforcing supply chain stability also. Diplomatic activity is the best means of developing reliable access points to resources. Active diplomacy provides governments with the best means of securing contract agreements for the supply of goods and services on a range of economically viable and sustainable alternatives. Establishing economically viable and sustainable alternative sources of supply, coupled with the establishment of reliable economic partnerships to support rapid isolation, is the most modern means of supply to nations faced with economic and commercial disruptions of modern systems, from international financial crises,

Trade diplomacy has been able to stimulate growth within a country and also has the potential to foster growth in another country. Trade diplomacy has also been able to lead to the development of value chains, which promote economic stability in a nation.

pandemics, or military conflicts. The exchange of technology and knowledge is also an important part of economic diplomacy. Collaborative efforts in research, innovation and education can boost a nation's human capital and tech prowess. Countries can advance their skillsets, digital technologies and sustainable development through international collaboration. This boosts productivity and enables national industries to compete in knowledge economies. Since innovation is a primary catalyst of global economic growth, a technology transfer-focused diplomacy is critical. Economic diplomacy is also fundamental to how a country enhances its global economic standing and soft power. Participating in international bodies, trade and economic summits aids in the establishment of global economic governance and the promotion of policies which align with the participant's development goals. Building a positive reputation internationally boosts investor confidence, enhances tourism and spurs the trade of ideas which economically benefits the country. Economic diplomacy may succeed through the effective collaboration of relevant government agencies, the private sector and civil society. Transparent policies, effective governance and a clear strategic vision are critical to transforming diplomatic initiatives into economic gains. Countries must also reflect their national interests with global ones, advocating for economic development that is sustainable and tackles the social and environmental issues of the world.

WIND TURBINES COULD UNLOCK STRONGER WINDS HIGH ABOVE EARTH

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

As the global race to expand renewable energy accelerates, engineers and scientists are exploring a new frontier in wind power: airborne wind energy systems, often described as flying wind turbines. By harnessing winds hundreds of metres above the Earth's surface, these innovative systems could unlock vast new renewable energy potential. Unlike conventional wind turbines that depend on tall towers and large rotating blades close to the ground, airborne wind energy systems rely on tethered drones, kites or gliders that operate at higher altitudes. These devices are connected to a ground station through a strong cable, or tether, which transfers the energy generated in the air to a generator on the ground. The idea behind airborne wind energy is based on a simple scientific principle. Wind speeds generally increase with altitude. At heights between 300 and 500 metres, winds are often stronger, steadier and less affected by obstacles such as buildings, hills or terrain. By accessing these high altitude wind currents, airborne systems could generate more electricity with significantly less material than traditional wind turbines. Several different designs are currently being tested. Some systems use kite like structures that move in a figure eight pattern in the sky. As the kite pulls on the tether, the tension drives a generator located on the ground. Other designs use lightweight drones equipped with small turbines that generate electricity while flying in circular paths. One of the most widely known experiments in airborne wind energy was developed by Makani, a company originally backed by Alphabet, the parent company of Google. Makani's prototype resembled a small aircraft with multiple rotors mounted along its wings. As the aircraft flew in wide loops while attached to a tether, its turbines produced electricity that was transmitted through the cable to a ground station. Although Makani eventually shut down in 2020, the project demonstrated the technical feasibility of airborne wind generation and sparked growing interest across the renewable energy sector. Several startups and research groups around the world have since continued developing the technology. Companies in Europe, including those in Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, are testing kite based systems designed for both onshore and offshore applications.

The strategic weight of the middle ground

LAST week, this column argued that Oman's strength in a troubled region lies in continuity — in its ability to keep trade moving and economic life functioning even when tensions around it begin to rise. That still holds true. But the past few days have also exposed something more difficult about the position Oman occupies. Continuity is not just an advantage. It comes with its own weight. For years, Oman has held a role in the region that few others have been able to sustain. When rivals stop talking, Muscat is often one of the last places where a conversation can still continue quietly in the background. It is not the kind of diplomacy that seeks attention. Most of the time, it works away from the spotlight. But that does not make it any less important. Still, there is a paradox here. The country trying to keep a channel open can also find itself closest to the pressure created by the same conflict it is trying to calm. That is not a flaw in diplomacy. It is often part of the job. A mediator is never completely outside the problem. It stands near the middle of it. In Oman's case, that middle position is not only political. It is economic too. Over the past two decades, Oman has built much of its development story around openness — around ports, logistics, trade routes and the idea that the country can connect markets even when the wider region becomes more difficult. Salalah and Al Duqm are part of that story. So is Oman's geography at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz. The idea behind all this has always been simple: politics may become complicated, but economic life must continue. Ships must move. Energy must



Oman has built much of its development story around openness — around ports, logistics and trade routes.



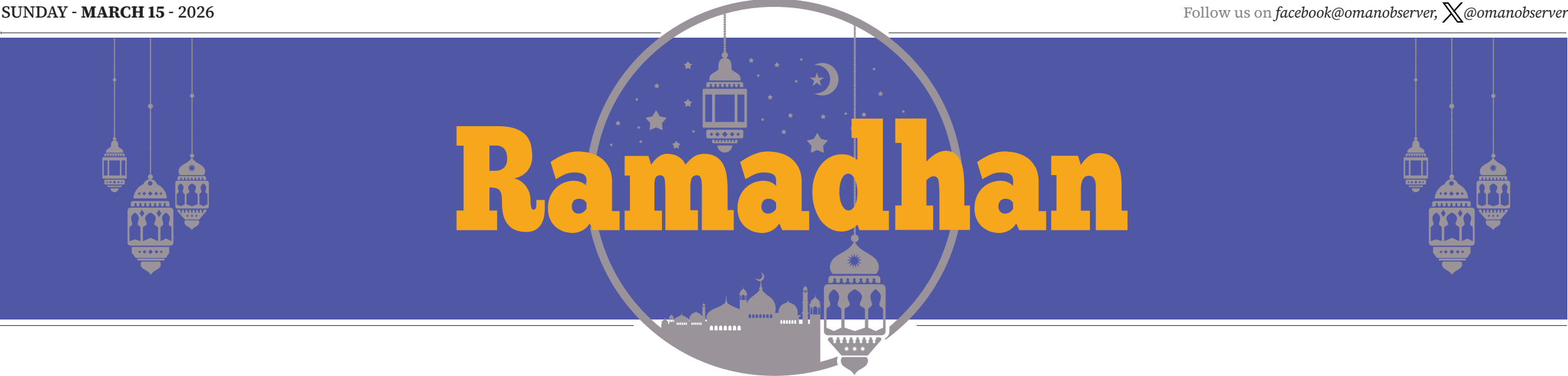
QASIM AL MAASHANI

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

For years, Oman has held a role in the region that few others have been able to sustain. When rivals stop talking, Muscat is often one of the last places where a conversation can still continue quietly in the background.

flow. Trade must keep going. In a region where instability has never been far away, that kind of predictability has real value. But predictability does not rest on infrastructure alone. It rests on confidence. Shipping companies, insurers and investors do not only look at what exists on the ground. They also look at what they believe is likely to happen next. They ask whether trade routes will remain dependable, whether commercial systems will keep working and whether the wider environment still feels manageable. Once those expectations begin to shift, the effect is not always dramatic at first. Ports may stay open. Cargo may keep moving. On the surface, little may seem to change. But underneath, the calculations begin to move. Insurance premiums are reviewed. Shipping decisions become more cautious. Investors start asking harder questions. The visible economy may still be working, but the invisible logic behind it becomes more careful. That is the quieter economic side of geopolitical tension. Markets do not react only to events. They react to what those

events might mean. And this is where the challenge becomes more serious. Continuity must also be protected economically, not just described politically. For Oman, this creates a delicate balancing act. The country's diplomatic approach has long been centred on keeping dialogue alive, particularly when communication between actors such as Iran and the United States becomes difficult. That role has given Muscat credibility that is widely recognised. But diplomacy does not erase geography. Oman remains close to some of the world's most sensitive trade corridors and regional fault lines. The same openness that makes the country valuable as a place for dialogue and commerce also places it close to the pressure created by regional instability. That is the reality of standing in the middle. Bridges are useful structures. They allow movement where division would otherwise bring everything to a halt. They connect places that might otherwise remain cut off from one another. But bridges also carry weight. And in a region where tensions can rise quickly, the countries that build those bridges sometimes feel that weight first. For Oman, the challenge has never been simply to stay out of regional conflict. The deeper challenge has been to preserve stability, protect economic confidence and maintain diplomatic balance while living in a part of the world that rarely stays still for long. That has never been easy. But it is one of the reasons Oman continues to matter. Because in a region shaped by sharp alignments and loud politics, the middle ground is not always comfortable. It is simply necessary.



How to break your fast comfortably



body to recognise fullness signals more naturally and helps prevent overeating.

Heavy meals immediately at iftar can also contribute to feelings of tiredness. When the body suddenly receives a large amount of rich or fried foods, it directs much of its energy towards digestion. This can create the familiar feeling of sleepiness that many people experience after eating. A balanced meal taken gradually can help maintain a steadier level of energy through the evening.

Hydration is another key element of a comfortable iftar. Drinking water gradually between iftar and suhoor allows the body to restore fluid balance more effectively than drinking large amounts at once. When hydration is steady, people often notice better energy levels and less fatigue the following day.

Ramadhan is not only a time of spiritual reflection but also an opportunity to reconnect with mindful eating habits. By approaching iftar with calmness, moderation and awareness, the body can transition smoothly from fasting to nourishment. This simple shift in habit often turns iftar into a more comfortable and energising experience throughout the month.



MOHAMED AL BATTASHI
MUSCAT, MARCH 14

AFTER long hours of fasting, the body enters a calm metabolic state where digestion slows down and energy is conserved. Because of this, the first moments of breaking the fast are important. Many people rush to eat large amounts of food immediately at iftar, but this sudden load can overwhelm the stomach and lead to discomfort, heaviness, or fatigue.

A gentle start to iftar often makes a noticeable difference. Beginning with water helps the body rehydrate after hours without fluids and a small portion of food allows the digestive system to gradually “wake up”. When food enters the stomach slowly, digestive enzymes and stomach acids begin working smoothly, reducing the chances of bloating or stomach discomfort.

Another common habit during iftar is eating too quickly. After fasting all day, it is natural to feel very hungry, but fast eating can lead to swallowing air and putting extra strain on digestion. Slowing down the pace of the meal allows the

Eating fast can lead to swallowing air and putting extra strain on digestion. Slowing down the pace of the meal allows the body to recognise fullness signals more naturally and helps prevent overeating



FATWA

QUESTION & ANSWER

Samahat Alshaykh
alealaamat 'Ahmad Alkhalilii

Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman

QUESTION

What is the ruling for someone who trims his beard during the daytime in Ramadhan?

ANSWER

As a precaution, he should make up the fast for that day. And Allah knows best.

QURAN

VERSE OF THE DAY

{ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا بَصِيرًا }

Surely your Lord gives abundant or limited provisions to whoever He wills. He is certainly All-Aware, All-Seeing of His servants.

[Surat Al Isra] — Verse 30

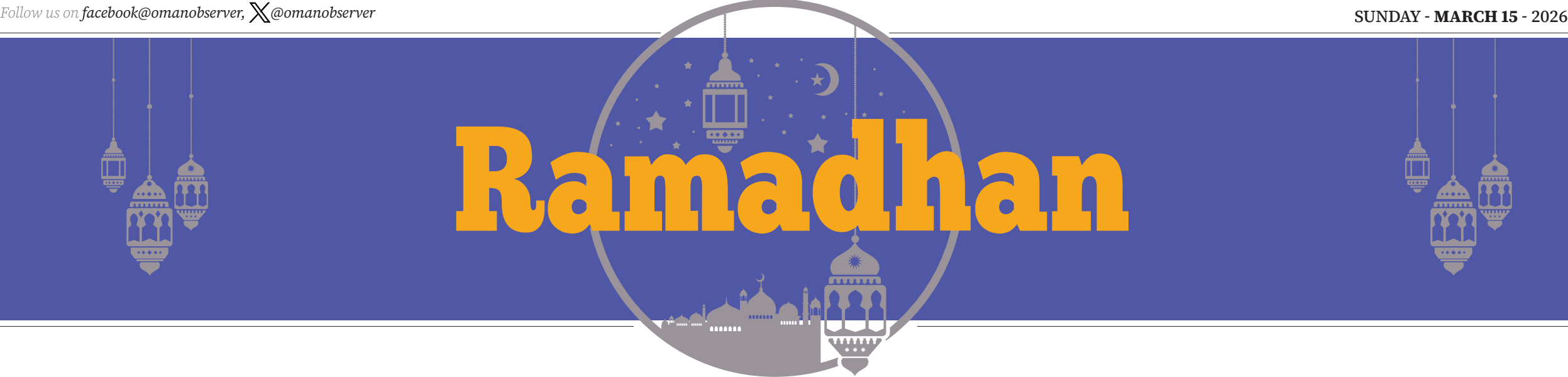
HADITH

A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Malik:

I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: He who professed that there is no god but Allah and made a denial of everything which the people worship beside Allah, his property and blood became inviolable, and their affairs rest with Allah.

[Sahih Bukhari]



A F L A V O U R F U L S U H O O R

LAMB KEBABS WITH AN OMANI TOUCH



SAUD AL ANSARI

AS the quiet hours of Ramadhan stretch towards dawn, suhoor becomes a moment of both nourishment and reflection. For many households, the pre-dawn meal is about comfort and simplicity, yet chefs often find ways to transform familiar ingredients into dishes that are both satisfying and memorable. One such creation comes from renowned Indian chef Shabu Thambi, a hospitality trainer at the Oman Tourism Academy, who presents an Omani inspired lamb kebab recipe in his cookbook.

The dish reflects a fusion of culinary traditions that mirrors Oman’s rich cultural landscape. Tender cubes of lamb shoulder or leg are marinated in a fragrant mixture of chopped onion, garlic, fresh ginger and a blend of warm spices including cumin, coriander, turmeric, cinnamon and chili powder. Fresh coriander, lemon juice and olive oil bring brightness and balance to the marinade, allowing the flavours to soak deeply into the meat.

After several hours of marination, the lamb is threaded onto skewers and grilled until lightly charred on the outside while remaining tender and juicy within. The aroma that rises from the grill is unmistakably comforting, a blend of spices that feels perfectly suited to the calm atmosphere of Ramadhan nights.

Chef Thambi recommends serving the kebabs with Omani rice, often



known as shuwa rice, creating a dish that is both hearty and flavourful, ideal for sustaining energy during the fasting day ahead.

For the chef, the recipe represents more than a meal. It is a celebration of shared culinary heritage, where Indian technique meets Omani flavours, resulting in a suhoor dish that is

simple, nourishing and deeply rooted in the spirit of Ramadhan hospitality.

RECIPE CARD
Chef: Shabu Thambi
Omani-Style Lamb Kebabs

- Ingredients**
- 500 g lamb shoulder or leg, cut into cubes
 - 1 onion, finely chopped
 - 4 garlic cloves, minced
 - 1 inch fresh ginger, grated
 - 1 tsp cumin
 - 1 tsp coriander
 - ½ tsp turmeric
 - ½ tsp cinnamon
 - 1 tsp chili powder
 - ¼ cup fresh coriander, chopped
 - 2 tbsp lemon juice
 - 2 tbsp olive oil
 - Salt and pepper
 - Skewers

- Method**
1. In a bowl, mix lamb with onion, garlic, ginger, spices, fresh coriander, lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper.
 2. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours.
 3. Thread the lamb onto skewers.
 4. Grill on medium high heat for about 10–15 minutes, turning occasionally, until browned and cooked through.
 5. Rest for a few minutes before serving.

- OMANI RICE (SHUWA RICE)**
- Ingredients**
- 2 cups basmati rice
 - 4 cups water
 - 2–3 cardamom pods
 - 2–3 cloves
 - 1 small cinnamon stick
 - Salt to taste
 - Fried onions, raisins and slivered almonds (optional)
- Method**
1. Rinse rice and soak for 30 minutes, then drain.
 2. Bring water to a boil, add rice, spices and salt.
 3. Cook 8–10 minutes until partially done, then drain.
 4. Cover and steam on low heat for 15–20 minutes until fluffy.
 5. Garnish with fried onions, raisins and almonds if desired.

RAMADHAN TWEETS

وكالة الأنباء العمانية

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Translated from Arabic by Grok

The Eastern House in the #Muscat Governorate in the #AlSharqiyah State.. A historical landmark regains its presence after more than a century.

2u.pw/2MC75N

#نشرة_المحافظات

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A landmark and legacy in Muscat

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صباح الخير لكل قلب اختار التناول رغم كل الظروف، وقرر أن يكون الضوء في طريقه

#صباح_الخير

20

5

39

166

Islamic architecture in Sur

PROMINENT

OMANI FIGURES

Who is he?

Shaikh Salim bin Hamoud bin Shams bin Salim bin Khamis bin Obeid bin Ali al Siyabi

He was an Omani historian, judge, jurist and genealogist.

He was born in 1908 in Bausher and is considered one of the most important Omani historians of the twentieth century.

RAMADHAN

TRADITION

Yemeni families prepare iftar meals through the creation of shared large platters, which they eat together as a family, basically when one platter feeds many hearts. The gatherings focus on bringing people together instead of maintaining formal conventions because Ramadhan meals serve as shared moments for all to gather, highlighting unique Ramadhan customs.

HEALTH

TIPS

EXERCISE SAFELY DURING FASTING

During Ramadhan, try mild exercise. Many find that exercising just prior to breaking fast for evening iftar, going to bed and/or in the morning can result in a particularly satisfying routine. While intense workouts may be a stretch due to the likely dehydration a mild workout you feel comfortable with could be beneficial to your health.

FEATURES

OMANI SIDR MAKES A COMEBACK FOR EID



ARWA AL HASHIMI

AS Eid Al Fitr approaches, many women in Oman begin searching for natural ways to give their hair and skin a special glow for the festive days. Among the shelves of modern cosmetics and international beauty products, one traditional ingredient continues to hold its place in many women's beauty routines, sidr.

Sidr is a perennial desert tree that grows in arid and semi arid environments and is considered one of the native trees of Oman's natural landscape. It is widely found in valleys and plains

across the country because of its ability to adapt to hot climates and limited water resources. The tree also plays an environmental role by helping stabilise soil, providing shade and supporting local biodiversity. Beyond its ecological value, the sidr tree has long been connected to people's lives in the region. Its ground leaves have traditionally been used for hair and skin care, its fruits are sometimes eaten and its flowers produce one of the region's most renowned types of

honey, sidr honey, known for its high nutritional value.

This close relationship between nature and daily life has made sidr an essential part of traditional beauty practices among women in Oman. Long before modern cosmetic products became common, many women relied on simple natural remedies to care for their hair and skin; and sidr was among the most prominent ingredients passed down through generations.

Today, as interest in natural products grows again, young entrepreneurs are reviving this beauty heritage and presenting it in modern ways. One such initiative is "Sidrah", a small home based business specialising in traditional Omani hair and skincare products that rely mainly on sidr and its derivatives.

Behind the project is Omani entrepreneur Sarah al Hashmi, who says the idea came from her passion for natural products that protect the beauty and health of hair and skin, as well as her appreciation for remedies long used by mothers and grandmothers. She explains that these mixtures represent a cultural legacy passed down through generations and inspired by natural ingredients.

According to Al Hashmi, sidr is widely used in beauty routines across the Arab world because of its many benefits. It helps nourish and strengthen hair, may reduce hair loss, cleanses and purifies the skin; and can help reduce acne. It also gives hair noticeable shine and softness.

As Eid and other celebrations approach, demand for sidr based products increases. Many women prefer natural remedies to give their hair and skin a healthy appearance before the holiday.

Despite the simplicity of these traditional recipes, sidr's presence in beauty routines continues to endure, reflecting a renewed interest in the natural ingredients that earlier generations relied on. Today, sidr remains one of the beauty secrets that continues to connect tradition with modern life, especially during seasons when attention to small details helps create the glow of Eid.



ABSURD JUSTICE

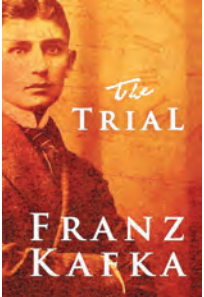
NAVIGATING KAFKA'S ABSURD WORLD

IDRIS AL BALUSHI

It is often said that law and order organise our world. But what happens when the system meant to deliver justice becomes incomprehensible, oppressive and indifferent to truth? This unsettling question lies at the centre of *The Trial*, one of the most influential works by the enigmatic writer Franz Kafka.

Published posthumously in 1925 and translated into English in 1937, *The Trial* has become a defining example of literary absurdism. The novel follows Joseph K, a seemingly successful banker who is suddenly arrested on the morning of his thirtieth birthday. The charge against him is never explained, yet he is forced to endure a mysterious legal process that stretches for nearly a year without resolution. From the beginning, the situation feels surreal, placing the protagonist in a world where rules exist but logic does not.

Kafka's narrative reflects the spirit of absurdist literature, a movement that explores the meaninglessness and confusion of human existence. Works such as *The Myth of Sisyphus* by Albert Camus and *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett similarly explore the alienation and uncertainty experienced by individuals in an indifferent world. Like these works, *The Trial* presents a reality where individuals search for meaning and justice but encounter only confusion.



The Trial



like a disturbing dream. Joseph K navigates a labyrinthine legal system filled with strange officials, obscure procedures and bizarre settings. Courtrooms appear in cramped apartments, officials behave with indifference and no one seems particularly concerned that K has been arrested without explanation. The absurdity of the situation is heightened by the reactions of those around him, who treat his predicament as entirely normal.

At the centre of the story stands Joseph K himself, the lone figure attempting to impose reason on an irrational world. Confident and determined, he believes that truth and logic will eventually prevail. Yet his faith in fairness proves tragically misplaced. Much like the characters in other works of absurdism, he becomes trapped in a system that cannot be understood or defeated.

The novel's conclusion is perhaps its most unsettling element. After a year of futile attempts to clear his name, Joseph K meets a sudden and brutal fate. The charges against him remain unknown and the trial ends without explanation. Readers are left with the same bewilderment that has haunted the protagonist throughout the story.

Despite its ambiguity, *The Trial* offers a powerful critique of bureaucratic systems and the dehumanising effects of unchecked authority. Kafka portrays a world in which individuals are reduced to powerless figures navigating endless procedures. The legal system, rather than protecting justice, becomes a mechanism that perpetuates confusion and submission.

Nearly a century after its publication, *The Trial* continues to resonate with modern readers. Kafka's haunting vision of faceless institutions and alienated individuals feels strikingly relevant in an age defined by complex bureaucracies and distant authorities. Through its unsettling narrative and profound themes, the novel remains one of the most powerful explorations of absurdity in modern literature.

Ultimately, *The Trial* endures not only as a literary classic but also as a reminder of how fragile justice can be when systems lose sight of humanity. Kafka's masterpiece invites readers to question the structures that govern their lives and to reflect on the unsettling possibility that the absurd may be closer to reality than we would like to believe.