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51

YEARS OF
LEGACY

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DATA FROM OMAN AIRPORTS



Salalah Airport sees strong growth in flights, passengers

SALALAH: The number of arriving flights at Salalah Airport during the period from 21 June to 31 July 2026 rose to 1,758, compared to 1,637 flights during the same period last year, marking an increase of 7 per cent.

Data from Oman Airports showed that the number of arriving passengers through the airport during the same period reached 154,529 passengers, compared to 142,488 passengers during the same period in 2025, registering an increase of 12,041 passengers and a growth rate of approximately 8 per cent.

This growth in flight and passenger movements coincides with the Dhofar Khareef (monsoon) season of 2026. The season attracts large numbers of visitors from within the Sultanate of Oman and abroad, who enjoy the autumnal weather that distinguishes Dhofar Governorate during this period.

Salalah Airport is considered one of the vital facilities supporting tourism activity in Dhofar Governorate, which experiences a surge in visitor numbers and travel movement during the khareef season. —**ONA**

OMAN BEGINS DEVELOPMENT OF FOUR INDUSTRIAL CITIES

These strategic projects across several governorates are part of the Sultanate's efforts to elevate Oman's investment environment

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman begins development of new four industrial cities across Musandam, North Al Batinah, North Al Sharqiyah and Dhofar Governorates.

Developing these industrial hubs is guided by Oman's commitment to promoting balanced governorates' growth as well as empowering the private sector to play an active role in driving the national economy.

These developing sectors will



drive economic diversification alongside complementary industries and strengthening a labour market that attracts national talent and specialised skills.

These new industrial cities will help in promoting the sustainable use of natural resources while

advancing the adoption of renewable energy.

This initiative is part of the 11th Five-Year Development Plan (2026-2030) of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) in advancing the industrial sector in Oman.

"Madayn is executing these strategic projects across several governorates as part of its efforts to elevate Oman's investment environment and support sustainable economic development," said Khalid Al Salehi, Director General of Marketing and Commercial Affairs and official spokesperson for Madayn.

The projects align with the priorities of Oman Vision 2040 related to economy and development, including development of governorates and sustainable cities, the private sector, investment and international cooperation, economic diversification and fiscal sustainability, labour market and employment as well as economic leadership and management. **>A6**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Over 835 cochlear surgeries conducted

1 The cochlear implant team at Al Nahda Hospital has successfully performed more than 835 surgeries as part of its ongoing programme to enhance its specialised services. The hospital affirms its leadership as a reference centre for this type of surgeries in Oman. **>A4**

OMAN Property trading value in Buraimi tops OMR16mn

2 The value of real estate trading in Al Buraimi during the first half of 2026 reached OMR16.77mn against OMR18.46 mn during the same period in 2025, marking a decline of about 9%, data issued by the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning in Al Buraimi reveals. **>A5**

MARKET Port of A'Suwaik sees notable growth

3 The Port of A'Suwaik in North Al Batinah Governorate witnessed notable growth during the first half of 2026 in cargo handling volumes and the number of vessels received, alongside enhanced operational efficiency and improved handling processes. **> B1**

India at 80: A timeless bond with Oman, a future of shared ambition

A2

BIRD'S REMARKABLE CRAFTSMANSHIP

Rüppell's Weaver's intricate nests fascinate Dhofar visitors

Times News Service

SALALAH: The distinctive hanging nests of the Rüppell's Weaver have become a point of curiosity for visitors exploring Dhofar during the Khareef season, with many stopping to admire the bird's remarkable craftsmanship.

Woven from grass, plant fibres and other vegetation, the unusual nests hang from tree branches, adding another fascinating feature to Dhofar's lush landscape.

The Rüppell's Weaver, scientifically known as *Ploceus galbula*, is a small bird measuring about 14.5 centimetres.

According to Oman's Environment Authority, it is known for its skill in weaving nests from long strips of grass and other plant material.

The species is found in East Africa and southern Oman, including Dhofar, and has been recorded in areas such as Ayn Hamran, Wadi Darbat and Salalah.

A master of nest-building

The hanging nest is the bird's most striking feature. The male carefully cuts and weaves vegetation into a strong, enclosed structure suspended from a branch, later adding its distinctive entrance.

The finished nest has a pouch- or bottle-like shape and is made from tightly interwoven grass, leaves and other plant fibres. Its elevated position helps protect it from ground-based predators.

A male can build several nests. The female lays two or three eggs, which are incubated for about 14 to 15 days. The young leave the nest at around 18 days.

A familiar sight during Khareef

The nests offer visitors another glimpse of Dhofar's rich biodiversity during the season, when the region's mountains, valleys and vegetation turn green.

"It was fascinating to see these nests hanging from the branches.



Woven from grass, plant fibres and other vegetation, the unusual nests hang from tree branches, adding another fascinating feature to Dhofar's lush landscape

At first, I wondered what they were, but after learning that they are built by weaver birds, I became even more interested in spotting them," said Indian expatriate Ravi Kumar.

Another visitor, P Aslam, said

the nests showed how much wildlife could be discovered by simply looking more closely.

"Dhofar is famous for its green mountains, mist and waterfalls during Khareef, but there are so many smaller wonders to notice as well. These nests are a beautiful example," Aslam said.

A birdwatching enthusiast, Ritu Kumar, said the nests demonstrate the birds' remarkable skills.

"These nests are incredibly detailed. You can see how carefully the fibres have been woven together. It is a reminder of the amazing skills birds use to build their homes," the home-maker further added.

"Once you know what to look for, you start seeing them everywhere," she added.

As Dhofar turns green during Khareef, the hanging nests provide a reminder that some of the region's most fascinating natural sights can be found high among the trees.

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India at 80: A timeless bond with Oman, a future of shared ambition

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Eight decades after India emerged as an independent nation, its relationship with Oman stands as a partnership shaped not only by diplomacy and trade, but by history, people and a long record of mutual trust.

As India marks its 80th Independence Day, Indian Ambassador to Oman, H E Prashant Pise sees the milestone as an opportunity to look beyond the achievements of the past and towards a relationship that, he believes, has the potential to make a “very good amount of progress” across almost every major area of cooperation.

The timing is particularly significant. India and Oman are also marking a journey of roughly seven decades of diplomatic relations, with India among the early countries to establish formal diplomatic ties with the Sultanate. Over the decades, that relationship has expanded from traditional commerce and people-to-people links into a broad strategic partnership encompassing defence, maritime security, energy, investment, technology, education, culture and emerging sectors.

“For 80 years versus 70 years, I think our journey is coinciding,” Pise said, describing the two countries as having evolved side by side.

That evolution mirrors India's own transformation.

The country that became independent in 1947 faced enormous challenges, but has since emerged as a major global economy and an increasingly influential player in international affairs.

Partnership entering another phase

Pise believes the relationship with Oman has grown alongside that transformation, with India contributing significantly to Oman's economic and social development through its companies, professionals and wider community.

Today, the partnership is entering another phase.

The ambassador points to the high-level political exchanges between the two countries as having provided momentum and direction, but says the next stage must be about translating that political goodwill into progress across multiple “verticals” of the relationship.

Those include political cooperation, defence and security, maritime security, trade and investment, culture and people-to-people ties, science and technology, space and renewable energy.

“India and Oman are strategic partners,” he said, stressing that the relationship now needs to be developed across all its dimensions.

CEPA opens new chapter

At the heart of the economic relationship is the India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which entered into force on June 1 this year.

The agreement has opened a new chapter in bilateral commerce, providing Indian exporters with sweeping access to the Omani market and creating opportunities for businesses to expand beyond traditional sectors as well as for Omani exporters to make an impact in the huge Indian market.

Pise said the impact is already beginning to be seen, with Indian companies using CEPA provisions for exports to Oman.

But for him, the agreement is not simply about removing tariffs. It is about creating a platform for a deeper economic relationship.

The ambassador said the embassy has been holding business meetings, webinars and roundtables involving investors, business leaders, export promotion councils, chambers of commerce and



government authorities to familiarise companies with the agreement and encourage them to use its provisions.

There is considerable scope, he believes, in sectors ranging from logistics and warehousing to metals, minerals and chemicals, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and port-related activities.

Oman potential base for wider markets

Oman's strategic location adds another dimension. For Indian companies, Oman can serve not only as a market in itself but as a potential base for reaching wider markets in the Gulf, Africa and beyond.

Pise said companies could explore opportunities in warehousing, packaging, manufacturing and value addition, allowing them to build supply chains that take advantage of Oman's location and infrastructure.

The pharmaceutical sector

is another area he highlighted, arguing that Indian companies could establish manufacturing facilities in Oman and use the country as a base for exports and re-exports.

The next phase of economic cooperation, however, is unlikely to be confined to traditional industries.

Pise sees strong potential in renewable energy, critical minerals, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital infrastructure and financial technology.

India's experience in building a large digital economy, he said, can complement Oman's own development ambitions.

That creates an important bridge between Oman Vision 2040 and India's ambition of becoming a developed nation by 2047, when the country will mark 100 years of independence. The two national visions, Pise argues, offer considerable room for collaboration.

From historic maritime links and enduring people-to-people ties to a deeper strategic and economic partnership, India and Oman are entering the next phase of a relationship shaped by trust, shared interests and growing ambition. **Indian Ambassador to Oman H E Prashant Pise** spoke to *Times of Oman* on the occasion of the 80th Indian Independence Day

coordination with Omani authorities, assistance can include accommodation, medical support, repatriation and emergency travel arrangements for people who cannot afford to return home.

A community welfare fund is used to support those facing genuine financial hardship.

One-stop centre for women

The embassy has also established a one-stop centre to assist women in distress, including those who have overstayed visas or left employers and wish to return to India.

Pise said the embassy works with relevant authorities and sponsors to find solutions and minimise the period of distress before facilitating their return.

The humanitarian dimension of the relationship has also extended to seafarers.

Thankful to Omani authorities

With regional tensions affecting maritime routes, Pise acknowledged the assistance provided by Oman and the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) to Indians in distress at sea.

He expressed appreciation for the support extended by Omani authorities and stressed the importance of keeping commercial shipping routes safe and secure in the Strait of Hormuz.

That concern is closely linked to India's energy security.

Pise said a significant share of India's energy requirements comes from the wider region and that disruptions to maritime routes can affect both supplies and prices.

India, he stressed, wants the regional conflict to be resolved as soon as possible and has consistently advocated the safety and security of commercial navigation.

Maritime cooperation

For India and Oman, maritime cooperation therefore has implications far beyond naval engagement. It is tied to energy, trade, supply chains and the stability of the wider region.

The future partnership, meanwhile, is increasingly expected to be knowledge-driven.

India's Technical and Economic Cooperation programme, launched in 1964, is one of the key vehicles through which India shares expertise with partner countries.

Pise said Omani officials have benefited from training in areas including information technology, cybersecurity, agriculture, banking and other economic and social sectors.

Scholarships are another important component, with opportunities for Omani students at undergraduate, master's and PhD levels.

New education policy

Pise also sees scope for Indian universities and educational institutions to establish a greater presence in Oman, particularly

as India's new education policy encourages international engagement and overseas campuses.

Oman already has a substantial Indian school network, with tens of thousands of Indian students studying under the CBSE system. The ambassador believes higher education could become another important bridge between the two countries.

The potential is particularly strong among young people.

Both countries have young populations, and Pise believes youth engagement should become a priority in the years ahead.

India's demographic strength and Oman's young population create opportunities for cooperation in education, skills, technology, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Recent exchanges involving Omani students visiting India to see the country's space programme illustrate the kind of knowledge-sharing that could become more important in the future.

Space, renewable energy, technology and scientific research, he believes, are no longer peripheral areas of the relationship. They could become central to its next phase.

And that is perhaps the defining message from the ambassador as India reaches its 80th year: the relationship cannot remain content with incremental growth.

Expanding economy

Pise wants measurable ambition.

He points to bilateral trade of around \$11 billion and says CEPA should help take that relationship to a higher level. He also sees substantial scope for greater investment in both directions.

Indian companies have invested in Oman, but Pise believes Omani investors should also look more actively towards India, particularly in sectors ranging from energy and natural resources to metals, investment funds and capital markets.

India's expanding economy, he argues, presents a large and increasingly attractive market for Omani capital.

The future, therefore, is not simply about India doing more business in Oman. It is about creating a two-way economic relationship that connects investment, technology, manufacturing, services and people.

After 80 years of independence and around seven decades of formal diplomatic ties with Oman, the relationship has already moved far beyond its original foundations.

Its next chapter is being written against a very different global backdrop — one marked by geopolitical uncertainty, supply-chain disruptions, technological transformation and a race towards new sources of energy and growth.

For India and Oman, that changing environment may make their longstanding trust even more valuable.

Pise sees a “very bright future” for the partnership, but his emphasis is on action rather than sentiment: stronger economic ties, deeper strategic cooperation, greater investment, expanded educational and technological exchanges, stronger maritime collaboration and closer engagement between the two countries' young people.

The history provides the foundation. The challenge now is to turn that foundation into a partnership ambitious enough for the next 20, 30 and 50 years.

As India looks towards its centenary of independence in 2047, the ambassador believes India-Oman ties should be moving towards their own set of ambitious targets — with trade, investment and cooperation across sectors growing substantially.

At 80, India is looking back with confidence. With Oman, it is also looking ahead.

Real Estate Khareef Season In Numbers 2026



+26
Thousand
Visitors



144
Sales
Transactions



409
Expressions
of Interest



55
Real Estate
Projects
Showcased



43
Participating
Real Estate
Developers

7+ Million
Investment
Value

+10
Participating
Media Outlets



+150
Media Features
& Coverage

+3 Million
Media &
Digital Reach



7
Participating
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Entities

18
Seminars &
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			LO/RE	SMEs			
1	2026/09	Landfill Site Treatment – Al Mabela Landfill	500/- OMR	200/- OMR	12/09/2026	30/09/2026	12/10/2026

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

1. Company registration with Muscat Municipality must be valid to obtain the bid document.

2. International companies that are not registered in Muscat Municipality's Supplier Register shall submit a formal confirmation that they will complete the registration process in accordance with the applicable procedures if the project is awarded to them.

3. Pay the specified document fee for the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality's Bank account as follows:

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4. A copy of the transaction's receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (BID.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 commerical registration number of the company) and formal confirmation by international companies.

5. The tender document will be provided to the company via email.

6. 2:00 PM on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents.

7. Submission details will be shares later.

NOTES:

1. 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).

2. For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality throngh this email (crm_support@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 (DSM@mm.gov.om)

3. 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.

4. Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om

SPECIALISED MEDICAL TEAM



Al Nahda Hospital performs over 835 cochlear implants

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The cochlear implant team at Al Nahda Hospital has performed over 835 cochlear implant surgeries, as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance its specialised services as the leading centre for this type of surgery in the Sultanate of Oman.

Al Nahda Hospital, part of the Khoula General Hospital Directorate, provides comprehensive cochlear implant services, including diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation, in accordance with the latest medical practices in this field.

Surgical techniques

The hospital continues to develop surgical techniques, performing a number of cochlear implant surgeries using local anaesthesia, based on the patient's health assessment and the decision of the specialised medical team.

A cochlear implant is an electronic device surgically implanted in the inner ear to help people with severe to profound hearing loss who do not benefit sufficiently from hearing aids.

It works by stimulating the auditory nerve and helping the brain receive sound signals.

Improving hearing

This type of intervention contributes to improving hearing and speech comprehension, enhancing communication and social interaction skills, and supporting language and speech development in children, in addition to improving their quality of life.

The cochlear implant team continues to conduct regular visits to various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman to perform surgeries and facilitate access to specialised care for beneficiaries, thus promoting the principle of equitable access to specialised healthcare services.

Early diagnosis and intervention

Al Nahda Hospital emphasises the importance of early diagnosis and intervention in cases of hearing loss, especially in children, as these play a crucial role in supporting the development of

hearing, language, and communication skills. The hospital also stresses that the success of cochlear implantation depends not only on the surgery itself but also on auditory and language rehabilitation programmes and regular post-operative follow-up.

Specialised healthcare services

These efforts are part of the Ministry of Health's commitment to developing specialised healthcare services and enhancing the quality of care provided to beneficiaries, thereby contributing to a better quality of life and supporting a brighter auditory and linguistic future for children and patients benefiting from cochlear implant services.

It is worth mentioning that the cochlear implant team at Al Nahda Hospital performed one of the smallest cochlear implant surgeries in the world on a 9-week-old child, in a medical achievement that reflects the level of expertise and competence that the medical team possesses in this specialised field.

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COMPANY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30TH JUNE 2026

Dear Shareholders,

We would like to present to you the unaudited consolidated financial statements for the period ended 30th June 2026.

At the group level, the total turnover of the Company for the period ended 30th June 2026 is 11.661 million  compared with 13.144 million  for the same period of the last year, i.e. a decrease of 11%.

The parent Company's total turnover for the period ended 30th June 2026 is 10.879 million  compared with 12.406 million  for the same period of last year, i.e. a decrease of 12%.

At the group level, net loss after tax for the period ended 30th June 2026 is  (110,071) compared with re-stated net profit of 1,720,706  for the same period of the last year.

The parent Company's net profit after tax for the period ended 30th June 2026 is 64,405  compared with re-stated net profit of 1,730,114  for the same period of the last year.

During the year 2025, Management has restated the inventories to match with IAS 8 and corresponding corrections in cost of revenue where the current year results were affected by positive 2,163,894 . The same took place for the year 2024 that was affected by the same amount negatively. The above restatement has no impact on Retained Earnings and Equity

The Management is focusing on the enhancement of LPG business to yield better results in the coming period and the Company will put all its efforts to maximise the shareholders return.

Thanking you,

Mr. Abdullah Saud M. Al Romaih
Chairman

SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	30 June 2026		30 June 2025	
	Parent 	Group 	Parent 	Group 
Revenue	10,879,338	11,660,841	12,406,462	13,144,539
Cost of sales	(10,324,548)	(11,104,531)	(9,843,926)	(10,413,097)
Gross Profit	554,790	556,310	2,562,536	2,731,442
General and administration expenses	(493,931)	(669,960)	(564,533)	(737,747)
Investment and Other Income	14,912	14,995	42,589	42,589
Profit for the period before tax	75,771	(98,655)	2,040,592	2,036,284
Provision for Income tax	(11,366)	(11,416)	(310,478)	(315,578)
Net Profit for the period after tax	64,405	(110,071)	1,730,114	1,720,706
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income	64,405	(110,071)	1,730,114	1,720,706
Earnings per share	0.002	(0.004)	0.058	0.057

Note: The complete account will be sent by email to any Shareholders who request them in either Arabic or English as requested within 7 days of the request.

SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2026						
	30 June 2026		30 June 2025		31 December 2025	
	Parent ر	Group ر	Parent ر	Group ر	Parent ر	Group ر
ASSETS						
Non-current Assets:						
Property, plant and equipment	2,944,373	3,267,092	2,660,212	3,023,260	3,032,227	3,404,324
Right of use assets	270,269	270,269	196,694	196,694	276,292	276,292
Deferred Tax Asset	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment	2,004,118	-	2,004,118	-	2,004,118	-
Goodwill	-	996,800		996,800	-	996,800
Trade Receivable	490,558	490,558	-	-	490,558	490,558
Total Non-current Assets	5,709,318	5,024,719	4,861,024	4,216,754	5,803,195	5,167,974
Current Assets:						
Inventories	857,035	1,094,305	1,066,861	1,244,483	876,604	1,105,346
Trade and other receivables	3,929,979	3,959,045	4,512,819	4,367,238	3,255,200	3,195,853
Cash and cash equivalents	1,358,021	1,504,831	1,187,350	1,347,545	1,676,146	1,915,049
Total Current Assets	6,145,035	6,558,181	6,767,030	6,959,266	5,807,950	6,216,249
TOTAL ASSETS	11,854,353	11,582,900	11,628,054	11,176,020	11,611,145	11,384,222
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES						
Equity:						
Share capital	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Statutory reserve	1,000,000	1,015,863	1,000,000	1,015,863	1,000,000	1,015,863
Special reserve	1,457,067	1,457,067	1,457,067	1,457,067	1,457,067	1,457,067
Land revaluation reserve	1,292,166	1,370,366	807,666	807,666	1,292,166	1,370,366
Retained earnings	(738,778)	(1,000,697)	(501,293)	(661,457)	(803,183)	(884,548)
Total Equity	6,010,455	5,842,599	5,763,440	5,619,139	5,946,050	5,958,748
Non-current Liabilities:						
End of service benefits	154,931	202,075	134,431	166,998	144,223	185,204
Non current portion of Term Loan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non current portion of lease liabilities	335,291	335,291	252,916	252,916	323,995	323,995
Deferred tax	115,605	128,657	92,532	94,375	115,605	128,657
Total Non-current Liabilities	605,827	666,023	479,879	514,289	583,823	637,856
Current Liabilities:						
Trade and other payables	4,581,434	4,417,591	5,281,130	4,938,664	4,638,013	4,334,471
Bank overdraft	614,989	614,989	74,203	74,203	413,115	413,115
Current portion of Term Loan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Current portion of lease liabilities	10,064	10,064	9,184	9,184	9,926	9,926
Income Tax	31,584	31,634	20,218	20,541	20,218	30,106
Total Current Liabilities	5,238,071	5,074,278	5,384,736	5,042,592	5,081,272	4,787,618
Total Liabilities	5,843,898	5,740,301	5,864,614	5,556,881	5,665,095	5,425,474
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	11,854,353	11,582,900	11,628,054	11,176,020	11,611,145	11,384,222
Net Assets Per Share (RO)	0.200	0.195	0.192	0.187	0.198	0.199

FIRST HALF DATA



Real estate trading value in Al Buraimi reaches over OMR16mn in H1 2026

AL BURAIMI: The value of real estate trading in Al Buraimi Governorate during the first half of 2026 reached approximately OMR16.77 million compared to OMR18.46 million during the same period in 2025, marking a decline of about 9%, according to data issued by the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning in Al Buraimi Governorate.

The data showed that the traded value of sale contracts up to the end of June this year amounted to OMR6,527,444, compared to OMR8,914,667 during the same period last year.

The number of sale contracts decreased by 26%.

The traded value of mortgage contracts recorded an increase of 11.7%, reaching OMR10,213,211 by the end of the first half of this year, compared to OMR9,141,678 during the same period in 2025.

The traded value of swap contracts rose by 41.7% to OMR32,400 by the end of June 2026, compared to OMR22,860 during the same period last year.

The Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning in Al Buraimi Governorate continues its efforts in the investment sector by enhancing the utilisation of government land and supporting projects related to food security, in partnership with the Directorate General of Agriculture and Water Resources in the governorate. The number of investment sites offered during the first half of this year reached approximately 44 sites.

In the real estate development sector, Al Buraimi Governorate is witnessing the implementation of Al Salam Neighbourhood project, which is one of the integrated residential communities under the “Surooh” initiative, as part of the broader direction to provide comprehensive housing options that meet the needs of families and contribute to enhancing quality of life in the governorate.

The project comprises 580 housing units, with the completion rate for the first phase reaching 31%, underscoring the progress of construction work on

the project. It falls within the integrated residential community system aimed at creating urban developments where housing is complemented by facilities, services and public spaces.

Sulaiman Ali Al Qarni, Director General of Housing and Urban Planning in Al Buraimi Governorate, stated that housing assistance provided to eligible families varies between home construction or purchase. He noted that by the end of June this year, the review and approval of 120 housing assistance applications across the governorate had been completed, while procedures for financial commitment are currently being finalised for the coming period.

He affirmed that the Directorate is working to increase response rates to beneficiaries’ requests and improve the quality of services provided by activating a number of programmes and initiatives that contribute to diversifying the options available to beneficiaries, foremost among which are varied housing choices for eligible individuals. — **ONA**

FOREIGN MINISTRY

Oman denounces Colombia’s recognition of Israeli sovereignty over Occupied Syrian Golan

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has denounced the decision of the Government of the Republic of Colombia to recognise Israel’s sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan.

Oman affirmed that this decision constitutes a violation of international law and contradicts

the resolutions of international legitimacy, foremost among them United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 497 of 1981.

In a statement issued yesterday by the Foreign Ministry, Oman reiterated its steadfast position that the Golan is occupied Syrian territory, affirming its support

for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic over all its lands. Oman also called upon all states to adhere to the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of international law, and the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy.

— **ONA**

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HIDAYAH WAQF FOUNDATION

Exhibition highlights civilisational essence and human heritage of Oman

SALALAH: The “My Identity: Oman – Identity and Civilisation” event and exhibition on Wednesday commenced at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Compound for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah, Dhofar Governorate. Organised by the Hidayah Waqf Foundation, the event will run until 19 August 2026. The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr. Ahmed Mohsen Al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality.

The event features an exhibition comprising a variety of pavilions, including a pavilion on rights in Omani society, a pavilion on Omani values in urban jurisprudence, and a pavilion on the values and ethics of Omani merchants



in spreading Islam, alongside a pavilion showcasing Omani contributions in various fields of the humanities, and an Omani village pavilion that embodies the fea-

tures of Omani architecture as an intellectual and human heritage. The event aims to highlight the civilisational essence of Oman and the roots of its authentic Is-

lamic values through the model of the balanced Omani character, while also reinforcing Omani identity across different segments of society. — **DNA**

IN MUSCAT

Exploration Camp activities for school students continue

MUSCAT: The activities of the Exploration Camp for school students continued on Wednesday in Muscat Governorate. The camp is organised by the Ministry of Education in strategic partnership with OQ Exploration and Production and targets 110 students in grades 9–11 from the governorates of Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dhahirah and North Al Sharqiyah.

The camp, which runs until the 20th of this month, aims to prepare a generation capable of keeping pace with the requirements of the knowledge economy and sustainability, invest in human capital, and develop the future skills of Omani youth through an intensive training programme that integrates theoretical and applied aspects in the fields of energy, sustainability, artificial intelligence, and entrepreneurship.

The camp focuses on equipping participants with an advanced understanding of conventional



and renewable energy systems, exploring AI applications within the sector, and honing design thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, it enables students to develop innovative entrepreneurial projects that address real-world challenges in the energy sector.

The programme includes specialised tracks and interactive activities to translate ideas into

viable projects through the development of sustainable business models, in alignment with national directions for economic diversification and innovation promotion. It also provides students with the opportunity to interact directly with experts and specialists to learn about future career pathways and enhance their readiness for the labour market.

— **DNA**

IN DHOFAR

Summer Scout Camp begins

SALALAH: The Summer Scout Camp for the Senior Scout Phase officially commenced on Wednesday at the Permanent Scout Camp in the plain of Jabal Ashur area of Dhofar Governorate.

Organised by the Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate General of Scouting, Guiding and Student Activities, the camp is being held under the theme “Our Future Lies in Our Values” and will run until 17 August 2026. Approximately 300 scouts and scout leaders from various governorates of Oman are participating in the camp. The event aims to reinforce humanitarian values and principles across multiple domains, harness the energies of youth to showcase and develop their talents, and prepare a generation capable of innovation, self-reliance, and effective time management.

The camp features a diverse array of programs and activities that integrate practical, applied and theoretical dimensions. — **DNA**



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PUBLIC ESTABLISHMENT FOR INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

New industrial cities to support diversification

< FROM A1 “The projects involve the development of fully integrated industrial cities equipped with advanced infrastructure and logistics services. Establishing new industrial cities in Al Suwaiq, Al Mudhaibi, Thumrait and Madha aims to strengthen Oman’s industrial infrastructure, support economic diversification, attract local and foreign investments, support SMEs, and generate job opportunities.”

Al Salehi highlighted Al Suwaiq Industrial City as one of Madayn’s promising development projects in North Al Batinah Governorate. The city covers a total area of approximately 12.2 million square metres, with around 1.3 million square metres to be developed during Phase 1.

“The city will feature Madayn Entrepreneurial Complex, Madayn Agricultural Complex, facility building, water and sewage networks, firefighting networks, internal roads, solar-powered lighting, and other integrated infrastructure and utility services,” he said.

“Al Suwaiq Industrial City aims to stimulate industrial, agricultural and service activities in North Al Batinah Governorate while providing an integrated investment environment that meets investor requirements,” he added.

Moreover, Al Mudhaibi Industrial City in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate spans nearly 9 million square metres, with approximately 1.3 million square metres allocated for Phase 1 development.

Al Salehi stated that development works are already underway at an estimated cost of OMR17 million, with the project recording a 7% completion rate. Upon completion, the project will feature dedicated entrepreneurial and agricultural complexes along alongside fully integrated infrastructure and utility networks. The city is expected to support economic activity in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate and create new investment opportunities across the industrial, agricultural and logistics sectors.

“In Dhofar Governorate, Madayn is implementing Thumrait Industrial City across 4 million square metres. The project includes Madayn Entrepreneurial Complex, facility building, internal roads, solar lighting systems, and essential infrastructure and utility services designed to advance economic development in Dhofar Governorate, attract industrial and service investments, and strengthen commercial and logistics activities,” Al Salehi further noted. — **DNA**

Full story @ timesofoman.com/business



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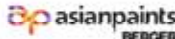
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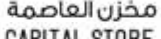
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GROWING DEMAND SEEN

354 green, heritage inns, guest houses, rest stops and camps in South Al Batinah

A'RUSTAQ: Green inns, heritage inns, guest houses, rest stops and camps in South Al Batinah Governorate are contributing to redefining the tourism experience in the governorate, owing to the fact that some are situated in locations rich in natural and heritage components, while others are located in environments that still preserve the essence of traditional life.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has affirmed that these types of tourism establishments are witnessing growing demand, having provided promising investment opportunities for youth and entrepreneurs to adopt innovative projects, alongside diversifying tourism experiences that enrich the sector and enhance the attractiveness of destinations.

The Ministry, represented by the Heritage and Tourism Department in South Al Batinah Governorate, pointed out that the number of licensed green inns, heritage inns, guest houses, rest stops, and



camps in the governorate reached approximately 354 establishments by the end of the first half of 2026. These consist of 5 rest stops and 2 camps, 275 guest houses, 70 green inns, and 2 heritage inns, distributed across the wilayats of Barka, Al Musannah, A'Rustaq, Nakhal, Wadi Al Maawil and Al Awabi. - **ONA**

NEAR AL QIBLIYAH ISLAND

Environment Authority continues to monitor grounded vessel off Al Hallaniyat Islands

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority continues to monitor the repercussions of the vessel grounding incident near Al Qibliyah Island, part of the Al Hallaniyat Islands archipelago in the Governorate of Dhofar.

Efforts are underway to conduct and execute monitoring, survey, and environmental handling operations in coordination with relevant entities, using technical monitoring means, satellite imagery, and numerical models to track the movement and spread of oil slicks and predict their potential landing sites.

The Authority clarified that Wednesday's monitoring results showed that some beaches in the Ras Madrasah area were affected by oil pollution, with expectations of an affected coastal stretch reaching up to 40 kilometres in length in the same area, alongside the possibility of the southern beaches of Masirah Island being affected in the coming hours within a range of 10 to 20 kilometres according to current data.

Meanwhile, specialised teams continue follow-up and response efforts and take necessary measures to limit its spread and mini-



mise its potential impacts, giving priority to areas of high environmental sensitivity.

The Authority called on fishermen, beachgoers, and members of the community not to approach any spotted materials or pollutants and to report them to the competent authorities, reaffirming its continued tracking of updates and announcing any developments through official channels. - **ONA**



COMMERCIAL VESSEL

Pakistan Minister says 3 nationals killed in 'Houthi Red Sea attack'

ISLAMABAD: At least three Pakistani nations were killed in an "incident involving an attack on a commercial vessel in the Red Sea," Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Wednesday.

Another Pakistani national had sustained injuries.

"Pakistan strongly condemns the Houthi attack on a non-combatant commercial vessel. Such attacks endanger innocent lives, constitute a violation of international law, and pose a serious threat to freedom of navigation, maritime security, and the safety of commercial shipping in the Red Sea," the minister said in a post on X.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry was in contact with Saudi Arabia and Yemen to ascertain further



details of the incident, Dar said. Meanwhile, the Pakistani Embassy in Riyadh was coordinating the

retrieval and repatriation of the mortal remains of their deceased nationals.

Vessels under attack amid Middle East conflict

On Tuesday, the US and Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels reported separate attacks on shipping as peace negotiations between Washington and Tehran seemingly stagnated once again.

At the southern end of the Red Sea, a suspected Houthi attack on a small cargo vessel killed four crew members, Yemen's Transport Ministry said.

It was not immediately clear if this was the same vessel Dar was referring to.

Commercial shipping and seafarers passing through the Middle East have increasingly come under attack by both the US and Iran since the conflict began earlier this year. - **BN**

MILLIONS AFFECTED

Europe braces for another heat wave

BERLIN: Millions of people across Europe on Wednesday were set for more extreme heat, as yet another heat wave descends on the world's fastest-warming continent.

In France, Italy and Spain, some 92 million people are expected to swelter in temperatures exceeding 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) on Wednesday.

Some 300 million people - more than half Europe's population - will see temperatures pass 30 C The new heat wave comes after Western Europe saw its warmest ever June-July period, the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said on Monday.

According to C3S figures, temperatures in Europe are rising at twice the speed of other continents.

The German Weather Service has forecast highs on Wednesday of 34 C.

Temperatures are set to climb to 37 C on Thursday and as high as 39 C by Friday for much of western and southern Germany, the national meteorology agency said.

The looming heatwave is the third blast of extreme heat that Germany has seen this summer.

The prolonged heat has caused water levels on the Rhine to drop to record lows in some areas. The river is one of Europe's main waterways for transports of grain, minerals, fuel and other goods.

The drought conditions are impacting both Germany's environment as well as its economy, with companies that rely on goods normally transported via water suffering supply shortfalls. - **BN**

ZAWIYA OIL COMPLEX

Drone attack: Fires at Libya fuel storage facility under control

TRIPOLI: Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) said on Tuesday that fires at a fuel storage facility had been quickly brought under control after a drone attack.

The Zawiya oil complex west of Tripoli is home to the country's largest refinery and has been the scene of repeated armed clashes between warring factions fighting for primacy in the country since the fall of former strongman leader Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.



What happened in the drone attack?

Monday's attack by an as yet undeclared actor targeted the Zawiya Oil Refining Company with explosives-laden drones, causing a tank containing about 4.5 million litres of gasoline to collapse after a fire.

Owner Brega Petroleum Marketing said the fires had been brought under control far faster than expected, with engineers telling Reuters news agency that damage had been limited, though operations were interrupted.

In a statement on X, Abdulhamid Dbeibah, Libya's internationally recognized prime minister, wrote that the crime of targeting civilian infrastructure would "not go unanswered."

"The use of drones to strike vital facilities," wrote Dbeibah, "is not a random incident, but rather an organized and dangerous act that requires a firm response to protect the state and its institutions and prevent its recurrence."

Officials from Libya's electricity provider said two further drones targeted the Zawiya power plant early Tuesday morning, with one hitting the fire-fighting system but causing no damage.

What is the security situation in divided Libya?

Libya has remained divided since the 2011 uprising that toppled Gadhafi. Dbeibah's UN-recognized government is based in Tripoli in the west, while eastern and parts of southern Libya are controlled by the Libyan National Army (LNA), a military force led by commander Khalifa Haftar.

Amid those tensions, the LNA said its head of military intelligence, Fawzi al-Mansouri, was killed in a car bombing in Benghazi on Monday night.

According to the LNA, an explosive device attached to al-Mansouri's vehicle detonated as he left a mosque. Authorities have not identified those responsible.

Khaled Haftar, one of Khalifa Haftar's sons, said an investigation had been opened, adding that initial "indicators point to a despicable terrorist tactic," according to AFP news agency.

His office later said authorities had arrested a "terrorist cell" in Benghazi that was allegedly pre-

paring acts of sabotage, but did not say whether it was linked to al-Mansouri's killing.

Al-Mansouri was a prominent military figure close to the Haftar family and had played a key role in fighting jihadist groups in eastern Libya.

How has political division affected oil production?

The split between dueling administrations has stunted the country's oil producing progress and kept foreign investors wary as rival sides clash over control of the oil revenues that pour into the Central Bank of Libya.

In 2024, a standoff over control of the bank slashed the country's oil exports by more than half.

Libya holds Africa's largest proven oil reserves, yet has struggled to return to pre-2011 production levels of 1.6 million barrels per day.

June production hit 1.44 million barrels per day, the highest output levels since 2013, but far short of its target of 2 million barrels per day. - **BN**

UNESCO

Around 2.4mn girls barred from school in Afghanistan

KABUL: Around 2.4 million girls in Afghanistan have been denied access to secondary education since the Taliban returned to power in 2021, UNESCO said on Tuesday.

The figure has risen by about 200,000 since last year and could reach nearly four million by 2030 if the ban remains in place.

"Afghanistan remains the only country in the world where girls and women are formally banned from secondary and higher education," Hoda Jaberian, UNESCO's program coordinator for education in emergencies, said.

"Five years is not a temporary interruption in a child's education. It is clearly almost an entire secondary school cycle."

The Taliban seized power on August 15, 2021, as US and NATO forces withdrew after two decades of war.

They initially assured the international community that women would be allowed to continue studying.

But secondary schools were closed to girls in March 2022. Women were barred from universities in December that year.

The Taliban described both measures as temporary, but they remain in force.

The authorities say they respect women's rights in line with their interpretation of Islamic law and Afghan culture. They have also insisted the issue is a domestic matter.

Restrictions extend beyond education. Women face limits on employment and movement and have been barred from public parks, gyms and beauty salons.

The UN has described the broader system of restrictions as "gender apartheid." Russia is the only country to formally recognize



the Taliban administration.

What has happened to girls' education?

UNESCO says the restrictions have reversed two decades of progress.

Girls had very limited access to schooling in 2001. By 2021, nearly one million were enrolled in secondary education.

"Afghanistan had made really major progress in expanding girls' access to education," Jaberian said. "But unfortunately, much of that progress now has been completely reversed."

UNESCO has called for the immediate and unconditional restoration of girls' and women's right to secondary and higher education.

The agency continues to support community-based education as well as literacy and skills programs, often held in community spaces or facilitators' homes.

UNESCO estimates that excluding women from secondary and higher education could push around 600,000 women out of the workforce by 2066.

The restrictions could also cause cumulative income losses of 9.6 billion US dollars and increase the risk of early marriage.

The ban is also worsening a

shortage of female teachers. UNESCO expects Afghanistan to face a deficit of more than 11,000 qualified female teachers by 2030.

The system is also under pressure from people returning to Afghanistan.

Three million people returned in 2025 alone, either voluntarily or forcibly. More than seven million have returned or been forced back since 2023.

Natural disasters have added to the crisis. Earthquakes, floods and other disasters have forced around 1,000 schools to close since 2021, UNESCO said.

"Many teachers have left the country and those who were in the system are banned from continuing teaching," Jaberian said.

She added that restrictions on women teaching boys had left some pupils with unqualified male teachers or no teachers at all.

How severe is Afghanistan's wider education crisis?

Afghanistan's education system is facing problems far beyond the ban on girls. More than two million primary school children are already out of school for other reasons. More than 90% of 10-year-olds cannot read a simple text, while the national literacy rate stands at 37%. - **BN**

SPORTS

Bangladesh take on Australia in long-awaited Darwin Test

For the hosts this is the start of a massive 12 months in Test cricket with the two-match series beginning on Thursday

DARWIN: In so many ways, the Test series has been a long time coming. Bangladesh have not visited Australia for a Test series in 23 years (and 18 for any bilateral exchange), while Darwin has not hosted a Test for 22.

The first Test of the series begins on Thursday.

Even on a more micro level, it's been seven months since Australia's men played a Test and more than a year since the big four of their bowling attack featured together.

The fact that Bangladesh have waited so long for a series in this country does not reflect particularly well on Cricket Australia, although more recent administrations have started to take a broader view on their role in world cricket.

Quite when Bangladesh can expect to return, however, remains uncertain.

There will be various interested parties with fingers crossed for a contest that goes deep into the weekend - perhaps everyone



other than the Australia players, who will want to be ruthless as the team begins their epic run of 20, or 21, Tests in the next 12 months and avoid dropping any World Test Championship (WTC) points.

Bangladesh's second-innings collapse for 54 against a CA XI in the warm-up match did not bode well but, when the coin goes up on Thursday morning, both sides begin on the same score.

Australia are in a fascinating position as a Test side heading into what will be an era-defining stretch. On the one hand, they are successful and settled.

But on the other, they also have a number of questions around them. An often referenced one is

the age profile of the team - only Cameron Green will be under 30 - particularly when it comes to the fast-bowling group, but they all continue to warrant selection and it would be a tough sell to move them aside with the major series ahead, although rotation is surely inevitable.

The batting order starts the series with some uncertainty. Jake Weatherald faces a huge two weeks in trying to secure his place at the top of the order to stop the revolving door, Green needs to deliver on his talent (a stable spot in the order would help), and Marnus Labuschagne has yet to fully convince he's back to his best.

That top order may still be chal-

lenged by the visiting attack, but would have been more thoroughly examined if fiery quick Nahid Rana had been available.

The side strain suffered in Zimbabwe was an agonising blow on so many levels.

Bangladesh, who are fourth in the WTC after two wins against Pakistan earlier in the year, and won four in a row including a brace against Ireland before a recent hammering to Zimbabwe, will need the experience of captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mushfiqur Rahim to lead the way with the bat. A victory would be a massive upset.

In the spotlight
Cameron Green: He is the young-

est member of Australia's Test side, but he's not young in international cricket anymore. He's 37 matches into his career and holds middling averages.

It feels as though he is entering a pivotal season, and perhaps even a pivotal couple of months if he's to play a key role throughout this run of Test cricket. The management is desperate to keep him in the side but the faith will need to be repaid, most importantly with the bat where he should be a central figure in the future. Green has to make sure that's the case.

Najmul Hossain Shanto: A huge amount rests on the shoulders of Bangladesh captain in a batting order that feels vulnerable.

He arrives with a decent 2026 under his belt to date, averaging 46.83 in three matches, and though his overall Test average is a less impressive 33.49, he has shown an ability to convert: of his 15 scores over fifty, nine have become centuries. He showed glimpses of form with 37 against the CA XI.

'All about playing now'
Speaking ahead of the match Australian skipper Pat Cummins said: "It's been a great few months. Now it's all about playing. We don't look too far ahead. We as a group are quite good at just being quite present, not thinking too far ahead and moving on from one game to the next. For us at the moment, it's all Bangladesh this series."

Cummins counterpart Shanto said: "They are obviously the No. 1 team in the world, so we will be facing a lot of challenges. Playing against them is a huge opportunity

for our players so nobody really needs added motivation. Everyone is confident knowing that a five-wicket haul or a century can be crucial. If it contributes to the team's cause, it can only mean good things for the team."

The clash at Marrara Oval will be only the third Test ever in tropical Darwin and the first since Sri Lanka visited in July 2004. The series moves to Harrup Park in Mackay next week, which will host its maiden Test.

Team news

Australia: Scott Boland will warm the bench as Australia bring back their famous four for the first time in more than a year as Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon all return. The side is as expected but the batting needs to convince that it can stay together.

Bangladesh: Shanto hinted at there being some "niggles" in the Bangladesh camp but confirmed Litton Das was fit to take his place. Two frontline spinners also appear the likely route while Hasan Mahmud's form for Kent and four wickets in the warm-up match could earn him a spot.

Teams (probable)

Australia: Travis Head, Jake Weatherald, Marnus Labuschagne, Steven Smith, Cameron Green, Alex Carey (wk), Beau Webster, Pat Cummins (capt), Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Josh Hazlewood.

Bangladesh: Tanzid Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Najmul Hossain Shanto (capt), Mushfiqur Rahim, Litton Das (wk), Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Khaled Ahmed/Ebadot Hossain, Hasan Mahmud. (With inputs from Cricinfo)

AGAINST INDIA

Dickwella, Madushanka return to Sri Lanka side for Test series

COLOMBO: Niroshan Dickwella returns to the Sri Lanka Test squad three years after he last played internationals.

Also in Sri Lanka's squad for the Tests against India are uncapped off-spinner Keshara Nuwantha, uncapped top-order batter Pasindu Sooriyabandara - who had also been part of Sri Lanka's last Test squad, and left-arm fast bowler Dilshan Madushanka, who has only played one Test, three years ago. Unavailable for selection were Pathum Nissanka, who continues to recover from a wrist surgery, and Kusal Mendis, who is out with a hamstring injury.

It is Kusal's absence that has opened up a spot for Dickwella to make a comeback at age 33.

Sooriyabandara too keeps his place in the squad partly due to Nissanka's absence, although Nishan Madushka and Lahiru Udara are likely to open the batting, having done so in Sri Lanka's most-recent Test.

Sri Lanka have also unusually selected no fewer than four specialist quicks for a home series, with all-rounder Milan Rathnayaka adding a fifth seam-bowling option. Asitha Fernando is almost certain to play, but Sri Lanka also have Lahiru Kumara, Vishwa Fernando, and Madushanka to pick from.

Only three front-line spinners have been picked. Left-arm spin-



ner Prabath Jayasuriya is Sri Lanka's lead slow bowler, but may play alongside either uncapped Nuwantha, or Ramesh Mendis. Sonal Dinusha - the left-arm spinning all-rounder - is also in Sri Lanka's 16.

On the batting front, Sri Lanka's selections are more predictable. Dinesh Chandimal, Kamindu Mendis, and Dhananjaya de Silva are likely to bat at Nos 3, 4 and 5. All-rounders Dinusha, Ramesh Mendis, and Rathnayaka will be in the running to be selected lower down, with Dickwella likely to bat at No. 6 or 7.

Nuwantha, 25, had impressed in a Sri Lanka A match against India A in Galle last month, taking 5 for 159 in the first innings. In the last week, he also returned with match figures of 3 for 97 against India in the tour match in Colombo. He is inexperienced even in domestic cricket however, with

only 15 first-class appearances and 64 wickets to his name.

Madushanka, meanwhile, has almost exclusively played T20 cricket in the past two months, and had not played the Sri Lanka four-day domestic tournament this year, or in any multi-day Sri Lanka A fixtures. His last Test was his debut against Pakistan in 2023.

The first Test begins in Galle on Saturday, before the series moves to the SSC in Colombo on August 23 for its conclusion.

Squad: Dhananjaya De Silva (capt), Lahiru Udara, Nishan Madushka, Kamindu Mendis, Dinesh Chandimal, Pasindu Sooriyabandara, Sonal Dinusha, Niroshan Dickwella, Ramesh Mendis, Prabath Jayasuriya, Keshara Nuwantha, Milan Rathnayaka, Asitha Fernando, Lahiru Kumara, Vishwa Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka. - Agencies

PAKISTAN SKIPPER

Babar Azam returns to top 10 of ICC Test batting rankings

DUBAI: Pakistan captain Babar Azam returned to the top 10 of the ICC Men's Test Batting Rankings after two years following his team's eight-wicket win over the West Indies in Port of Spain that helped draw the two-match ICC World Test Championship series.

The 31-year-old scored 88 and 24 not out, advancing five slots to 10th position in the rankings. He had slipped out of the top 10 in September 2024 after remaining there continuously for the previous five years.

Babar's career best second position was achieved during a home series against England in December 2022.

Abdullah Shafique, who was named Player of the Match for his unbeaten knocks of 160 and 24, progressed 25 slots to 32nd position, overtaking players like Marnus Labuschagne, KL Rahul and compatriots Salman Agha and Shan Masood in the process.

Brandon King of the West Indies was another player to rise in the batters' list, up from 73rd to joint-69th despite being unable to bat in the second innings due to a back injury. He scored 46 off 50 balls in the first innings.

The bowling rankings saw the West Indies fast bowler Shamar Joseph inch up one place to 19th after finishing with three wickets in the match while Pakistan off-



spinner Sajid Khan (up five places to 30th), new-ball bowler Mohammad Ali (up eight places to 85th) and left-arm spinner Ali Usman (up 58 places to 97th) have also moved up.

In the ICC Men's ODI Batting Rankings, Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz rose three positions to 11th after scoring 32 and 71 in the second and third matches of their series against Ireland. Oman's Hammad Mirza (up two places to 85th) and the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Rahul Chopra (up 37 places to joint-97th) have advanced following their performances in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 series.

Ireland's seam bowler Mark

Adair returned in 17th position after picking two wickets each in two matches against Afghanistan and Scotland's Brandon McMullen was up 10 spots to joint-48th in the bowlers' list after taking three wickets each against Canada and the UAE.

The drawn Test series in the West Indies has not helped the cause of either team as they occupy the bottom two positions in the ICC World Test Championship points table. Australia are at the top with 87.50 percentage points with seven wins and a loss in eight outings while South Africa (75.00) and New Zealand (72.22) are in second and third positions, respectively. - Agencies

SANJOG GUPTA SPEAKS

Era of 'randomly scheduled' bilaterals 'has to come to an end,' says ICC CEO

DUBAI: The era of "randomly scheduled" bilateral series "has to come to an end," but the much-debated ODI format can continue to survive and thrive with its place "inextricably" linked to the World Cup, ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta said on Wednesday.

"The era of randomly scheduled bilateral series has to come to an end, because countries will not be able to sustain cricket without context, culture, competition and competitiveness, which require significant investment of resources, both financial and non-financial," Gupta, who took over as ICC CEO in July last year, told Indian news agency PTI.

"It's important to stay focused on the four levers which drive attention and affiliation - context, culture, competition and competitiveness - and ODIs can continue

not just to survive, but thrive.

"There is a place for the format in the product portfolio, which is inextricably linked to men's and women's World Cups. We need to look at what we want the format to stand for and how we want it to evolve, including the expanse of participation."

The future of ODIs has become a debated issue for the last few years, especially with the advent of several T20 leagues around the world and Test cricket also garnering interest and context with the introduction of the World Test Championship (WTC) in 2019, in which each two-year cycle ends with a team crowned the Test champion after the final. For ODIs, the most recent landmark was the 5000th game played recently, between Scotland and Canada in Dundee last week.

The next ODI World Cup will be



played in October-November 2027 in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The ICC had recently - after its annual conference in Edinburgh - revamped the structure of the 14-team tournament to include a Super Series round before the group

stages, and a new Super 7 before the semi-finals.

Since the Super Series means the 12th, 13th and the 14th qualifying teams will play in a tri-series from which only one will make it to the main round of the World Cup, the format of the tournament

copped severe criticism earlier this week from two Associate boards, Cricket Scotland and KNCB, the Netherlands Cricket Board.

The 2027 World Cup will be the first ICC event of the next FTP (2027-2031) cycle, which governs bilateral international series between member boards and which is set to be finalised at the ICC's meetings in Hong Kong later this year. The current men's FTP runs until April 2027 and the next phase will also bring with it a new cycle of media rights.

Former South Africa captain Graeme Smith had also expressed concerns around bilateral cricket last year, saying it lacked "context" and "consistency" when it wasn't played among the top teams of the world. His former team-mate Jonny Rhodes also voiced similar concerns while saying ODIs "might be

in trouble" going forward but may not go away altogether.

"When T20 first started, people were saying it's going to put pressure on Test cricket amazingly it hasn't," Rhodes said at an event in Mumbai on Tuesday. "Sure, some of the Test cricket looks like T20 at times, there's some aggressive batting and bowling, but for me it was always understanding that 50-over cricket might be the one format that might be in trouble in the years ahead."

"We're really fortunate that what 50-overs cricket has is you've got really passionate fans who support their team no matter what format. At this stage, I think there will be fewer and fewer bilateral series where there's a lot of 50-over cricket in the bilateral series. But it's very difficult to think of cricket without the 50-over version." - Agencies

OMAN OIL PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman crude oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by October 2026 reaching \$86.93. The price of Oman crude oil fell by \$2.19 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$89.12.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 7,481.70 points, up by 0.20% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.29% at 595.40 points. Oman Packaging, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while, A'Saffa Foods, down 3.18%, was the top loser.

A'Suwaiq Port cargo handling rises 38.6% in first half of 2026

Statistics issued by the Port of A'Suwaiq management indicate that the total cargo handling volume during the first half of 2026 reached 560,600 tonnes, compared to 404,600 tonnes during the same period in 2025, achieving a growth rate of approximately 38.6%



A'SUWAIQ: The Port of A'Suwaiq in North Al Batinah Governorate witnessed notable growth during the first half of 2026 in cargo handling volumes and the number of vessels received, alongside enhanced operational efficiency and improved handling processes. This contributed to reduced vessel turnaround times and elevated the quality of services provided.

Statistics issued by the Port of A'Suwaiq management indicate that the total cargo handling volume during the first half of 2026 reached 560,600 tonnes, compared to 404,600 tonnes during the same

period in 2025, achieving a growth rate of approximately 38.6%.

The number of vessels received by the port in the first half of this year stood at 590 vessels, compared to 437 vessels during the same period in 2025, reflecting a growth rate of approximately 35.0%.

The management explained that the port handles general cargo vessels carrying vehicles, dry bulk carriers, container vessels, as well as small and medium-sized vessels, and receives vessels with capacities of up to approximately 10,000

tonnes depending on vessel type.

Dry bulk cargo

The Port of A'Suwaiq achieved a 24.8% growth in dry bulk cargo handling volumes during the first half of 2026, reaching 267,200 tonnes, compared to 214,100 tonnes during the same period in 2025. This growth reflects the diversification of operational activities at the port. The volume of foodstuffs, vegetables, fruits, and meat handled during the first half of this year reached 96,600 tonnes,

compared to 54,400 tonnes during the same period in 2025, achieving a growth of approximately 77.6%.

The Port of A'Suwaiq received 68,700 head of livestock in the first half of this year, whereas the port did not receive any livestock shipments during the same period last year due to the redistribution of shipments to other ports under the national plan. The port affirms its full readiness to receive livestock shipments and provide associated operational services.

Engi. Sameer Ghulam Al Bal-

ushi, Director of the Port of A'Suwaiq, affirmed to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the port continues its role in supporting the continuity of supply chains and ensuring the smooth flow of goods between the Sultanate of Oman and neighbouring countries, thereby contributing to food security enhancement.

He noted that the port has launched an electronic portal for shipping agents, which enables the completion of procedures electronically, contributing to expedited

services, enhanced operational efficiency and improved customer experience.

The port has also expanded its operational services by receiving container vessels and vehicle-carrying vessels, reflecting the diversity of its services and its capacity to meet the requirements of trade and the logistics sector.

Eng. Sameer stated: "The market and investment feasibility study for the Port of A'Suwaiq expansion project has been completed, encompassing four main phases. The specialised consultancy services for the first phase of the project will be tendered and awarded, followed by the tendering and awarding of the construction works contract, in preparation for the commencement of project implementation according to the approved plan."

He explained that the most prominent cargo handled through the Port of A'Suwaiq includes vegetables and fruits, foodstuffs, construction materials, equipment, and general cargo, in addition to containers and vehicle-carrying vessels, reflecting the diversity of the port's operational activities and its role in serving import, export, and re-export movements.

He added that the Port of A'Suwaiq continues to implement a number of initiatives and development projects, including the development and reorganisation of operational yards, the completion of procedures related to the expansion project, alongside the upgrading of monitoring systems and the enhancement of digital transformation initiatives, all of which contribute to raising operational efficiency, improving service quality and strengthening the safety and security system. **-ONA**

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK

US household debt drops by \$13bn to \$18.8tn in Q2 2026

NEW YORK: Household debt balances decreased slightly while credit card delinquency transition rates remained steady in the second quarter of 2026, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

The findings, published in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Center for Microeconomic Data Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit, revealed total household debt decreased by \$13 billion, or 0.1 per cent, to stand at \$18.771 trillion.

Despite the quarterly dip, total debt expanded by \$383 billion compared to the same period in the previous year. The data, collected from the New York Fed's nationally representative Consumer Credit Panel, showed aggregate delinquency rates improved slightly in the second quarter, with 4.7 per cent of outstanding debt in some stage of delinquency.

"Delinquency rates across most products have held steady over the past two years," said Jolelle Scally, Economic Policy Advisor at the New York Fed.

"Still, new delinquencies for auto loans and credit cards remain at elevated levels, a trend we'll continue to monitor," Scally added.

Mortgage balances led the quarterly decline, dropping by \$74 billion to total \$13.117 trillion at the end of June, though annual mortgage growth remained positive with a \$182 billion increase. Mortgage originations held steady with \$505 billion newly originated during the quarter.

Transition rates into serious delinquency, defined as 90 days or more delinquent, for mortgage debt stood at 1.52 per cent in Q2 2026 compared to 1.29 per cent in Q2 2025.

Home equity lines of credit (HELOC) balances rose by \$13 billion to \$459 billion, which registered a \$48 billion increase year-over-year and stood \$142



billion above the trough reached in the first quarter of 2022. HELOC limits increased by \$19 billion. The serious delinquency rate for HELOC remained unchanged at 1.15 per cent.

Credit card balances increased by \$21 billion during the quarter to reach \$1.263 trillion, marking a \$54 billion annual increase. Aggregate credit card limits grew, supported by an \$85 billion uptick in credit limits earlier in the year.

Credit card serious delinquency transition rates reached 6.97 per cent, compared to 6.93 per cent recorded in Q2 2025.

Auto loan balances grew by \$28 billion to \$1.713 trillion, representing a \$58 billion annual expansion, as auto loan originations picked up to \$211 billion.

Serious delinquency transitions for auto loans stood at 3.00 per cent, compared to 2.93 per cent a year earlier.

Student debt balances decreased by \$7 billion to \$1.651 trillion, though annual figures reflected a \$13 billion increase.

Transition into serious delinquency for student loans moved to 7.83 per cent from 12.88 per cent in Q2 2025, with student loan delinquencies remaining an exception due to ongoing impacts from the re-reporting of defaulted student debt.

Overall flow into serious delinquency across all debt categories fell to 2.57 per cent from 2.91 per cent recorded a year prior. **-ANI**

PUBLIC SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Ten agreements signed to localise electrical transformer component manufacturing

MUSCAT: Ten agreements have been signed with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as local and international companies to localise the manufacturing of key components used in the production of electrical transformers, with expected investments totaling around OMR 15 million.

The agreements were signed under the "Watinha - From Vision to Partnerships" initiative, organised by the Public Services Regulatory Authority (APSR) in cooperation with Voltamp Energy.

The agreements include four with local SMEs and six with local and international companies. They cover the establishment of seven new factories and the addition of new production lines at two existing factories, contributing to the expansion of the local manufacturing base, enhancing local content, and developing supply chains linked to the electricity sector.

The signing ceremony was held under the patronage of Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aafi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, and was attended by Her Highness Sayyida Mayan bint Shihab Al Said, Vice Chairperson of Voltamp, Dr. Mansour bin Talib Al Hinai, Chairman of the Public Services Regulatory Authority, as well as a number of officials, CEOs, investors and representatives of SMEs.

The agreements represent a practical step toward transforming demand for components and equipment in the electricity sector into investment and industrial opportunities within the Sultanate of Oman. They aim to build local production capabilities capable of meeting part of the sector's needs, strengthen supply-chain resilience, increase local value added, and support the rapid growth of electricity and energy projects in Oman.

Dr Mansour bin Talib Al Hinai, Chairman of the Public Services Regulatory Authority, said the agreements represent a practical step toward localising strategic industries, enhancing local content and enabling SMEs to integrate into industrial value chains. He



noted that this would contribute to expanding investment and production opportunities, increasing local value added and enhancing the competitiveness of the national economy.

He added that the rapid growth in electricity and energy projects, transmission and distribution networks, renewable energy and green hydrogen highlights the importance of building a national industrial base capable of meeting the needs of these sectors efficiently, with high quality and reliability.

Dr. Al Hinai noted that localising the manufacturing of electrical transformer components represents "an investment in people before it is an investment in industry", as it creates opportunities for knowledge transfer, the development of national capabilities and the creation of quality employment opportunities, while also attracting investment and supporting national enterprises.

He stressed that the true value of the agreements lies in their impact on investment, industrial localisation, the empowerment of national talent and job creation, contributing to the development of a more diversified and sustainable economy.

For her part, Her Highness Sayyida Mayan bint Shihab Al Said, Vice Chairperson of Voltamp, said the initiative directly reflects national priorities. She expressed confidence that, through collective efforts, the initiative would become an inspiring success story

remembered by future generations and a landmark in advancing the electrical components industry in Oman and the region. She added that its success could serve as the first spark for pioneering national initiatives across various sectors.

The agreements include the establishment of seven new factories to manufacture eight key electrical transformer components in Oman, in addition to new production lines at two existing factories to manufacture two key components.

The projects are expected to be developed across a proposed total area of up to 34,000 square metres and are expected to create numerous employment opportunities for Omanis, in addition to indirect opportunities in related services and supporting industries. Commercial production at the new projects is expected to begin during 2027 and 2028.

The agreements carry significant economic and industrial importance by expanding the participation of national enterprises and attracting local and international expertise and investment. The four agreements with local SMEs will enable them to establish new industrial projects and participate more extensively in value chains linked to the electricity sector.

Meanwhile, the six agreements with local and international companies will strengthen investment partnerships, promote integration between local and global expertise, facilitate the transfer of knowledge

and technologies, and develop industrial and technical capabilities.

Localising these industries will also enhance the resilience and security of supply chains, reduce dependence on imports and exposure to supply risks and fluctuations in global markets, attract new industrial investments, develop high-value-added industries, and strengthen national capabilities in engineering, technical and operational fields.

The initiative is also expected to retain a greater share of procurement expenditure within the national economy, while building an industrial base capable of expanding and accessing regional and international markets.

The "Watinha - From Vision to Partnerships" initiative is the result of cooperation between the Public Services Regulatory Authority and Voltamp Energy to identify industrial opportunities suitable for localization, encourage investment in industries linked to the electricity sector, and connect the sector's requirements with opportunities available to investors and national enterprises. This collaboration aims to build a more integrated industrial ecosystem capable of meeting part of the sector's needs locally.

The initiative forms part of a broader effort to localise industries and supply chains linked to public utility sectors and transform the needs of these sectors into sustainable economic and industrial opportunities. **-ONA**

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Oman Packaging, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while, A'Saffa Foods, down 3.18%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7481.70 points, up by 0.20% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.29% at 595.40 points. Oman Packaging, up 10.00%, was the top gainer while, A'Saffa Foods, down 3.18%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 8307 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 43.6 million, with more than 146 million shares changing hands. Out of 67 traded securities, 24 advanced, 19 declined, and 24 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 864K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 702K, followed by domestic investors for RO 162K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 13,101.19 points, up 0.51%. Prices of Financial Corporation, Taa-geer Finance, Bank Dhofar, Ahli Bank, Al Madina Takaful were up by 7.22%, 3.57%, 2.39%, 1.90%, 1.82% respectively. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Sohar International Bank, Al Madina Investments, Takaful Oman,



Muscat Finance were down by 2.99%, 2.14%, 1.72%, 1.64%, 1.54% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,434.07 points, down -0.21%. Prices of Oman Packaging, Gulf Mushroom Products, Jazeera Steel Products were up by 10.00%, 1.19%, 0.47% respectively. Prices of Oman Refreshment, A'Saffa Foods, Gulf International Chemicals, Voltamp Energy were down by 4.17%, 3.18%, 2.86%, 0.57% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.37% before closing at 3,011.85 points. Prices of OQ Gas Networks, National Gas, Abraj Energy, Abraj Energy, Sembcorp Salalah were up by 2.36%, 1.87%, 0.51%, 0.39% respectively.

Prices of Al Batinah Power, Oman Telecom, Al Suwadi Power, Al Jazeera Services were down by 1.08%, 1.02%, 0.54%, 0.40% respectively. —United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	7492.06	7424.60	7481.70	7466.53	15.17	0.20 %
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,113.64	12,957.57	13,101.19	13,034.72	66.47	0.51 %
Industry Index	9,462.26	9,421.88	9,434.07	9,454.15	-20.07	-0.21 %
Services Index	3,013.10	2,988.82	3,011.85	3,000.88	10.98	0.37 %
MSX Shariah Index	596.06	583.06	595.40	593.58	1.73	0.29 %
MSX TR INDEX	11,591.08	11,486.72	11,575.05	11,551.68	23.46	0.20 %
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16,122.53	15,930.65	16,107.23	16,025.51	81.72	0.51 %
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,118.75	12,067.03	12,082.66	12,108.36	-25.71	-0.21 %
SERVICES TR IDX	4,036.99	4,004.45	4,035.32	4,020.61	14.71	0.37 %
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,253.83	1,253.83	1,253.83	1,253.83	0.00	0.00 %

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
146,000,247	43,597,987	8,307	38,108,591,370	24	19	24	67

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12

SIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	212,100	45,034	69	0.210	0.215	0.210	0.214	0.209	0.005	2.392	0.214	0.215	0.214	0.100	650,516,886
OM0000000702	OQ GAS NETWORKS	24,620,946	5,245,443	1,547	0.211	0.217	0.211	0.217	0.212	0.005	2.358	0.217	0.220	0.217	0.100	838,745,391
OM0000004769	MADINA TAKAFUL	121,116	13,554	13	0.112	0.112	0.111	0.112	0.110	0.002	1.818	0.112	0.111	0.114	0.100	19,600,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	774,975	107,510	40	0.138	0.139	0.138	0.139	0.137	0.002	1.460	0.139	0.137	0.139	0.100	310,938,471
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	788,757	217,521	57	0.275	0.278	0.273	0.278	0.274	0.004	1.460	0.278	0.276	0.285	0.100	406,603,206
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	102,200	40,232	23	0.383	0.421	0.391	0.421	0.415	0.006	1.446	0.421	0.402	0.410	0.100	472,721,498
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	1,341	572	5	0.428	0.428	0.424	0.427	0.422	0.005	1.185	0.424	0.424	0.426	0.100	21,496,195
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	2,015,944	935,404	7	0.464	0.465	0.464	0.465	0.460	0.005	1.087	0.465	0.459	0.467	0.100	756,065,055
OM0000000120	ASTAD SHIPPING	3,087,271	726,913	697	0.234	0.236	0.232	0.235	0.233	0.002	0.858	0.235	0.250	0.235	0.000	1,224,054,906
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	2,557,472	1,011,746	651	0.396	0.398	0.393	0.397	0.395	0.002	0.506	0.397	0.400	0.397	0.100	305,769,400
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	3,130	2,680	4	0.856	0.860	0.856	0.860	0.856	0.004	0.467	0.860	0.856	0.870	0.100	107,412,246
OM00000004735	SEMBOCORP SALALAH	25,700	6,569	10	0.255	0.256	0.255	0.256	0.255	0.001	0.392	0.256	0.256	0.256	0.100	244,370,419
OM00000009125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	175,000	53,253	8	0.304	0.305	0.304	0.305	0.304	0.001	0.329	0.305	0.300	0.304	0.100	61,000,000
OM00000001152	OMAN NAT'L ENGINEERING & INVEST	591	86	1	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.000	0.000	0.146	0.146	0.148	0.100	21,900,000
OM00000001509	DHOFAR INT'L DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	11,103	2,622	9	0.265	0.267	0.263	0.264	0.264	0.000	0.000	0.264	0.264	0.265	0.100	130,958,821
OM00000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	1,250	4,125	1	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	0.000	0.000	3.300	3.301	3.300	0.100	296,010,000
OM00000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO	10,000	880	3	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.098	0.099	0.100	8,820,000
OM00000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	1,000	154	1	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.158	0.158	0.000	0.000	0.154	0.154	0.158	0.100	25,280,000
OM00000003234	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	81,466	22,568	10	0.277	0.278	0.277	0.278	0.278	0.000	0.000	0.278	0.277	0.278	0.100	65,721,980
OM00000009465	CORREPO	489,230	156,219	36	0.322	0.324	0.318	0.322	0.322	0.000	0.000	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.100	269,604,042
OM00000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	13,143,393	6,078,006	310	0.465	0.466	0.461	0.464	0.464	0.000	0.000	0.464	0.464	0.464	0.010	3,712,000,000
OM00000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	18,200	4,486	8	0.250	0.250	0.245	0.249	0.250	-0.001	-0.400	0.249	0.249	0.250	0.100	10,667,905
OM00000009808	ROBASE INDUSTRIES (SFPZ)	20,974,347	5,196,597	1,222	0.250	0.250	0.247	0.248	0.249	-0.001	-0.403	0.248	0.250	0.249	0.000	857,653,731
OM00000002796	BANK MUSCAT	25,459,365	10,015,875	1,093	0.397	0.398	0.392	0.395	0.397	-0.002	-0.504	0.395	0.400	0.395	0.100	2,965,026,839
OM00000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	203,928	37,454	35	0.185	0.185	0.183	0.183	0.184	-0.001	-0.543	0.183	0.183	0.185	0.100	130,736,360
OM00000003681	VOLTAMP ENERGY	705,558	122,884	41	0.174	0.176	0.174	0.174	0.175	-0.001	-0.571	0.174	0.174	0.175	0.010	174,000,000
OM00000001097	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	12,559	3,894	3	0.312	0.312	0.310	0.310	0.312	-0.002	-0.641	0.310	0.310	0.343	0.100	32,550,000
OM00000003026	OMAN TELECOM	3,311,677	4,816,332	262	1.468	1.475	1.446	1.454	1.469	-0.015	-1.021	1.454	1.460	1.454	0.100	1,090,500,000
OM00000004825	ALBATINAH POWER	231,973	42,769	32	0.185	0.185	0.183	0.183	0.185	-0.002	-1.081	0.183	0.183	0.184	0.100	123,504,400
OM00000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	42,738,268	7,864,521	1,830	0.187	0.188	0.182	0.183	0.187	0.004	2.139	0.183	0.183	0.185	0.100	1,404,700,038
OM00000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	8,400	1,098	6	0.133	0.133	0.130	0.130	0.134	-0.004	-2.985	0.130	0.130	0.136	0.100	16,635,938
OM00000002804	AASAFFA FOODS	1,310	956	3	0.730	0.730	0.730	0.730	0.754	-0.024	-3.183	0.730	0.720	0.730	0.100	87,600,000
Total	32	141,898,969	42,778,697	7,727												

Parallel Market

OM00000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	816	180	1	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.200	0.020	10.000	0.220	0.195	0.220	0.100	7,135,889
OM00000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	7050	731	6	0.099	0.104	0.099	0.104	0.097	0.007	7.216	0.104	0.090	0.104	0.100	7,283,116
OM00000003281	TAA-GEER FINANCE	846	98	1	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.112	0.004	3.571	0.116	0.112	0.116	0.100	32,908,131
OM00000002200	AHLI BANK	103,000	21,744	4	0.211	0.215	0.211	0.215	0.211	0.004	1.896	0.215	0.190	0.215	0.100	597,323,547
OM00000000160	NATIONAL GAS	193,631	20,825	27	0.108	0.109	0.107	0.109	0.107	0.002	1.869	0.109	0.106	0.114	0.100	9,265,000
OM00000008868	THE PEARL REIF	7,384	1,322	1	0.179	0.179	0.179	0.179	0.178	0.001	0.562	0.179	0.177	0.181	0.100	105,867,202
OM00000001151	OMIFCO	1,704,135	339,257	263	0.199	0.200	0.198	0.200	0.199	0.001	0.503	0.200	0.180	0.200	0.000	1,337,875,000
OM00000010823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	400	409	3	1.022	1.022	1.022	1.022	1.018	0.004	0.393	1.022	1.022	1.030	0.000	28,028,189
OM00000001384	FINANCIAL SERVICES	17,232	4,136	1	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.000	0.000	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.100	4,800,000
OM00000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	6,611	693	6	0.138	0.138	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.000	0.000	0.135	0.135	0.140	0.100	13,365,000
OM00000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	579,771	73,306	93	0.128	0.129	0.125	0.128	0.128	0.000	0.000	0.129	0.126	0.129	0.100	28,160,000
OM00000005280	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INVEST	320	574	1	1.800	1.800	1.800	1.800	1.800	0.000	0.000	1.800	1.800	0.000	0.000	126,000,000
OM00000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	25,367	3,989	4	0.158	0.158	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.000	0.000	0.157	0.155	0.157	0.100	31,868,872
OM00000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	14,645	2,475	5	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.000	0.000	0.169	0.169	0.167	0.100	16,528,565
OM00000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	420,000	111,720	60	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.000	0.000	0.266	0.265	0.266	0.100	532,728,727
OM00000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	7,880	638	1	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.000	0.000	0.081	0.078	0.089	0.100	18,001,440
OM00000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	3,730	263	4	0.069	0.072	0.069	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.069	0.072	0.100	14,400,000
OM00000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	12,017	1,287	8	0.106	0.108	0.106	0.107	0.108	-0.001	-0.926	0.107	0.106	0.118	0.100	90,064,033
OM00000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	10,000	894	2	0.090	0.090	0.089	0.089	0.090	0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.081	0.090	0.100	13,843,986
OM00000001990	MUSCAT FINANCE	700	45	1	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.065	-0.001	-1.338	0.064	0.063	0.064	0.100	16,957,995
OM00000004776	TAKASUL FUND	3,838	6,906	1	0.839	0.839	0.839	0.839	0.839	0.000	-0.839	0.839	0.839	0.839	0.100	15,000,000
OM00000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	7,656	439	4	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.057	0.058	-0.001	1.723	0.057	0.055	0.058	0.100	2,456,700
OM00000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	100,000	6,817	13	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.068	0.070	-0.002	-2.857	0.068	0.068	0.070	0.100	142,800
OM00000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	450	518	1	1.150	1.150	1.150	1.150	1.200	-0.050	-4.167	1.150	1.150	0.000	0.000	57,500,000
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IN THE WAKE OF A "THREAT"

Trump accepts secret switching of planes in Turkiye

MARYLAND: US President Donald Trump has acknowledged that he secretly switched planes while returning from the NATO Summit in Turkiye last month, in the wake of a "threat" to him at the behest of the Secret Service and the military, shortly after a Washington Post report on the incident.

Speaking to the media, Trump said he followed what the Secret Service and military told him to do and got on to a different flight.

"It's only up to the Secret Service. I just follow what they'd like to do. I go by the Secret Service and the military. They wanted me to go on a different flight, a different plane, equal safety, but they wanted me to do it, so I did it. I do what they say. I guess there was a threat out there. I get a lot of threats," the US President said.

The acknowledgement by



President Trump comes after the Washington Post had reported that shortly after attending the NATO Summit in Turkiye on July 8, Trump took a secret flight out of

the country amid a threat of an Iranian assassination attempt.

The mission, which was not reported earlier, was carried out unbeknownst to journalists and

some White House staff members who believed they were on the same plane as President Trump, as per the material reviewed by the Washington Post, a US official familiar with the operation and another person with knowledge of the President's travel who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Trump added, "This one went over to England where it was shown to the soldiers and they stopped and we showed it to the soldiers. We did a switch over there. It was as per the military and I just have to do what they say."

Old Air Force One jumbo jet

According to corroborating material reviewed by the Washington Post and the US official, while Trump boarded the old Air Force One jumbo jet in view of cameras, he was secretly shuttled out min-

utes later into a smaller plane- the Air Force C-32A via an airport catering truck used typically to load meals and other supplies pre-flight.

To exit that plane without being seen, Trump and several aides stepped aboard an airport catering truck, which was elevated plane-side using hydraulics and positioned at a door on the opposite side of Air Force One's entrance, according to the U.S. official and other corroborating material reviewed by the Washington Post.

Hence, the Air Force One was a "decoy" with media and some members of the White House staff aboard, as per the official.

When asked by the media whether it was dangerous to fly on Air Force One, Trump said, "I think actually the plane that I flew

on was at a greater risk, because I think that would be the plane they would be more likely to go for."

Taking a dig at the past presidents, he added, "I have a lot of threats you don't know about. Any consequential president has a lot of threats. Non-consequential presidents don't get threatened. I think I am maybe the most consequential president. There's nobody that's done more than me in a period of almost 6 years."

Modified Boeing 757

The blue-and-white C-32A, a modified Boeing 757 used to transport American government officials, had been flown to Turkiye along with the legacy Air Force One and the former Qatari jet to support the president's visit, the US official said as per the Washington Post report. **-ANI**

President Aoun discusses pact with top US official



The United States, Israel, and Lebanon signed the Trilateral Framework in Washington on June 26



BEIRUT: Lebanon President Joseph Aoun on Wednesday received US General Joseph Clearfield in Beirut, with discussions focusing on steps to implement the framework agreement reached between Lebanon, Israel, and the United States in Washington on June 26.

According to a X post by the Lebanese Presidency, the meeting comes after General Clearfield held talks in Israel last week, as the US-facilitated trilateral Military Coordination Group for Lebanon (MCG4L) works towards implementing the framework agreement.

In the X post, the Lebanese

Presidency said that President Aoun received "the head of the Military Coordination Group for Lebanon MCG4L, General Joseph Clearfield, in the presence of the American Ambassador to Lebanon, Michel Issa, and a number of General Clewfield's aides."

"During the meeting, they discussed the procedures necessary to implement the framework agreement reached as a result of the Lebanese-American-Israeli negotiations in Washington, in light of the talks conducted by General Clewfield in Israel last week," the Lebanese Presidency said.

The United States, Israel, and Lebanon signed the Trilateral

Framework in Washington on June 26.

The statement said, "This agreement establishes a clear and structured process to restore Lebanon's sovereignty, disarm Hizballah and dismantle its terrorist infrastructure, and enable Israel to return to its borders once that threat to its citizens is removed."

It added that the agreement "also creates a trilateral Military Coordination Group for Lebanon (MCG4L), facilitated by the United States, allowing the two sides to implement this Framework."

"We intend to work closely with our regional partners to implement this Framework and deliver a brighter, more secure future for

Israel, Lebanon, and the whole Middle East," it added.

Meanwhile, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam on July 31 sharply condemned military actions by Israeli forces in southern Lebanon, describing them as a direct breach of international law and existing truce commitments and a threat to UNESCO sites

In a post on X, Prime Minister Salam warned that the escalating strikes pose severe risks to civilians in the south while inflicting damage on historically significant heritage sites.

"The ongoing Israeli assaults in southern Lebanon--through explosions, shelling, and systematic destruction--represent a blatant violation of the ceasefire, in addition to constituting a flagrant breach of Lebanon's sovereignty and security, as well as the principles and rules of international law," Salam stated.

They not only embody a condemned escalatory approach but also pose a threat to the safety of our people in the south, not to mention the damage inflicted upon the archaeological landmarks inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, which constitute a cherished part of our nation's history," he added. **-ANI**

INDONESIA

Over 130 people rescued after Bali ferry catches fire

JAKARTA: Indonesian authorities rescued over 130 people from a burning ferry on Wednesday near the tourist island of Bali.

The fire broke out on the Padang Bai-Lembar ferry route connecting Bali and Lombok and is also used by tourists travelling between the two popular destinations.

It is the second major ferry fire in Indonesia this month.

Muhammad Hariyadi, who heads the Mataram Search and Rescue Office, told Metro TV that all passengers had been rescued and there were no immediate reports of casualties.

"We have approached the ship and confirmed that all passengers are no longer on board," he said. "We visually see no passengers on the ship."

In a statement later, Hariyadi said the total number of passengers on board was still being verified. He had initially said the ferry was carrying 114 passengers and 17 crew members, referring to the passenger manifest data released by Padang Bai's port authority.

The ferry also had 44 vehicles and 53 motorcycles on board.

Fire broke out on board the Putri Yasmin Ferry at about 4:15 a.m.



(1045 GMT) while it was en route from Padang Bai port in Bali to Lembar port on the adjacent island of Lombok, according to the search office in Mataram.

The agency received an emergency report nearly half an hour later and then deployed rescue vessels and personnel.

The burning ferry was in the midst of rough seas with waves as high as 4 meters (13 feet), Hariyadi said, adding that conditions had complicated rescue efforts.

A ferry in the vicinity had evacuated 30 passengers and brought them to Bali. A search and rescue vessel was on its way to Lembar port with 59 of the rescued passengers. **-DW**

CHANGING CLIMATE

Disrupted monsoons force India to face climate threat

NEW DELHI: India's southwest monsoon usually arrives around June, bringing most of the country's annual rainfall, and begins to retreat by September.

Its timing and intensity have always varied, but the broad pattern was predictable enough for farmers, cities and businesses to plan around it. Now, this natural rhythm increasingly seems like a thing of the past.

More than 100 people have been killed across India since late July as heavy monsoon rains triggered floods, landslides and lightning strikes.

The northeastern state of Assam has borne the brunt, with more than 120,000 people affected by flooding. Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar and Jharkhand have also reported deaths and widespread disruption.

The problem is not necessarily that India is receiving more rain. It is the way the rain is arriving: longer dry spells are followed by short bursts of intense rainfall that can overwhelm rivers, drainage systems and hillsides.

El Nino has added to this year's variability but scientists say the longer-term changes are being driven by a changing climate.

Have the monsoons entered a new era?

Akshay Deoras, a senior research scientist with the UK's National Centre for Atmospheric Science and the University of Reading, cautions against describing the Indian monsoon as having entered "a fundamentally different regime."

"Active and break spells have always been part of the monsoon. What appears to be changing is their intensity," Deoras told DW.

He pointed out a warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture,



making active spells, or periods of intense rainfall, more intense.

Madhavan Nair Rajeevan, a climate scientist and former secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences, says the change is visible in the behaviour of the monsoon itself.

Average seasonal rainfall, he said, has not shown a systematic long-term change and the monsoon remains a robust natural phenomenon. But the timing, intensity and distribution of rainfall are all noticeably different.

"The characteristics of the Indian monsoon have changed fundamentally," Rajeevan told DW. "We are witnessing an increase in short-duration rainfall extremes, longer dry spells, and changes in the frequency, intensity and distribution of monsoon weather systems."

He believes the rise in extreme rainfall is more than natural variability. "It represents a structural shift in the monsoon system," he said.

Villages and cities both at risk

India's farmers depend heavily on the timing of rainfall. Long dry spells can disrupt sowing and reduce soil moisture and intense rain can wash away fields and damage crops.

India's cities are also struggling due to rapid construction, as new roads and buildings leave less land to absorb water, thus interfering with natural drainage.

Moreover, after weeks of dry weather, hard, dry soil absorbs less water. When heavy rain finally arrives, more of it floods the rivers and drains instead of replenishing groundwater.

India not stepping up to extreme weather hazard

"The greatest risks increasingly come from short periods of very intense rainfall," Deoras told DW, warning that India's infrastructure is increasingly out of step with this changing threat.

Deoras says drainage systems

and flood management are still too often designed around historical seasonal rainfall averages rather than the short, high-impact events that cause the greatest disruption.

He noted that forecasting has improved, but knowing that extreme rain is coming is only useful if authorities act on the warning.

Warnings, he said, need to translate into "timely, impact-based decisions" such as changing school schedules, restricting travel or closing off vulnerable areas before heavy rain arrives.

Ritwick Dutta, an environmental lawyer and managing trustee of the Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment, says the problem goes beyond extreme weather itself.

"It is now scientifically accepted that climate change leads to erratic rainfall patterns: high rainfall over a few days followed by long dry periods during the monsoon," Dutta told DW.

"These trends have been com-

pounded by the fact that the decision-making process in India fails to consider climate change while planning construction projects."

Dutta points to the western city of Pune, where a study by the state government and the Energy and Resources Institute projects a 37% increase in rainfall by 2030. Still, Dutta says this projection has not been adequately incorporated into the city's planning, including its riverfront development.

"Dams, embankments and roads are all likely to suffer major damage due to climate change, and yet we proceed as though climate change is a matter to be discussed only in conferences and workshops," Dutta said.

Dutta says India's environmental clearance system does not require climate change to be systematically factored into project decisions.

"The concept of 'climate proofing' does not exist here," he said.

Thousands killed in last year's monsoon

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) found that extreme weather affected India on 331 of 334 monitored days in 2025, or 99% of the period assessed.

More than 4,000 people died, about 3,000 during the monsoon, while at least 30 states and union territories experienced extreme weather simultaneously for eight consecutive months.

Sunita Narain, director general of the CSE, argues that adaptation therefore needs to become part of the country's development strategy.

"Climate change is no longer a future threat. It is already here in the form of extreme heat, extreme rainfall and increasingly destructive weather events," Narain told DW.

"The challenge is no longer

proving the science, but redesigning our economy and infrastructure to survive it," she added.

"Cities, roads, drainage systems and water infrastructure can no longer be designed for yesterday's climate."

Every investment, she says, must be planned for a future of more intense and unpredictable weather.

In her reckoning, India must stop treating each flood as an isolated disaster and start planning for a climate in which such extremes are no longer exceptional.

What can be done against extreme weather?

India is facing a whole new pattern of extreme weather. It can record a rainfall deficit nationally while individual regions are underwater. Farmers can go weeks without useful rain and then lose crops in a few hours. Cities can prepare for an average monsoon and still be overwhelmed by one extraordinary downpour.

"The focus now needs to move beyond documenting and discussing these changes towards developing and implementing effective, sector-specific adaptation strategies," climate scientist and former Indian official Rajeevan said.

That means better flood management in cities, changes in agricultural practices, stronger water-storage systems and infrastructure designed around short-duration extreme rainfall rather than historical averages.

India cannot control the monsoon or El Nino and it cannot stop global warming on its own. It can decide, however, where it builds, how it builds and if its new infrastructure is designed for the climate of its future.

"We are, in effect, 'weaponizing the environment,'" Dutta said. **-DW**



LIFESTYLE

‘LONELINESS INFLUENCERS’:
BEING ALONE BRINGS IN THE CLICKS

No friends, no dating, no problem? Many influencers are presenting social isolation as a lifestyle. But experts warn of the consequences

A young woman in business attire comes home, cuddles with her cat, cleans her high heels, takes a shower and settles down on the couch to watch TV in her pajamas with pizza and a soft drink. Afterward, she tidies up, takes out the trash (“no clutter in this apartment ever”) and spends the rest of the evening on the sofa with her cat.

The title of the video: “POV: You live alone in NYC and have no friends so this is how you spend your Friday night.” It has already raked in over 11 million views on Instagram.

This reel is the most successful clip to date by Paulina Cee, who boasts over 320,000 followers on Instagram.

Her account features numerous videos of this kind, always emphasising her friend-free life.

And Paulina Cee is just one influencer amid a broader trend: Social media is full of young women presenting their solitude as a lifestyle. Sometimes they have a dog, sometimes one or two cats, but otherwise the videos share a similar aesthetic: an apartment so clean and so sparsely furnished, it verges on sterility.

At peace with themselves and being alone

One of the pioneers of this trend is Lana Isa from Toronto. Her videos bear such titles as “just an introvert in her natural habitat (home alone with yummy food)” or “what a weekend looks like as a friendless girl with NO interest in men or dating.”

Lana Isa always ends her reels with the positive message, “Enjoy your life.” She appears to be at peace with her largely solitary lifestyle. Apart from FaceTime calls with her mother and contact with her sister, her clips mainly revolve around consumption: usually unhealthy food, new clothes or movies.

The Canadian says her content has no purpose other than sharing her real life, which, according to her, has been shaped by generalised anxiety disorder and the loss of her relationship and all of her friendships several years ago.

It was never supposed to be just an ‘aesthetic vlog,’ or to romanticize having no friends. ... I just happened to start filming and show the current chapter of my life, which was the peace that came after I dealt with my feelings.”

Authenticity hard to verify

Mareike Ernst, an assistant professor of psychoanalytically-oriented psychotherapy research at the University of Klagenfurt, has mixed feelings about such reels.

Ernst, whose research focuses on psychotherapy and loneliness, says that on the one hand, it is positive when young women show that being alone, even in public, is good and normal: “That can help destigmatise it and provides a counterpoint to the content of many other influencers, who often portray almost constant social interaction.”

On the other hand, young people in similar life situations might view these “loneliness influencers” as role models, “so that it becomes increasingly normalised to spend most of your time alone and convince yourself that ‘this is perfectly fine.’”

Whether these loneliness influencers are all truly authentic is difficult to verify. What matters, however, is that many followers believe them and respond positively to the solitary lifestyle shown in the videos. The fact remains: Prolonged social isolation can make people ill. Studies show that it increases the risk of heart disease, mental illness and premature death.

Young and lonely — Ways out of isolation

More and more young people are exposed to these risks. In a 2025 World Health Organization (WHO) study, between 17% and 21% of respondents aged 13 to 29 said they felt lonely, with the highest rates observed among teenagers. The WHO estimates that around one quarter of them are affected by social isolation.

According to a Nivea study conducted in 13 countries, 24% of young people aged 16 to 24 feel socially isolated, compared with 19% across all age groups.

Solitude as an aesthetic?

“Loneliness influencers” are almost exclusively women. Ernst sus-

pects this has to do with gender stereotypes: Women are expected to build relationships and be there for others. This countertrend may therefore constitute a form of emancipation.

“Or perhaps it simply fits better with the female influencer aesthetic, which often focuses on self-care, cooking, tidying up and similar activities.”

Because of this aesthetic, US psychotherapist Phil Lane recently addressed these influencers in an Instagram post. “Loneliness influencers, stop trying to make loneliness as an aesthetic happen; it is not going to happen. It is important that we are around our fellow human beings. It’s one of our basic human needs.”

Lane stressed that there is nothing wrong with spending time alone. “Sometimes, I really enjoy my own company, and I enjoy solitude, but we can’t overapply this because it can have significant health risks.”

So far, however, his message has gained little traction: His post has garnered only around 900 views. -dw



SPORTS

Rybakina tops Osaka, Gauff advances on Bencic walkover

The second seed from Kazakhstan rallied from an opening set defeat to overcome Osaka and set up a semi-final showdown with Gauff

TORONTO: An early match time didn't faze Elena Rybakina on Tuesday at the WTA Toronto Open. Neither did a strong start by her opponent.

Rybakina came back for a 4-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4 win over Naomi Osaka to reach the semi-finals at the WTA Tour event. The second seed from Kazakhstan broke Osaka's serve at 3-3 in the deciding set and held on for the win at Sobey's Stadium.

"It was a very difficult match," Rybakina said. "I honestly don't know how I managed to turn it around."

The match started earlier than planned after Switzerland's Belinda Bencic pulled out due to a hip



injury. Fourth-seeded Coco Gauff advanced to the semi-finals via walkover. Organisers confirmed the withdrawal shortly before the evening match was set to begin on centre court.

The Rybakina-Osaka match was moved up into the time-slot and the players delivered with a back-and-forth battle that lasted two hours 33 minutes.

Rybakina played her previous matches during the day sessions and had hoped for a longer pre-match practice session to adjust to



Thursday at the US\$743-million tournament. The 12th-seeded Bencic, who won here in 2015, played with significant taping around her left thigh in a fourth-round win over Alexandra Eala of the Philippines on Sunday.

"I am really sorry to not be able to compete tonight," Bencic said in a statement.

"This is an amazing tournament and I was really looking forward to playing in front of the great fans here in Toronto.

"I tried everything possible to be ready for tonight."

The 11th-seeded Osaka broke serve in the match's opening game and was two points away from victory in the second-set tiebreaker before Rybakina pulled even.

Up 3-2 in the decider, the four-time Grand Slam champion from Japan had four break-point opportunities but Rybakina held serve to tie it.

Osaka was broken after that and Rybakina would close out the match with her 15th ace to secure her third WTA 1000 semifinal appearance of the season.

"I was just trying to stay positive and tried to stay close to the score," Rybakina said. "I'm very happy that I managed to turn it around."

Osaka reached the final last year in Montreal before falling to Canada's Victoria Mboko, who was unable to defend her title due to a knee injury. - Agencies



the late-day light.

"I couldn't find the feeling, it took me some time," Rybakina said. The hard-serving six-footer will meet Gauff in the semi-finals.

"She's a great fighter," Rybakina said. "I know it's going to be a very difficult match."

The other matchup pits ninth-seeded Elina Svitolina of Ukraine against seventh-seeded Iga Swiatek of Poland. Both players won their quarter-final matches on Monday.

The final was scheduled for

MONTREAL MASTERS

Shelton strolls past Mensik; Jodar downs Fils in quarters



MONTREAL: Ben Shelton took another step toward defending his ATP Montreal Masters title on Tuesday with a 6-3, 6-1 quarter-finals hammering of Jakub Mensik for his 10th straight victory in Canada.

World No.10 Shelton, the last top-10 player in the field, was never challenged by the Czech in advancing to a semi-final against fellow American Learner Tien, who ousted Spain's Daniel Merida 6-3, 6-2 in 72 minutes. "It was a great performance for me, super happy with that and to be in the semis again," Shelton said.

Spanish teen Rafael Jodar booked a semifinal spot in only his fifth ATP Masters 1000 event by holding off France's Arthur Fils 7-6 (5), 6-3.

The 19-year-old will face the

oldest remaining player when he plays 25-year-old American Brandon Nakashima in a battle for a place in Thursday's final.

Nakashima reached his breakthrough Masters semi in 77 minutes as he imposed his game on Luciano Darderi 6-2, 6-3, setting up three match points with his 11th ace as winning as the Italian missed on a drop shot.

It's the first time since 1992 that three American men have reached the last four in Canada.

Shelton was on fire in his 72-minute thrashing of Mensik, the American producing 18 winners and only three unforced errors. Shelton has yet to lose a set at this event.

"I felt great, I played well form the ground from point one," Shelton said. "I'm right where I want



to be. I maintained a high level throughout the match. I hope to continue to build on this in the semis."

Jodar shrugged off a slight tweak of his ankle in the second set against Fils and remained calm throughout as his French opponent smashed a racquet after being broken early in the second set.

Jodar, who does not turn 20 until after the US Open, has won 34 matches this season and risen to 15th in world rankings, but sees improving his game as more important than his ranking.

"That shouldn't be your primary thing and your goal," he said. "My goal is to have fun on court and to enjoy all the tournaments that are new for me."

Fils, back after injury, saved three match points in the final

game before Jodar lanced a winner to the empty court after an hour and three-quarters.

"I played a very high level today against a tough player like Arthur," Jodar said. "I had to give my best to win this match."

Nakashima, who won his fifth quarter-final of the season, credited his serve with the win.

"My serve was super important. It got me out of some tough holes," Nakashima said.

"I also took my opportunities on return when I needed to. I knew I had to open up the court. He was hitting his spots really well."

Nakashima, into his 16th career semi-finals, put his confidence "at an all-time high" after his seventh victory in eight matches following a Washington semi-final run. - Agencies

GST athletes deny Johnson claim they have been paid

LONDON: Athletes promised thousands of pounds in payments for participating in Grand Slam Track (GST) events are still waiting for their money, despite organisers saying they had all been paid.

Agents and sports-management companies told BBC Sport athletes are yet to receive money they are owed, despite GST founder Michael Johnson saying he had "got the athletes paid" after a "catastrophic capital issue" caused by investors pulling out.

Four-time former Olympic champion Johnson launched GST in 2025 with the promise of lucrative prize money and salaries. Originally scheduled for four marquee meets, the final event in Los Angeles was cancelled and organisers voluntarily filed for bankruptcy in the US in December.

In an interview in the Telegraph, on Saturday, Johnson admitted that as GST ran into financial trouble, he used his own credit card to purchase athlete flights and hotel rooms.

The 58-year-old said he was hurt by accusations he "secretly" paid himself \$500,000 (£375,000) days before the season collapsed - a claim a GST representative said at the time was "unfounded and false".

"I'm happy to clear it up, because it's the most hurtful thing and the exact opposite



of what was reported," Johnson told *The Telegraph*.

But Johnson's claim those who were owed money by GST had received it was premature. A company acting on behalf of athletes said they had not received any payments, nor had they been contacted to be told when they were due.

Johnson's representatives conceded the money had not yet reached the athletes and said the American had not intentionally set out to deceive people by saying it had. It is understood the reported \$11m (£8.1m) owed to creditors - including athletes - is being held by a third party.

It is unclear how long it will take to pay the athletes.

Several high-profile athletes were owed payments of more than £100,000, including British former world 1500m champion Josh Kerr and Olympic 400m silver medallist Matthew Hudson-Smith. - Agencies

EUROPEAN ATHLETICS

Double Olympic champ Tentoglou soars to fourth long jump title

BIRMINGHAM: Greece's Miltiadis Tentoglou soared out to a record-equalling fourth European long jump title on Tuesday, but Italian Marcel Jacobs was unable to claim a third 100m gold.

Tentoglou, the double Olympic champion, came under pressure from Swiss athlete Simon Ehammer, but produced a winning 8.44 metres on his fourth attempt.

Tentoglou emulated Germany's Heike Drechsler who won four successive European women's long jump titles between 1986 and 1998. "This was one of the hardest finals I have ever done," said Tentoglou. "I am good in all conditions but this wind was so hard on us long jumpers."

"Ehammer is a very strong guy and he was kind of OK with it. But for the other jumpers and me, it was incredibly difficult."

Tentoglou added: "I had to try so

hard for this 8.44m jump. It is nothing for me usually but today it was so hard to do. This is one of my most precious victories because it is also a complex season for me. This is the start of winning golds again."

Like Tentoglou, Jacobs is a proven championship performer.

But the Tokyo Olympic gold medallist and firm favourite for the blue riband event fell short in his quest to win a third title and equal a feat only achieved by Ukrainian Valeriy Borzov (1969, 1971, 1974) and Britain's Linford Christie (1986, 1990, 1994).

The 31-year-old Italian suffered a terrible start and seemed to pull up halfway through the race before continuing to the finish line in a jog. He then walked off with a slight limp. "I think my injury is serious because I felt something before the start when I tried the blocks," said Jacobs.



Total domination

With Jacobs out of contention, Jamaican-born Glave sealed victory in 10.09 seconds in a British 1-2 as world indoor 60m champion Jeremiah Azu claimed silver in 10.16sec.

Glave's victory came hot on the heels of Amy Hunt winning the

women's 100m on Monday. "It is domination. Total domination," said Glave.

Where Jacobs faltered, Nadia Battocletti remained resolute, the Italian striking with 200 metres to run to comfortably defend her 5,000m title in 15:37.84.

"It was a little crazy, we touched



each other a lot during the race as it was very tactical," Battocletti said.

It is the latest accolade for Battocletti, who has gone on a medal spree since completing a 5,000/10,000m Euro double in Rome two years ago.

Since then, she has won two successive European cross country

titles, European 10km road gold, Olympic and world 10,000m silver, world 5000m bronze and world indoor 3000m gold.

Spain's Marta García took silver in 15:39.98, with another Italian, Micol Majori, rounding out the podium. Dutchwoman Nadine Visser claimed a thrilling victory in the 100m hurdles, edging Poland's Pia Skrzyszowska in a photo finish in 12.67sec.

A tight finish across the field saw France's Laetitia Bapte grab bronze ahead of Switzerland's reigning world champion Ditaji Kambundji.

Hungary's Olympic silver medallist Bence Halasz broke the Polish stranglehold on the European men's hammer throw, managing a world-leading 84.25m for victory.

It was Halasz's first gold after seven previous near-misses on the global stage. - Agencies

PORTUGUESE FOOTBALL STAR

Ronaldo and Georgina tie the knot after 10 years

CASCAIS: Cristiano Ronaldo and Georgina Rodriguez are husband and wife.

They married on Tuesday in a civil ceremony described by the public relations team that represents the Portuguese football star as “a private and intimate moment attended by their five children.”

The ceremony took place in Cascais, a coastal town in western Portugal near the capital Lisbon, the Brunswick Group said in the announcement.

The couple posted a picture on their Instagram accounts showing their rings.

They have been together for the past decade after meeting in Madrid.

The 41-year-old Ronaldo, a five-time world player of the year and one of the most high-profile sports stars, is coming off playing in his record-tying sixth World Cup for Portugal. His Saudi team, Al Nassr, starts its domestic season on Saturday. - Agencies



FRENCH LIGUE 1

Fresh injury raises doubts about Pogba’s future

MONACO: Paul Pogba suffered a new thigh injury on Tuesday during the first day of Monaco’s training camp in England, casting doubt on his future in the Principality.

The 2018 French World Cup winner suffered an injury to his left thigh as Monaco trained at the English national football centre at St George’s Park after beating Liverpool in a friendly on Sunday.

The 33-year-old midfielder was only returning to group training after a long spell of right-knee problems.

Pogba has played only one half of football for Monaco in this pre-season.

According to several sources close to the matter, the new injury shows Pogba is some way off the level of fitness required to begin the Ligue 1 season.

After serving 18 months of a



four-year ban for doping, Pogba played just six Ligue 1 matches for Monaco last season, totalling 115 minutes on the pitch. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Barcelona’s Bardghji suffers ACL rupture



BARCELONA: Barcelona’s young Swedish winger Roony Bardghji faces surgery in the coming days after rupturing the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in his right knee, the Spanish champions announced on Tuesday. The 20-year-old, who joined Barca last summer from FC Copenhagen, was injured in training on Monday and could be sidelined for at least six to seven months, according to the local media outlets.

He played just 28 matches last season as he served as back-up to Lamine Yamal and was tipped to leave the club following the arrivals of England winger Anthony Gordon and German Karim Adeyemi. - Agencies

Slot to stay in club football after Netherlands talks

The Dutch manager had replaced Jurgen Klopp as Liverpool boss in May 2024 but was sacked in May earlier this year

LONDON: Former Liverpool head coach Arne Slot has confirmed he held talks over the vacant Netherlands job but withdrew because he wants his next job to be in club football.

The Dutchman, 47, guided the Reds to their 20th league title in his debut season but finished fifth in the Premier League and was sacked on May 30.

Ronald Koeman stepped down from his second spell as Nether-



lands manager after they were knocked out of the World Cup by Morocco in the last-32 penalty shootout in June. Slot denied reports he had withdrawn from talks with the KNVB (Royal Dutch Foot-

ball Association) after a dispute over his contract.

“Over the past few weeks, and particularly the past few days, various reports have appeared regarding the vacancy at the Dutch

national team, suggesting that I had withdrawn from the process after lengthy negotiations, including regarding salary and contract duration,” Slot told Voetbal International. “That speculation is in-

correct. We simply never reached that stage of the talks.”

Slot, who won the Eredivisie with Feyenoord in 2023, did not rule out taking over the national team in the future. “At this stage of my career, I prefer to see myself on the training pitch with my players every day. Something that is simply not possible in the same way with a national team,” he said. “And (this is) why I chose not to continue the talks and not to start negotiations on what a possible contract might look like.

“I have enormous respect for the national team and for the KNVB and can only be positive about the professional manner in which the talks proceeded that week.

“For now, I believe that club football still has a lot to offer me.”

He added: “It would be a great honour to represent my country as national coach one day. However, this was not the right moment for me.” Former Portugal manager Roberto Martinez is now in talks with the KNVB, according to reports in the Netherlands. - Agencies

WAR IMPACT



Palestinian club football to resume in September after three-year disruption

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Football Association announced that it would resume activity in September after a nearly three-year pause due to the Gaza war.

“We announce the resumption of sports activities and the football association’s league beginning September 4,” association president Jibril Rajoub said at a Ramallah press conference.

Palestinian sports leagues, including professional football, came to a halt with the war, which was sparked by Hamas’s October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

The association has named the first tournament back the “Thousand Martyrs’ Cup”, to honour the 1,014 Palestinian athletes killed by Israel during the war according to the association’s data.

More than 200 clubs will compete in the tournament, including 146 from the Israeli-occupied West Bank, 44 from Gaza, and 36 from Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The tournament will kick off simultaneously in the



three locations.

Rajoub said the war “created difficult conditions for all Palestinians that led to the suspension of our competitions and activities”.

“But we have not lost our Palestinian national will, nor have we lost our belief that sport will remain a symbol of hope and life.”

Rajoub said the association and Palestinian clubs faced tough financial circumstances.

During the press conference, he called on FIFA and other federations to stand by Palestinian sports and to protect the rights

of players, clubs and children to enjoy sports in “freedom and dignity”.

The association previously issued a statement regarding FIFA president Gianni Infantino’s now-withdrawn plan to open tournaments to private investors, saying “many today are questioning FIFA’s commercial direction”.

“But for Palestine, the issue is more fundamental... Our question is whether FIFA still has the courage to apply its regulations to everyone equally... without succumbing to political pressures.”

The association has called on FIFA to impose sanctions on Israeli clubs that operate in West Bank settlements and to suspend Israel’s FIFA membership over the country’s conduct in Gaza.

Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law. “We are not asking for privileges; we are demanding legitimate rights guaranteed by international sporting laws and charters,” Rajoub said. - Agencies

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Man City sign Argentina’s Rulli as back-up goalkeeper

MANCHESTER: Manchester City’s back-up goalkeeper to Gianluigi Donnarumma will be Gerónimo Rulli after the Argentina international joined from Marseille on a two-year deal on Wednesday. The 34-year-old Rulli replaces James Trafford as City’s second-choice goalie. Trafford left to join Leeds last week. Rulli, who has played eight times for Argentina and was part of the World Cup-winning squad in 2022, has European experience after playing at Real Sociedad, Villarreal, Montpellier, Ajax and most recently Marseille since 2024.

He had a brief spell at City in the 2016-17 season. “I have been really impressed by him during our conversations, a strong desire to join us,” City director of football Hugo Viana said. “It’s clear we are getting a brilliant professional, as well as a top keeper.”

Chelsea get Chavarria

Chelsea signed Pep Chavarria from Rayo Vallecano on Wednesday as a replacement for left back Marc Cucurella. Cucurella joined Real Madrid at the start of the off-season.

Chelsea now have another Spaniard at left back, with Chavarria signing a deal until 2031. He helped Rayo reach the Conference League final last season and finish eighth in La Liga for the second straight year.

“This is a dream for me as Chelsea are one of the biggest clubs in the world,” Chavarria said.

“It is a big opportunity but I am prepared and will work hard to help the team achieve success.”

Palace re-sign Guessand

Crystal Palace have re-signed Evann Guessand on a season-long loan from Aston Villa.

The 25-year-old Ivory Coast for-



ward spent the second half of last season at Selhurst Park and was part of the side that won the Conference League in May.

He only joined Villa in August last year but endured an underwhelming start to the season after his £26m transfer, scoring two goals in 21 appearances in all competitions.

After moving to Palace in Janu-

ary, Guessand scored his first Premier League goal in a 1-0 win over Wolves and came on in the Conference League final victory over Spanish side Rayo Vallecano.

He also finished the season with a Europa League winner’s medal after appearing for Villa earlier in the season before Unai Emery’s side went on to win the trophy. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

BankDhofar enhances savings with flexible Recurring Deposit Account



The account offers customers the flexibility to save on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, making it easier to align savings with individual lifestyles and financial goals

MUSCAT: BankDhofar, the second-largest bank in the Sultanate of Oman by branch network, continues to expand its portfolio of customer-focused banking solutions with its Recurring Deposit Account, a disciplined savings solution designed to help customers build financial security through regular savings. The account offers customers the flexibility to save on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, making it easier to align savings with individual

lifestyles and financial goals. With competitive returns of up to 5%, the Recurring Deposit Account provides an attractive opportunity to grow savings while encouraging disciplined financial planning. Customers can begin saving from as little as 500 baisa, making the account accessible to a wide range of customers. The account also provides an ideal platform for families to invest the OMR 10 monthly child benefit received from Social Protection Fund, help-

ing parents build long-term savings for their children's future. Whether saving for education, travel, major purchases or future financial commitments, the account enables customers to accumulate funds gradually through convenient and affordable contributions. The Recurring Deposit Account also offers fixed savings tenures, providing greater certainty and helping customers plan confidently towards specific financial milestones within a defined timeframe.

Through this offering, BankDhofar reaffirms its commitment to delivering innovative, accessible and flexible financial solutions that empower customers to manage their finances effectively and cultivate long-term savings habits. Customers interested in opening a Recurring Deposit Account can visit any of BankDhofar's more than 145 branches across the Sultanate's governorates and wilayats to learn more about the product and its benefits.

INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

ISWK [Cambridge] holds Investiture Ceremony for 2026-27



MUSCAT: Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir [Cambridge] held its Investiture Ceremony for the academic year 2026-27 recently, formally inducting 48 newly elected student leaders from Grades 3 to A Level as members of the Student Council. The ceremony, held at the school campus, was graced by Captain Modit Soni, Defence Attaché at the Embassy of India, Sultanate of Oman, who attended as Chief

Guest. A distinguished Communication and Electronic Warfare specialist with over two decades of service in the Indian Navy, Captain Soni delivered an inspiring address in which he commended the role of educators and parents in shaping future leaders. Drawing from his own journey from a school prefect to a naval officer he emphasised that true leadership is rooted in knowledge, competence, integrity, and selfless

service. Referring to the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita, he encouraged the student leaders to lead with vision, humility, resilience, and a sense of responsibility. The programme commenced with the traditional lighting of the ceremonial lamp, followed by a dance presentation titled Wings of Power, which celebrated the ideals of leadership, unity, and responsibility. The newly elected Student

Council members were then formally invested with their badges of office and administered the Oath of Office, pledging to uphold the values of integrity, discipline, and service. Outgoing School Captain Cailyn Justine Durham addressed the gathering, reflecting on her leadership journey and congratulating the incoming Council. She encouraged the new office-bearers to believe in themselves and inspire

others through their actions. A symbolic Passing of the Baton by the House Coordinators marked the seamless transition of leadership, signifying continuity and shared responsibility. The ceremony concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by School Captain Rahil Maniar, who expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest, members of the School Management Committee, school leadership, educators, parents, and

students for their support in making the occasion memorable. The Investiture Ceremony reflected the school's commitment to nurturing confident, compassionate, and responsible global citizens in alignment with the Cambridge Learner Attributes, and inspired the newly elected Student Council to uphold the vision and values of ISWK [Cambridge] with dedication and excellence throughout the academic year.



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