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NCSI

Over 527,000 new, renewed vehicle driving licences issued

MUSCAT: The number of new and renewed vehicle driving licences issued in Oman reached approximately 527,830 by the end of 2025, up from 500,738 in 2024 and 338,990 in 2021.

Of the total issued in 2025, 136,491 were new licences and 391,339 were renewed licences.

Omanis accounted for 227,718 new and renewed vehicle driving licences, while expatriates accounted for 300,112 licences.

Oman's paved road network continued to expand over the past 5 years, reaching 45,659kms by the end of 2025, compared with 40,546 kilometres in 2021, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). **>A3**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman's inflation rises 3.2% in July 2026

1 Oman's inflation rate rose 3.2% in July 2026 compared with the same month last year, while average inflation for the January-July 2026 period reached 2.9%, according to data from the NCSI. **>A3**

SPORTS

Bangladesh fight back

2 Shoriful Islam replicated Mitchell Starc's exploits in the second Test. **>A8**

MARKET

MSX trading value up

2 The value of trading on MSX rose the week to OMR252.1 million. **>B1**

FINANCIAL CRIMES TOP OMAN'S OFFENCE CATEGORIES: NCSI DATA

Oman recorded 21,000 crimes in 2025, property offences surged 33%

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Financial crimes lead Oman's offence categories, according to the latest official data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Oman recorded around 21,000 crimes in 2025, marking a 14.8% increase from the previous year, according to the latest NCSI data released.

Crimes against property ac-

counted for the largest share, rising by 33% to nearly 13,000 offences and representing 62.3% of all recorded crimes across the Sultanate's governorates.

Crimes against persons were the second-largest category, accounting for 28.8%, followed by offences against public adminis-

tration and public trust at 3.5%.

Liquor and public drunkenness violations accounted for 2.8%, while moral offences represented 2.1%.

The average number of recorded crimes increased to 58 offences a day in 2025, compared with 50 per day in 2024. The overall crime

rate stood at 3.9 offences per 1,000 population.

Muscat accounts for largest share

Muscat Governorate recorded the highest number of offences, accounting for 42% of the national total, with 8,916 crimes and a rate of 5.8 offences per 1,000 residents.

North Al Batinah followed with 3,002 offences, while South Al Batinah recorded 1,985 and Dhofar 1,827.

At the other end of the scale, Al Wusta Governorate recorded the lowest number of crimes, with 120 offences during the year.

Young adults make up majority of offenders

The number of people charged or apprehended in connection with crimes also increased. A total of 26,847 offenders were recorded in 2025, up 10% from 24,341 in 2024. **>A3**



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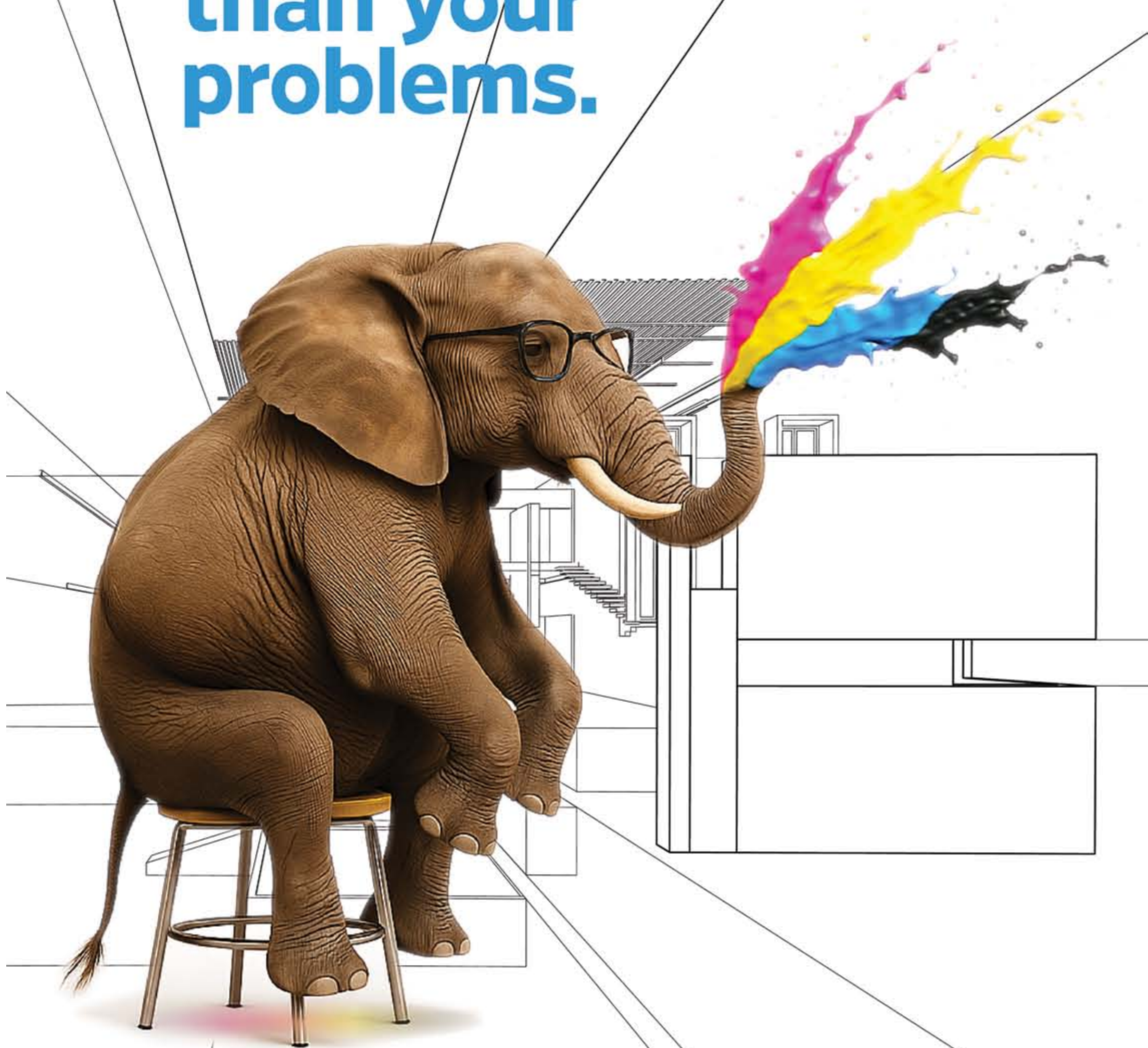


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COMMENTARY

Oman’s Personal Income Tax Law: Key Rules on Tax Liability

Oman’s Personal Income Tax Law was promulgated under Royal Decree 56/2025 and is set to take effect on 1st January 2028, establishing a legal framework defining who will be subject to personal income tax.

In an exclusive interview with Times of Oman, Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Zadjali, Chairman of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm, explained that “a tax resident is a person whose presence in Oman exceeds 183 days, whether continuously or intermittently, during a tax year. A non-tax resident is anyone who does not meet this condition. A tax resident pays tax on income realised both inside and outside Oman, while a non-tax resident pays tax only on income realised inside Oman.



In both cases, tax is imposed at a rate of 5% of taxable income.”

“A person’s gross income includes sources such as salaries and wages, self-employment,



leasing, royalties, interest, and returns from and disposal gains on stocks, shares and bonds, pensions and end-of-service gratuities, among others. The first

OMR 42,000 of gross income is excluded in determining net income, while applicable exemptions, costs and losses are then deducted to determine taxable income, which is taxed at 5%. A person whose gross income exceeds OMR 42,000 must file an electronic tax return within six months from the end of the tax year, subject to certain exceptions under the Law,” he said.

He stated that “employers shall pay amounts required to be withheld for tax on salaries and wages, pensions, end-of-service gratuities and membership bonuses which they are required to pay, and shall transfer them to the Authority periodically under the regulation. Other entities, such as government bodies, companies and establish-

ments, must also withhold tax on payments from other income sources. Where the recipient is a tax resident and income from such source exceeds OMR 20,000, 20% of the tax due must be withheld. Where the recipient is a non-tax resident, an amount equivalent to the full value of the tax due shall be withheld in accordance with the controls specified by the regulation.”

“Deliberately failing to file, withhold, or pay withheld tax can result in fines. Serious offences such as knowingly providing false data, or deliberately destroying, concealing, or disposing of records before the retention period ends, may carry fines or imprisonment. Understanding who must pay, and when, is essential for both

individuals and businesses well ahead of the law coming into effect,” he concluded.

(Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm (info@mohammedibrahim.net), (+968 244 87 600) was established on 14th December 2006 and is serving clients through its offices in Muscat and Sohar, as well as operating on a request basis in other areas. It offers legal representation across a wide range of practice areas that include Labour Law, Corporate, Commercial, Contracts, Banking and Finance, International Trade, Foreign Investment, Insurance, Maritime Law, Construction and Engineering Contracts, International Arbitration, Intellectual Property and more).

Nama Water Services boosts sustainable transformation

The company said water resources management is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, water security, economic stability and the well-being of communities



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Nama Water Services is advancing a new operational model aimed at strengthening the sustainability, efficiency and resilience of Oman’s water sector by integrating environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles into its operations and institutional decision-making.

The company said water resources management is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, water security, economic stability and the well-being of communities.

Nama Water Services is implementing a roadmap extending to 2027, aligned with Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards.

The roadmap focuses on developing policies and frameworks, strengthening operational integration and pursuing continuous improvement, with the aim of enhancing the company’s readiness for internationally recognised sustainability and governance ratings.

Engineer Ahmed bin Rashid Al-Khamisi, CEO of Business Assurance and Excellence at Nama

Water Services, said the company is integrating ESG principles across its operations and strategic decisions in support of Oman Vision 2040.

He said the company is also developing an operational system based on data and artificial intelligence, while employing advanced technologies across various processes, viewing water as a long-term investment in the stability and resilience of the future.

The company has launched a financial sustainability framework aimed at expanding the use of sustainable financing instruments, including green, blue and social bonds, to fund projects delivering positive environmental and social impacts.

Al-Khamisi noted that expanding low-emission solutions and

renewable energy projects forms an important part of the company’s strategy to build a more efficient, low-emission operational system, support net-zero objectives and reduce long-term environmental impacts.

He also highlighted the Green Harvest initiative as one of the pathways supporting climate resilience by maximising the use of natural resources and reducing the effects of environmental and climatic fluctuations.

Serving more than 4 million beneficiaries

Nama Water Services currently serves more than 4 million beneficiaries through an operational system covering Oman’s various governorates.

The company’s local added

value exceeded OMR100 million during the past year, underscoring its contribution to the national economy, support for small and medium enterprises and promotion of local content.

Engineer Riya bint Ali Al-Abri, Director of the Environment, Society and Governance Project at Nama Water Services, said ESG principles are key strategic enablers for sustainable resource management and strengthening the water sector’s preparedness for accelerating environmental and climate challenges.

She said their adoption contributes to more efficient resource use, lower environmental impact and the development of sustainable projects based on innovation and digital transformation.

The approach also supports a more adaptable operating system, a fair workplace that promotes equal opportunities and national competencies, as well as community initiatives and local development.

Nama Water Services said it will continue moving towards more sustainable and innovative water-resource management through an integrated model combining technology, governance, operational excellence and sustainability.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Otech, Remedy ink deal to boost business solutions

MUSCAT: Otech, the technology arm of Omantel, has signed a co-operation agreement with Remedy to launch an advanced corporate platform supporting strategic planning and performance management through artificial intelligence technologies.

The partnership forms part of Otech’s efforts to adopt emerging technologies, strengthen Oman’s national innovation ecosystem and support local startups in transforming their innovations into institutional solutions.

Under the agreement, Otech will develop and implement the “Rise Talent” platform within its corporate system. The platform will provide capabilities covering strategic goal alignment, talent management, employee experience and human resources.

Its functions will include competency management, recruitment, learning and development, performance management and career planning, in addition to AI-supported human resources analytics and digital self-service tools.

Maqbool bin Salim Al Wohaibi, acting CEO of Otech, said the partnership reflects the company’s commitment to supporting innovation and helping emerging technology companies transform their ideas into practical institutional applications.

He stressed that developing a competitive digital economy re-

quires an integrated environment that brings together local innovation, technical expertise and the real needs of institutions.

He added that Otech is working to connect innovators and startups with institutional opportunities and provide them with capabilities to develop scalable solutions for the Omani market and international markets. The company is also continuing to invest in advanced technologies to improve operational efficiency and strengthen its institutional capabilities.

Turki bin Abdul Hafeez Al Balushi, Co-founder of Remedy, said the partnership would allow the company’s solutions to move from the development stage into real-world institutional applications, while benefiting from Otech’s technical expertise in understanding corporate requirements.

He said Remedy focuses on developing AI-powered tools that connect corporate strategies with implementation, strengthen performance management and provide real-time insights to help leaders and employees make more effective decisions.

The collaboration is expected to contribute to the development of Oman’s digital economy, while creating new opportunities for local technology companies to scale their solutions and meet the evolving needs of businesses. -ONA



BIODIVERSITY

‘Land of Frankincense’ documentary highlights Oman’s heritage

Times News Service

SALALAH: The documentary film “Land of Frankincense”, produced by Russia Today (RT), offers a visual journey through the natural, cultural and scientific treasures of Dhofar Governorate, highlighting the enduring importance of Oman’s frankincense heritage.

The film is scheduled to premiere today in Dhofar Governorate, taking viewers across southern Oman and showcasing the region’s distinctive landscapes, biodiversity and historical connection with frankincense.

The documentary visits several prominent locations, including Wadi Darbat, the Wilayat of Taqah and Wadi Dawkah Nature Reserve, introducing viewers to the natural environment in which frankincense trees grow and the climatic conditions that contribute to the production of high-quality natural gum.

It highlights Dhofar’s diverse vegetation, including coconut and palm trees, which contribute to the distinctive character of the region.

Directed by Karim Naguib, with screenplay and script by Anisa

Murad, the film combines documentary storytelling with scientific analysis to explore the significance of Omani frankincense throughout history.

Russian and Omani experts examine frankincense

The documentary features Russian scientists and specialists, including Dr. Yelena Malankina, PhD in Agricultural Sciences, and Dr. Sergei Stovbon, PhD in Physical-Chemical Sciences, alongside Omani experts in frankincense collection Ahmed Mohammed Ali Jadad Al Kathiri and Ahmed Abdullah Mohammed Jadad Al Kathiri.

The experts discuss the distinctive characteristics of Omani frankincense and examine its chemical components, particularly boswellic acids, which are known for their anti-inflammatory properties.

The film also explores research conducted by Russian scientific institutions into frankincense components and their potential medical applications, connecting Oman’s traditional natural resource with contemporary scientific research.

Preserving an inherited tradition

Beyond its scientific dimension, the documentary documents the traditional methods of frankincense harvesting in Wadi Dawkah, where the profession has been passed down through generations of Omani families.

It also explores customs surrounding the use of frankincense, including fumigating homes and using it during social and cultural occasions, illustrating the deep relationship between communities and the natural environment.

The film presents frankincense not only as an important economic resource but also as a natural and cultural heritage deeply embedded in Oman’s history and identity.

“Land of Frankincense” continues RT’s tradition of producing documentaries exploring historical, cultural and scientific subjects linking Russia and the Arab world.

Through field filming, research and expert interviews, the production seeks to document information and make scientific and historical knowledge accessible to a wider audience.



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COMMENTARY

Sixty Days After the Memorandum of Understanding, Trump Withdraws Again

On 13th June 2025, Netanyahu took a reckless gamble by igniting aggression against Iran. Just two days later, Donald Trump joined him, and the American air umbrella launched intensive airstrikes targeting Iranian nuclear facilities and vital infrastructure.

However, Tehran did not stand idly by. Its response was swift and devastating, striking deep inside Israel and inflicting heavy damage. This forced Trump himself to halt his operations and request a ceasefire on 24th June, thus ending what became known as the “Twelve-Day War”.

Eight months later, the recklessness of war resumed on 28th February, 2026. This time, the war criminal Netanyahu succeeded in dragging Trump into it once again, deluding him into believing that assassinating the revolutionary leadership would be enough to topple the regime, which he claimed the people were “fed up” with. The plan openly aimed to break Tehran’s power and remove the major obstacle to what is called “Greater Israel”. But Iranian resilience shattered the dual aggression, forcing both aggressors to retreat and seek a ceasefire on 8th April, 2026, after forty days of fierce fighting that became known as the “Forty Day War”.

The calm lasted only a week, as Trump reneged on his commitments and waged a losing war of attrition, ultimately compelling him to request Pakistani mediation. After



rounds of indirect negotiations in Switzerland and Islamabad, the process culminated on 7th June, 2026, with the signing of a “Memorandum of Understanding” consisting of 14 articles and valid for 60 days, renewable.

True to his history of breaking promises, Trump withdrew after only one day, resuming the bombing, while Netanyahu chose to withdraw from the scene, unable to bear further destruction.

The tit-for-tat exchange of bombings continued for twenty days until Washington yielded to pressure, and a ceasefire, brokered jointly by Islamabad and Doha, came into effect, bringing relative calm for approximately twenty days which still prevails.

Trump’s abrupt withdrawal from the 7th June memorandum was nothing more than an attempt to salvage his pride, after the memorandum was described by both the US and Israel as a “complete surrender” and a “free gift to Tehran”. He reopened the war of attrition, hoping to impose new condi-

tions, but his miscalculations were met with Iranian resolve and attacks targeting US bases in the region.

Faced with the Gulf states suffering and the growing outcry from Japan, China, and South Korea over the oil supply crisis and their blaming of Washington, Trump called for a ceasefire for the fourth time. The Iranian response was decisive: “We did not start the war, and when Trump stops, we will stop.” Thus the military operations on both sides ceased.

On 16th August, 2026, the 60-day deadline expired. While Trump demonstrated his compliance with the memorandum by opening the Strait of Hormuz, Tehran insisted on imposing six additional conditions on top of the fourteen, declaring unequivocally that the strait would not be opened except with complete submission to Iranian demands.

The question remains: Is not Trump the solely responsible for this manipulation of oil prices and the chaos threatening financial markets? The next few days will reveal the truth.

TELEPHONE CALL

Oman and Iran discuss regional developments

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi held a telephone call on Friday with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi to discuss the latest regional developments and efforts to revive dialogue and negotiations.

During the call, the two ministers discussed ways to create conditions conducive to the resumption of dialogue and negotiations, with the aim of narrowing differences and reaching peaceful solutions to outstanding issues while taking into account the interests of all parties.

The ministers also discussed developments concerning navigation through the Strait of Hor-



muz, stressing the importance of continuing consultations to reach practical understandings that would support the resumption of freedom of navigation and the safe, uninterrupted flow of

maritime traffic.

They underscored the importance of ensuring the security of the strategic waterway and promoting stability across the region.

IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Oman, US officials hold talks

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s Ambassador to the United States, Talal Al Rahbi met with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of an event organised by the US Department of State at the Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C. on Friday.

During their meeting, they exchanged views on a number of issues of mutual interest, commended the strong cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the United States, and under-



scored the importance of continued coordination and cooperation

in addressing shared issues and challenges.

IBRA

Man opens fire, one killed, 2 hurt

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The North Al Sharqiyah Governorate Police Command has arrested an Omani citizen suspected of opening fire on three citizens in Al Haima area of Ibra Wilayat.

The shooting resulted in the death of one of the victims and serious injuries to the other two, according to the Royal Oman Police.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the incident was allegedly linked to previous disputes between the individuals.

The police said legal procedures are currently being completed in connection with the case.

NCSI

Al Dakhiliyah records largest share of paved roads

< FROM A1 The data showed that single roads accounted for 41,478 kilometres, while dual roads extended for 4,182 kilometres. The total length of paved roads was reported at 44,079 kilometres by the end of 2025.

At the governorate level, Al Dakhiliyah recorded the largest share of paved roads at 480 kilometres, followed by Muscat with 425 kilometres and Al Dhahirah with 120 kilometres.

For single roads, Dhofar ranked first with 383 kilometres, followed by North Al Sharqiyah with 263 kilometres and South Al Batinah with 260 kilometres.

Oman’s inflation rises 3.2% in July 2026

The food and non-alcoholic beverages group recorded the highest annual increase among the main categories at 7.3%, followed by transport at 6.5% and miscellaneous personal goods and services at 5.3%

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s inflation rate rose 3.2% in July 2026 compared with the same month last year, while average inflation for the January–July 2026 period reached 2.9%, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The food and non-alcoholic beverages group recorded the highest annual increase among the main categories at 7.3%, followed by transport at 6.5% and miscellaneous personal goods and services at 5.3%.

Prices also increased for restaurants and hotels (3.6%), furniture and household equipment (3.1%), education (2.2%), health (1.7%) and culture and



RIISING COST: The figures point to food and transport costs as the main drivers of Oman's inflation in July, with food prices—particularly vegetables and fruits—recording the sharpest increases. - ONA

entertainment (0.4%).

Meanwhile, prices for communications, tobacco, and clothing and footwear remained unchanged from July 2025. The housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels group declined by 0.6%.

Al Dhahirah records highest inflation

At the governorate level, Al Dhahirah recorded the highest inflation rate at 4.4%, followed by Al Dakhiliyah at 3.7%.

Muscat and Al Wusta each recorded inflation of 3.4%, while

South Al Sharqiyah and Musandam registered 3.0% each. Al Buraimi recorded 2.8%.

Inflation stood at 2.5% in both North Al Batinah and North Al Sharqiyah, and 2.4% in South Al Batinah.

Lowest inflation rate

Dhofar recorded the lowest inflation rate at 2.1%.

Within the food and non-alcoholic beverages category, vegetable prices surged 19.9% year-on-year, while fruit prices increased 15.8%.

Meat prices rose 8.7%, fish

prices 5.7%, and non-alcoholic beverages 3.3%.

Prices of sugar, jam, honey rise

Prices of sugar, jam, honey and sweets increased 2.4%, while milk, cheese and eggs rose 2.2%. Food products not elsewhere classified increased 2.1%, bread and cereals 1.0%, and oils and fats 0.5%. The figures point to food and transport costs as the main drivers of Oman’s inflation in July, with food prices—particularly vegetables and fruits—recording the sharpest increases.

DATA

Men account for 85% of total crimes

< FROM A1 Men accounted for 85%, or 22,869 offenders, while women represented 15%, with 3,978 offenders.

Adults aged between 18 and 59 constituted the overwhelming majority, numbering 25,524 offenders. The 30–39 age group formed the largest segment, accounting for 36%, or 9,647 offenders.

The number of juvenile offenders under the age of 18 stood at 751.

Number of victims also rises

The number of affected individuals and entities reached 21,900 in 2025, an increase of 14.6% compared with the previous year.

Individuals accounted for 79%, or 17,371 people, with males making up around 70% of affected individuals. The number of individuals affected rose by 32% compared with 2024.

Cases recorded under Public Rights fall

Meanwhile, cases recorded under Public Rights fell sharply by 52.2%, declining to 1,543 cases. The decline comes amid strengthened regulatory and preventive measures aimed at protecting public institutions and reducing general violations.

The latest figures highlight a significant increase in recorded crime during 2025, particularly property-related offences, while Muscat continued to account for the largest concentration of reported crimes nationwide.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Send us your comments at facebook.com/timesofoman, blog.timesofoman.com or haveyoursay@timesofoman.com

Omani theatre showcases cultural heritage at Russian Festival



The Omani theatrical performance attracted an audience that included an official representative of the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation

MOSCOW: Oman's Al-Dan Theatre Troupe for Culture and Art has participated in the official competition of the eighth International Festival of Chamber Theatre Forms, presenting its production "A Bite of Bread" in the Russian city of Kineshma.

The Omani theatrical performance attracted an audience that included an official representative of the Embassy of the Sultanate

of Oman to the Russian Federation, alongside Russian cultural personalities, representatives of participating countries, artists, theatre specialists and members of the public.

The participation provided an opportunity for Omani theatre to present its artistic experience to an international audience and engage with theatre practitioners from different cultural and artistic backgrounds.

As part of the programme accompanying the Omani participation, an introductory seminar and press conference were organised to discuss the theatrical experience of "A Living Wage" and developments in Omani theatre.

The sessions also examined the importance of international theatre festivals in exchanging artistic experiences and expertise, developing theatrical practices and creating opportunities for communication and cooperation between artists from different countries.

The Omani troupe additionally established a small exhibition outside the performance venue, displaying introductory brochures and material highlighting its theatrical activities and artistic experience.



The participation of Al-Dan Theatre Troupe forms part of Oman's broader efforts to strengthen its presence in international cultural and artistic events and to introduce Omani creative productions to audiences abroad.

Through its participation in the Russian festival, the troupe highlighted the progress made by Omani theatre in recent years, while providing a platform for cultural dialogue and interaction between Omani and Russian artists and cultural communities.

The event also contributed to strengthening friendship, cultural communication and mutual understanding between Oman and the Russian Federation, demonstrating the role of theatre as a bridge connecting different socie-

RUN UNTIL AUGUST 30

OCCI's 'Empowerment and Excellence' exhibition opens in Dhofar with 50+ SMEs

SALALAH: The second edition of the "Empowerment and Excellence" exhibition, organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), represented by its Small and Medium Enterprises Committee, opened in Dhofar Governorate and will run until August 30.

Held at the Al Gharif project, the exhibition features more than 50 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating across a wide range of activities, including perfumes and incense, contemporary and traditional fashion and textiles, Omani hospitality and food products, and traditional crafts and industries.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Sheikh Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the OCCI Board of Directors, who said the event reflects the Chamber's commitment to strengthening economic activity across Oman's governorates and highlighting their entrepreneurial potential and productive capabilities.

Al Rawas stressed that supporting SMEs is an important avenue for advancing economic diversification and increasing the private sector's contribution to GDP, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and governorate development programmes.

He noted that investment in SMEs goes beyond supporting existing businesses, extending to developing a new generation of entrepreneurs capable of innovation, generating added value and creating employment opportunities.

He also called for greater coordination between government and private-sector institutions and organisations supporting SMEs to strengthen the sector's ability to grow sustainably and create a more competitive business environment.

Expanding opportunities for entrepreneurs
Sheikh Ahmed bin Amer Al Musalhi, Chairman of OCCI's Small and



Held at the Al Gharif project, the exhibition features more than 50 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating across a wide range of activities, including perfumes and incense

tee, said the exhibition builds on the success of its first edition and demonstrates the Chamber's continued efforts to strengthen the role of SMEs in the economic landscape of Oman's governorates.

He said the Chamber is working to improve SMEs' access to markets and business opportunities, while providing platforms that enable entrepreneurs to develop, sustain and expand their businesses.

Among the initiatives supporting this objective is the franchise

Franchise Center. The programme has contributed to the registration of more than 40 trademarks across Oman, highlighting the role of franchising in helping businesses develop their models and expand.

The exhibition aims to help SMEs develop their businesses, broaden their market presence and access investment opportunities, while creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurship and contributing to Oman's wider economic diversification efforts.

BANGLADESH

His Majesty sends greetings

Times News Service

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sent a cable of congratulations to President Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, on the occasion of his election as President and his swearing-in ceremony.

His Majesty expressed his best wishes to President Alamgir for success in carrying out his responsibilities, and hoped that Bangladesh would achieve continued stability and prosperity.

His Majesty also expressed the hope that relations of coop-



eration and partnership between Oman and Bangladesh would continue to grow and expand across various fields.

OCCI to organise social investment forum in Salalah

Participants will exchange experiences, develop partnerships and explore practical initiatives that combine financial returns with social, economic and environmental impact

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) will organise the Social Investment and Sustainable De-

velopment Forum in Salalah from August 30 to 31, with the opening ceremony to be sponsored by His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar.

The forum will serve as a national platform for dialogue, cooperation and partnership-building, focusing on strengthening social investment as a sustainable development and investment pathway capable of turning social, economic and environmental challenges into viable and measurable investment opportunities.

Sustainable investment
It aims to shift social investment away from short-term initiatives towards sustainable investment models with measurable impact, bringing together government institutions, the private sector, investors, civil society organisations and social entrepreneurs.

Participants will exchange experiences, develop partnerships and explore practical initiatives that combine financial returns with social, economic and environmental impact, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the Sustainable

Development Goals. The forum will address four strategic areas: empowerment and integration; partnerships and stimulation; capacity building and knowledge; and innovative financing.

Discussions will include creating an enabling environment for social investment, connecting investors with impactful projects, developing national knowledge and databases, and establishing sustainable financing mechanisms, including developmental endowments.

An accompanying exhibition will showcase pioneering social investment projects and initiatives, demonstrating how social, economic and environmental challenges can be transformed into sustainable opportunities with measurable impact.

The exhibition will also provide social entrepreneurs and emerging talents with an opportunity to present their products, ideas and innovations and connect with institutions, investors and potential partners to help turn promising initiatives into viable and sustainable projects.



HONOURING LATE NADHIRA AL HARTHY

‘Loyalty Trail’ draws more than 100 participants at Jabel Shams

Times News Service

AL HAMRA: The “Loyalty Trail” event was held at Jabel Shams in the Wilayat of Al Hamra, attracting more than 100 participants from mountain walking, running and outdoor activity communities across Oman.

The event was organised in honour of the late Omani adventurer Nadhira Al Harthy and fellow mountain climbers.

Participants took part in both the full summit route and a shorter commemorative route, with the event welcoming people of different nationalities and members of various mountain sports communities.

Oman’s highest mountain peak
More than 80 registered participants completed the full summit route, covering nearly 24 kilometres with an elevation gain of more than 1,300 metres on



Oman’s highest mountain peak. The route featured several timed checkpoints and return points, allowing organisers to make decisions based on timing, weather conditions and partici-

pants’ physical condition. The Himam Adventures Club surveyed the mountain route, with its teams accompanying the final groups to ensure all participants completed their journey

safely. The event began at 6:30am from the main gathering point at Sama Jabel Shams Resort, following a brief commemorative pause and the signing of the summit’s commemorative record.

AKAI – MHD-ITICS Wins Best Brand in Customer Experience Award in Air Conditioners



AKAI – MHD-ITICS was felicitated with the Times of Oman Best Brand Award in Air Conditioners’ at the Oman Best Brands Awards 2026.

The awards presentation was co-located with the Oman CX Forum 2026, held at Kempinski Hotel Muscat. The premier event brought together over 325 senior CX leaders, business professionals, and industry experts from across Oman.

AKAI, the iconic Japanese brand established in 1929 and exclusively distributed by MHD-ITICS in Oman, continues to strengthen its position in the Sultanate’s air conditioning market through superior quality, exceptional performance, and a customer-first approach. This recognition reflects the strong trust consumers place in the brand and its commitment to delivering dependable cooling solutions.

AKAI offers a comprehensive range of Split, Cassette, Floor Standing, Window, and Ducted air conditioners, including energy-efficient Inverter models.

Designed for Oman’s demanding climate, its 2-Ton Inverter AC delivers 25,000 BTU (T1 Rating), providing powerful and efficient cooling across diverse applications.

As the official distributor, MHD-ITICS supports AKAI customers with comprehensive warranty and after-sales services, strengthening the overall ownership experience. Beyond air conditioners, AKAI’s portfolio includes refrigerators, washing machines, freezers, gas cookers, and built-in appliances, backed by nearly a century of Japanese heritage and innovation.

With a continued focus on quality, innovation, customer service, and evolving consumer needs, AKAI and MHD-ITICS remain committed to delivering products and experiences that meet the expectations of customers across Oman.

The Best Brand in Customer Experience (CX) Awards are instituted by Times of Oman, in collaboration with Muscat Media Group, Gulf Leaders Circle and TEvents. They are presented to the leading brands that are ahead of the curve in

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For more information, contact: 78471944/97221630

meeting and exceeding the customers expectations. The winners are selected based on an extensive consumer survey conducted by the Times of Oman.

DHOFAR KHAREEF

Authorities maintain vigil to curb environmental violations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Environment Protection Team is continuing its efforts to curb environmental violations during the Dhofar Khareef season, in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality and the Royal Oman Police.

As part of the initiative, the team has intensified field monitoring and follow-up operations to promote environmental compliance and protect natural areas amid the increased visitor activity during the season.

According to the latest figures issued by the Environment Authority, the initiative recorded 238 reports, while 3,914 vehicles were removed from green areas



in coordination with the relevant authorities.

The campaign also resulted in the closure of 250 locations, while 156 reports were received concerning overflowing waste containers. In addition, 89 abandoned vehicles were identified and addressed as part of efforts

to maintain the cleanliness and environmental appearance of the governorate.

The initiative forms part of ongoing efforts to protect Dhofar’s natural environment during the Khareef season, when the governorate attracts large numbers of visitors and experiences increased recreational and outdoor activities.

The Environment Authority, in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality and the Royal Oman Police, continues to monitor public areas and respond to environmental violations, with the aim of preserving green spaces, preventing harmful practices and ensuring a sustainable and environmentally responsible Khareef season.

SITUATION VACANT

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SALALAH

Indian rising talent Nachiketa wins Dhofar International Rapid Chess Championship

SALALAH: The Dhofar International Rapid Chess Championship concluded yesterday at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah after three days of competition.

Organised by the Oman Chess Committee in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality as part of the Dhofar Autumn Season, the tournament brought together 80 players from 10 countries.

First place
India's Nachiketa Krishnendra Mulgund claimed first place, followed by Yemen's Bashir Abdullah Al-Qudaimi in second, while India's Hari Vardan Satheeskumar finished third.

The championship was played under the Swiss system over nine rounds, providing Omani players with an opportunity to compete against international participants and gain valuable experience.

Dhofar Governorate
The event also formed part of efforts to promote Dhofar Governorate as a tourism and sporting destination, combining international competition with the attractions of the Khareef season.



PROMOTIONAL CONTEST

Court in Oman orders OMR3,600 compensation for car prize winner

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A notable consumer-related case in Oman has highlighted the legal obligations surrounding promotional contest after a participant who was announced as the winner of a car was instead handed a wall clock.

The case was featured in Al-Mujtama'a wa Al-Qanun (Society and Law), a publication issued by the Public Prosecution, which examined the case as part of its coverage of judicial trends concerning promotional offers and sales incentives.

According to the publication, the Muscat Court of Appeal, Commercial Circuit, issued its ruling on November 10, 2003, ordering the defendant to pay OMR3,600 to the claimant, equivalent to the value of the car he had won in the promotional campaign.

The claimant had reportedly been announced as the winner based on the coupon number he held. However, when he went to collect the prize, he was given a wall clock instead. The organisers allegedly argued that the first prize — the car — belonged to the holder of a coupon whose number was announced last, contrary to what had been publicly announced.

The magazine highlighted the case in the context of judicial approaches to promotional sales and prize-based offers, stressing the importance of protecting consumers from promotional practices that seek to attract them at their expense.

It also noted the need to enforce the law against promotional offers that violate applicable requirements, while distinguishing them from legitimate offers that do not undermine consumers' freedom of choice.

MUSCAT: Oman's Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) has seized 571 non-compliant school products in Muscat Governorate as part of its regulatory efforts ahead of the new school year.

The seized items included 81 school bags, 23 files, 21 pens, 440 stickers designed for Crocs footwear and six water bottles. According to the Authority, the products featured inappropriate images and illustrations, including images associated with the Kuromi character.

The seizure was carried out as part of the regulatory measures accompanying the CPA's "Back to School" campaign, which aims to strengthen market surveillance during the back-to-school season.

The Authority said the necessary measures were taken against the non-compliant products, stressing that its ongoing efforts are focused on enhancing commercial establishments' compliance with the regulations and requirements governing the market.

The CPA has also urged consumers to report any violations through its consumer hotline.

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MUSCAT GOVERNORATE

CPA seizes 571 non-compliant school products



Times News Service



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MEDIA REPORT

US military casualties rise to over 770 as Iran conflict enters sixth month

WASHINGTON DC: The number of US service members killed or wounded in the Iran war has risen to more than 770, according to casualty figures provided by the Pentagon, reported by The Washington Post on Friday, as the conflict enters its sixth month.

The Washington Post reported that the Pentagon's casualty reporting system showed 774 US service members killed or wounded, including 18 killed and 756 wounded in the conflict.

According to the Post, the Pentagon added scores of new troops to the wounded list in recent days, even as the United States and Iran have largely remained under a ceasefire in recent weeks.

It noted that some of the newly added figures could reflect a delay

between an injury being recorded in the military's medical system and its appearance in the Pentagon's casualty database.

US President Donald Trump also did not extend the ceasefire with Iran, as per the 14-point Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in June, after it expired on Monday. However, there has been no large-scale resumption of combat operations by either side since then.

CNN, meanwhile, reported that the number of wounded US service members has crossed 750 on Wednesday.

When figures under the Defense Casualty Analysis System (DCAS) for "Overseas Operations" are combined with those for Operation Epic Fury, CNN reported

that 18 service members have died since the US launched the war against Iran on February 28.

CNN reported that the Pentagon created the "Overseas Operations" category last month in DCAS for service members killed and wounded "starting July 7."

The Pentagon has not provided additional details or specified the conflict associated with the category.

The July 7 date also corresponds with the day the Trump administration informed the US Congress that a new conflict with Iran had begun in a War Powers Act notification.

The latest figures come weeks after the Pentagon faced scrutiny over changes to its casualty data.

The number of killed and

wounded service members had decreased in the database even as Iranian attacks continued, with four deaths and dozens of injuries disappearing from the totals before being restored.

The War Department had attributed those changes to "temporary data disruptions", according to CNN.

CNN also reported that the Pentagon has been slow to disclose wounded troops during the conflict, with officials citing security concerns. Trump, meanwhile, said on Wednesday that the situation with Iran is "so good" right now, as negotiations between Washington and Tehran remain paused and the Strait of Hormuz continues to be a key point of tension in the conflict.

— ANI



Islamic nations condemn Israel's E1 settlement plan

GCC Secretary General condemned Israel's continued settlement plans in the occupied West Bank, including the E1 project, saying that advancing such plans represents a 'blatant challenge to international legitimacy' and a systematic undermining of the legitimate rights of Palestinian people



challenge to international legitimacy" and a systematic undermining of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

"These practices by the Israeli occupation forces undermine the prospects of achieving peace and threaten international and regional efforts aimed at establishing an independent Palestinian state," Albudaiwi said, according to the GCC General Secretariat.

Albudaiwi also called on the international community to take a "serious and responsible stance" to halt settlement policies and plans and oppose measures aimed at changing the geographical and demographic reality of the occupied Palestinian territories.

The GCC Secretary General reiterated the bloc's support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant international resolutions.

In a separate joint statement issued on August 20, the leaders of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the European Commission, the Netherlands, Canada, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Belgium, Spain, Austria and Greece also condemned Israel's decision to publish construction tenders for the E1 settlement project.

"The Israeli Government's decision to publish construction tenders for the E1 settlement project is unacceptable," the leaders said.

They warned that the project could "undermine the prospect of the two-state solution by driving a wedge through the West Bank and harming the territorial contiguity of the Palestinian Territories."

The countries said the international community has long opposed settlement expansion and reaffirmed their position that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law, citing the position of

the international community as reaffirmed by the United Nations Security Council.

The joint statement also expressed concern over what the countries described as unprecedented levels of settler violence against civilians in the West Bank and serious restrictions on the Palestinian economy.

The leaders urged the Israeli Government to "retract these plans immediately and end its expansion of settlements in the West Bank" and warned that the plans would move the region further away from peace and further undermine Israel's international standing.

They also called on businesses not to bid for construction tenders associated with the project, warning of potential "legal and reputational consequences" and the risk of involvement in what they described as serious breaches of international law.

The countries reiterated their

commitment to a "comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution".

The condemnation was echoed by the foreign ministers of Qatar, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Pakistan, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Egypt in a joint statement issued in Doha on August 21.

The eight countries "unequivocally condemn" Israel's continued settlement policies in the occupied Palestinian territory and "categorically reject" the E1 settlement plan and related settlement activities east of occupied East Jerusalem.

The ministers also condemned violations and acts of violence against Palestinians and their property, which they said were perpetrated by settlers with the support of Israeli occupying authorities.

They said such actions constitute violations of international law and relevant UN resolutions and pose a "serious threat to regional and international peace and security".

The ministers described the E1 plan as a "dangerous escalation", warning that it would further advance settlement expansion and annexation and undermine the geographical contiguity of the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly between the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

According to the ministers, this threatens the viability and realisation of an independent and contiguous Palestinian state based on the 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

They further said the actions challenge international efforts to achieve peace and referred to US President Donald Trump's Comprehensive Plan, including its rejection of annexation and forced displacement, as well as mechanisms envisaged for its implementation. — ANI

TWO-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT

India's Jaishankar to meet Russia's Sergey Lavrov

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is set to embark on a two-day official visit to Russia on August 23-24 and will meet his counterpart Sergey Lavrov along with co-chairing the 27th Session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC).

The details were shared by the Ministry of External Affairs in a press release on Saturday.

As per the release, the EAM will pay a visit to Russia at the invitation of First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Denis Manturov.

The release said, "The External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, will undertake an official visit to Russia on 23-24 August 2026 to co-chair the 27th Session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC)."

It further added that talks between him and Lavrov will focus on regional and global issues.

"During the visit, EAM will also meet Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation H.E. Mr. Sergey Lavrov and exchange perspectives on regional and global issues," the release said.

India and Russia have a long-standing and time-tested partnership.

A prior release by the Ministry of External Affairs noted that since the signing of the "Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" in October 2000, India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas, including political, security, defence, trade and economy, science & technology, culture, and people-to-people ties.

Under the Strategic Partnership, several institutionalised dialogue mechanisms operate at both political and official levels to ensure regular interaction and follow-up on cooperation activities.

— ANI

CENTRAL SAGAING REGION

Myanmar military airstrike kills at least 14 at Buddhist monastery

MANDALAY: At least 14 people were killed when a military airstrike hit a Buddhist monastery in Myanmar's central Sagaing region, an opposition group and local witnesses said on Saturday.

Friday's attack, by the ruling military regime that seized power in a 2021 coup, is the latest deadly assault on pro-democracy forces in the Southeast Asian country's ongoing civil war.

The strike happened in Swel Le Oh village, Myaung township, in central Myanmar, said Nway Oo, a spokesman for an anti-government resistance group.

The village is about 75 kilometres (45 miles) west of Mandalay, the country's second largest city.

Nway Oo, from the Civil Defence and Security Organisation of Myaung Township, or CDSOM, said the dead included three women and that 20 others were wounded.

The Associated Press spoke to a villager who confirmed the



death toll and said that a military jet dropped two bombs 15 minutes apart.

The villager said the second strike damaged a nearby house.

Victims were civilians attending a retreat

More than 100 people were taking part in a weeklong meditation retreat to mark Buddhist Lent, the villager added.

AFP news agency cited Nway Oo Myaung, a pro-democracy rebel, as

saying: "It wasn't a mistaken target; they intentionally attacked a monastery."

The military government has yet to confirm the strike.

Myanmar's military has often used airstrikes to counter opposition forces, especially in Sagaing region, a stronghold of armed resistance.

UN flags sharp rise in airstrikes

A United Nations investigation

team said last week it had observed a notable increase in aerial attacks over much of the past year.

The UN's Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) accused the military-backed government of "indiscriminate and intentional aerial attacks against civilians."

Last month, conflict monitoring group ACLED accused the regime of adopting "a terror strategy" that it said focuses on "civilian infrastructure and social gatherings, such as weddings and religious festivals, to maximise psychological impact."

Myanmar government defends strikes

On Sunday, Myanmar's foreign ministry rejected the IIMM report, insisting that its operations were in response to insurgents and terrorist groups.

The ministry said it uses maximum restraint to avoid civilian harm. — DW

CENTCOM

US forces redirect 68 commercial vessels

WASHINGTON: The US Central Command (CENTCOM) on Friday said that American forces have redirected 68 commercial vessels, disabled three and boarded two others as part of efforts to enforce a blockade against Iran amid rising tensions in the Strait of Hormuz.

In a post shared on X, CENTCOM said US sailors observed an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter landing on the flight deck of the USS Ross (DDG 71), one of more than 20 warships supporting the US blockade against Iran.

"U.S. Sailors observe an MH-60R Sea Hawk landing on the flight deck aboard USS Ross (DDG 71). Ross is one of more than 20 warships supporting the US blockade against Iran. As of Aug. 21, US forces have redirected 68 commercial vessels, disabled 3 and boarded 2 to ensure compliance," the post read.

The development comes amid heightened tensions between Washington and Tehran over the Strait of Hormuz.

Earlier on Thursday, CENTCOM had said that US Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey aircraft were operating from the USS Boxer (LHD 4) as the ship transited the Arabian Sea while supporting blockade operations against Iran.

"US Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey utility aircraft take off from the flight deck of USS Boxer (LHD 4) while the ship transits the Arabian Sea and continues to enforce the U.S. blockade against Iran. As of Aug. 20, US forces have redirected 67 commercial vessels, disabled 3 and boarded 2 to ensure compliance," the post read. The US has increased naval presence in the region amid disputes with Iran over maritime security, sanctions and nuclear issues. Washington has also accused Tehran of attempting to restrict shipping linked to US-allied countries, while the US has responded with naval escorts and maritime operations to keep international energy routes open.

— ANI

SPORTS

Bowlers’ day out in Mackay as Starc, Shoriful clinch six wickets each

Starc’s 6/12 shot down Bangladesh for mere 64 — their fourth lowest total in the format — before Shoriful, 6/35, returned the favour to limit Australia to 165/8 at the stumps in the second Test

MACKAY: Shoriful Islam replicated Mitchell Starc’s exploits as batters lived their worst nightmare



on the opening day of the second Test at the Great Barrier Reef Arena in Mackay on Saturday. Starc’s 6/12 shot down Bangladesh for mere 64 — its fourth lowest total in the format — before Shoriful, 6/35, returned the favour to limit Australia to 165/8 at the stumps. Cameron Green survived 81

balls and batted until the end of the day’s play for his 51, helping Australia take an overnight 101-run lead. Green, batting at No.5, saw five of his batting partners go back to the hut of which Shoriful removed four. Only Alex Carey was caught off Mehidy Hasan Miraz — the lone wicket of the day credited to a spin-



ner. Shoriful first had Travis Head chop on with the one that seamed into the left-hander before cleaning up Marnus Labuschagne three balls later. Earlier, Taskin Ahmed had Matt Renshaw caught in slips. With Australia at 41/3, Steve Smith and Green punched gloves and added 77 runs for the fourth wicket. Both survived multiple

close calls but went past Bangladesh’s total with ease. However, Shoriful returned to trap Smith on 42. In the same spell, the left-arm pacer got Beau Webster, Pat Cummins, and Mitchell Starc as well to reduce Australia to 148/8. Nathan Lyon focused on his defence and saw off the remaining

seven overs with Green. Earlier, Cummins put Bangladesh into bat, and Starc had Shadman Islam caught with the first ball. In the next 22 deliveries, the left-arm pacer completed his five-wicket haul as Tanzid Hasan, Momimul Haque, Najmul Hossain Shanto, and Litton Das couldn’t handle the pace and swing. Bangladesh were 12/5. Then Cummins cleaned up Mushfiquir Rahim, Mehidy Hasan, and Taskin Ahmed, while Hazlewood had Hasan Mahmud as the visitors slumped to 39/9. Shoriful came to the rescue with the bat as well, along with Taijul Islam, as the last pair added 25 runs to get past three of Bangladesh’s lowest scores. Starc came back to complete the formalities, having Shoriful caught behind only for his counterpart to strike back. **Brief scores:** Australia 165 for 8 (Green 51*, Smith 42, Shoriful 6-35) lead Bangladesh 64 (Starc 6-12, Cummins 3-25) by 101 runs. - Agencies

PAKISTAN STAND-IN SKIPPER

‘England outplayed us in every department’: Agha

LEEDS: There could realistically be no defence of the performance Pakistan put up over less than two full days of Test cricket, and their stand-in captain Salman Agha made no attempt to offer one after the team’s decimation by England in the first Test on Friday. The hosts won by an innings and 103 runs in three days to go 1-0 up in the three-match series. Agha accepted Pakistan had been “outplayed in every department” and that their Test form demonstrated they hadn’t been playing well “anywhere in the world.” “Bowling, batting and fielding - England outplayed us,” Agha said. “We were not consistent enough in any department. In England, consistency is important because there is lateral movement here, so you must be focused at all times. That was missing. And we think that missing consistency is what resulted in this performance.” In truth, Pakistan were consistently underwhelming, quite literally from the first ball, when Ollie Robinson trapped opener Azan Awaiz in front and set the tone for the Test. They were bowled out within 50 overs the first time around, and a lacklustre bowling and pedestrian fielding effort saw England amass what felt like an unassailable 238-run lead. It took England even less time to run through the visitors in their second innings, wrapping up a resounding innings victory. They were, as Agha put it, “better than Pakistan all three days”. It took England 514 balls to take



20 Pakistan wickets; on only four instances have sides dismissed Pakistan quicker. Pakistan suffered their 14th Test defeat in their last 19 matches, and their ninth in the last ten away games. “We’re not playing well away,” Agha said. “We haven’t done well anywhere in the world. This is concerning. We do talk about that in every meeting we have. Even outside of official team meetings. We are trying.” Agha tried to account for it all by suggesting Pakistan didn’t have enough time to acclimatise in England ahead of the tour. “An England tour is challenging for any Pakistan side,” he said. “We came into it from completely different conditions. It’s not like we came here a month ago; we only came here a week ago. You may have seen a

gulf in these sides. “But when any Asian team comes here, they struggle early on. These conditions are not such you can adapt to within a week. But we’re trying, and you’ll see in the next game we’ll turn in a better performance.” Pakistan arrived in England 12 days before the first day in Headingley. In that time, they played a three-day practice game against a select XI in Beckenham, winning by seven wickets. The only silver lining came in the form of skipper Babar Azam’s improving prognosis as he recovers from a finger injury, with Agha joking he was “more than happy” to return the captaincy to him after his tough induction to the role. “He’s our best batter and one of the best batters in the world. We definitely want to have him and hand him the captaincy.” - Agencies

Gambhir ‘ideally’ wants three-match Test series

COLOMBO: India coach Gautam Gambhir has called for more three-match series in Tests, arguing that two-Test series - like the one his team is presently engaged in, in Sri Lanka - do not allow for full narratives to unfold. Specifically, he spoke about teams not having the opportunity to bounce back from an early loss to take the series. “Ideally, I would want a three-match Test series,” Gambhir said in Colombo on the eve of the second Test. His team is actually leading this series, having won by 165 runs in Galle. “I’ve always believed that there should always be a possibility that a team losing the first Test match can come back and win the series. You can’t do that in a two-Test series - the most you can do is draw the series. “A short turnaround between Tests is fine. Other teams are doing that as well.” Though they are leading this particular series, India have had to bounce back from a 1-0 deficit on their 2015 tour of the island. Gambhir also used India’s comeback win during the Border-Gavaskar Test series in 2020-21 as an example of teams imposing themselves later in a series, having lost the first Test. On that occasion they had lost the opening match in Adelaide, before winning in Melbourne,



drawing the match in Sydney, and winning the final Test in Brisbane. “I still remember that series, between India and Australia, where India was one down, and they still managed to come back, and win that series 2-1. Normally, if you have those three Test matches, it’s always worth it.” Aside from India, Australia,

and England, most Test teams play series lasting only two Tests, even - as in this case - if their opponent is India. Sri Lanka have only six two-match series on their schedule in the ongoing World Test Championship cycle. Reigning World Test Champions South Africa had a similarly sparse schedule in the cycle that they won. - Agencies

HONOURS SHARED IN FIVE-MATCH WHITE BALL SERIES

Oman head coach Kulkarni says Goa ‘experiment’ paid off

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman cricket team head coach Sulakshan Kulkarni hailed the recent Goa tour as a valuable learning experience, saying the series gave his team much more than the T20 series victory as they fine-tune their preparations for a crucial run of international assignments. Oman won the T20 series 2-0 before going down 2-1 in the 50-over contests to leave the honours shared, but Kulkarni said the tour had achieved its wider objective. “The series was very competitive, and we gained a lot from it,” Kulkarni said. “It was not just about winning or losing. We learned a lot about our players and about where we stand as a team.” The Goa series gave Oman an opportunity to test different combinations, manage the workload of key players and expose others to competitive match situations — an exercise Kulkarni believes will prove valuable in the challenges ahead. “We rested some players and gave opportunities to others. Naturally, when you bring in players, they need time to settle. But overall, the experiment was successful,” he said. Kulkarni was particularly pleased with the character shown



by his side in the T20 series, where several players made important contributions in pressure situations. “I always tell the players to stay positive. Even if things do not go your way, don’t worry too much. Keep playing your game and don’t overthink,” he said. The coach also pointed to several encouraging individual performances, including consistent contributions with the bat and decisive spells with the ball, as Oman continued to search for the right balance across formats. But the larger significance of the

Goa tour, Kulkarni said, lies in the lessons it provided ahead of the ACC Men’s Premier Cup in Malaysia, beginning on August 30. Oman have been drawn in Group B alongside the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Singapore in the ODI tournament, which runs until September 12. Oman open their campaign against Singapore on August 30, followed by Qatar on September 2, Kuwait on September 5 and the UAE on September 8. The tournament will provide Oman with another important test as Kulkarni and his coaching staff



continue to shape a side that is also firmly in the hunt for a place at the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier. Oman are currently fourth in the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 standings and remain in a strong position to secure one of the four places that guarantee direct progression to the 2027 World Cup Qualifier. The top four teams at the end of the League 2 cycle advance automatically to the Qualifier, where the battle for places at the 2027 ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup will intensify. For Kulkarni, however, maintaining that position will depend

not only on performances but also on how effectively Oman manage their limited player resources. “Our player pool is small, so we have to look after the players,” he said. “We have to manage their workload, give them rest when required and make sure that we keep them fit.” Kulkarni reserved particular praise for Oman’s fitness and medical support staff, saying injury management had become increasingly important during a packed calendar featuring both T20 and 50-over cricket. “If a key player is unavailable,

it can make a big difference to a team like ours,” he said. “Keeping the players fit and managing their workload is extremely important.” The Goa tour, therefore, may have ended with mixed results on paper — a 2-0 T20 series triumph and a 2-1 defeat in the 50-over series — but Kulkarni believes Oman will emerge better prepared from the experience and have little time to dwell on the results. Instead, Kulkarni is taking the positives — and the lessons. “We gained a lot from this series,” he said. “Now the important thing is to take those lessons forward.”

BANK EARNINGS OUTLOOK
NEW DELHI: Indian banks are likely to see further improvement in net interest income and earnings growth in FY27, supported by strong foreign currency non-resident deposit mobilisation, healthy credit demand and benign asset quality, according to ICICI Securities. — **ANI**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



TRADE TALKS COLLAPSE
Trade negotiations between the US and Canada collapsed late on Friday night, triggering fresh tariffs. At 12:01 a.m. ET, the US imposed a 50% tariff on nearly \$28 billion worth of Canadian imports. > **B2**



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END OF 2026 FIRST HALF

Credit value for domestic sales, exports at Credit Oman tops OMR226mn

MUSCAT: Statistics released by Credit Oman showed that the total value of approved credit ceilings for domestic sales and exports by the end of the first half of the current year amounted to approximately OMR226.6 million, compared to OMR253.1 million during the same period of the previous year.

In terms of distribution, the value of approved credit ceilings for exports stood at approximately OMR138.5 million, compared to OMR148.7 million in the corresponding period of the previous year, while the value of approved credit ceilings for domestic sales reached approximately OMR88.1 million, compared to OMR104.4 million.

As for the total value of insured sales for exports and domestic transactions, it amounted to approximately OMR191.4 million by the end of the first half of the current year, compared to OMR211.4



million in the same period of the previous year, reflecting a decline of 9 percent.

Insured export sales recorded approximately OMR100.9 million, compared to OMR118.1 million in the same period of the previous year, a decrease of 15 percent. Insured domestic sales amounted to approximately OMR90.5 million, compared to OMR93.3 million, registering a decline of 3 percent.

Regarding the distribution of approved credit ceilings and insured sales by sector, the manufacturing sector led the results during the first half of the current year, with approved credit ceilings amounting to OMR208.3 million, representing 92 percent of total approved credit ceilings, while insured sales reached approximately OMR171.9 million, accounting for 90 percent of total sales.

The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector ranked third, with approved credit ceilings of approximately OMR3.1 million, representing one percent, while insured sales amounted to approximately OMR6.2 million, accounting for 3 percent of total insured sales for exports and domestic transactions.

Approved credit ceilings for the mining and quarrying sector reached approximately OMR988,000, while the transportation and storage sector recorded OMR871,500, and the construction sector OMR259,600.

Additionally, sectors including administrative and support service activities, financial and insurance activities, and accommodation and food services collectively accounted for shares not exceeding one percent of total approved credit ceilings.

Credit Oman continues to offer its diverse range of services and insurance solutions, aimed at empowering Omani exporters by providing effective protection against non-payment risks associated with financial collections or buyer default, while also supporting business continuity and encouraging exporters and manufacturers to proceed with expansion.

The availability of appropriate insurance coverage affords companies greater scope for making well-considered commercial decisions, whether in entering new markets or in expanding their existing sales volumes. — **ONA**

\$10 BILLION INVESTMENT

Micron to launch US memory research lab

NEW DELHI: Micron Technology CEO Sanjay Mehrotra has announced a \$10 billion investment in Micron Research Labs — a new research institution. The initiative adds to more than \$250 billion in investments in American manufacturing, which are expected to create over 90,000 jobs.

he chipmaker on Thursday unveiled Micron Research Labs -- a US-based research hub headquartered in Boise. Taking to X, Mehrotra said the research labs “will bring together our customers, suppliers, academia, government and the broader semiconductor ecosystem to pursue breakthroughs beyond today’s technology roadmaps and define what is possible in the years ahead.”

He further added, the initiative adds to more than \$250 billion in investments in American manufacturing, which are expected to create over 90,000 jobs across sectors.

“The Micron Research Labs joins more than \$250 billion of investment in American manufacturing that will create over 90,000 American jobs. Fabs, engineers, technicians, apprentices, suppliers, whole communities,” he said.

“We are funding the next generation of those questions now, before the world asks for the answers,” he noted. — **ANI**

MSX trading value rises by 2.4% to OMR252.1mn

This uptick was driven by investor appetite for diversifying their investment portfolios, coinciding with expectations that a number of companies will distribute dividends to their shareholders over the coming weeks



investment portfolios, coinciding with expectations that a number of companies will distribute dividends to their shareholders over the coming weeks.

Muscat Stock Exchange witnessed multiple gains last week, with executed transactions increasing by 2.2 percent to exceed 42,000 trades. The market capitalisation of listed securities rose to OMR38.33 billion, recording weekly gains of OMR140.3 million.

The main index advanced by 14 points to close at 7,522 points. Sectoral indices posted mixed gains, with the financial sector index recording the highest in-

crease, rising 93 points to close at 13,248 points, buoyed by gains in banking shares and a number of investment companies.

The services sector index climbed 8 points, supported by gains in shares of OQ Gas Networks, Al Jazeera Services, OQ Exploration and Production, Abraj Energy Services, and several other companies. The Sharia-compliant index rose by 3 points.

In contrast, the industrial sector index recorded a decline of over 100 points, weighed down by losses in shares of various industrial companies, including Salalah Mills, Galfar Engineering and Contracting, Al Anwar

Ceramic Tiles, Al Maha Ceramics, OQ Basic Industries, and Voltamp Energy.

During the week’s trading, investors targeted a number of blue-chip companies. OQ Basic Industries shares recorded trades valued at OMR47.5 million, accounting for approximately 19 percent of the total trading value. The company announced in recent days its intention to distribute performance-linked cash dividends estimated at 2.6 baisa per share, based on the exceptional financial performance achieved in the first half of the current year.

The company stated that these distributions will be in addition

to the base distributions announced in the offer prospectus amounting to 5.2 baisa per share, bringing total distributions to 7.8 baisa per share.

Bank Muscat shares saw trades valued at OMR45.8 million, representing 18.1 percent of the total trading value. Sohar International attracted investor interest, with trades amounting to OMR40.6 million, accounting for 16.1 percent of the total trading value.

OQ Exploration and Production shares captured 14.4 percent of the total trading value, with trades valued at OMR36.4 million. The share price closed the week at 481 baisa, up 11 baisa over the week, while the company’s market capitalisation rose to OMR3.848 billion, recording weekly gains of OMR88 million.

OQ Gas Networks ranked fifth among the most actively traded companies by value, with trades amounting to OMR28.4 million, representing 11.2 percent of the total trading value. Omantel came in sixth place with trades totalling OMR17.3 million, with the share price closing at OMR1.398.

During the week, prices of 39 securities rose, compared to 40 securities whose prices declined, while 17 securities stabilised at their previous levels.

— **ONA**

WEEK ENDED AUGUST 14

India’s forex reserves rise nearly \$10bn to \$716.9bn

MUMBAI: India’s foreign exchange reserves surged nearly \$10 billion in the week ended August 14 to \$716.9 billion, their highest level in about six months, helped by strong foreign currency inflows generated by measures introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to strengthen the country’s balance of payments.

According to data released by the RBI on Friday, the increase was driven primarily by a \$7.2 billion rise in foreign currency assets, while the value of the central bank’s gold holdings increased by \$2.7 billion.

India’s reserves have now risen for seven consecutive weeks, adding around \$50 billion during the



period and moving closer to the record high of \$728.5 billion reached in February.

The sharp increase follows measures announced by the RBI in June to encourage dollar inflows. These included discounted hedg-

ing facilities for overseas borrowings by state-owned companies and banks, as well as a zero-cost hedging facility allowing banks to raise foreign currency deposits from overseas sources.

The RBI has been absorbing much of these inflows into its reserves through discounted foreign exchange swaps.

The central bank said last week that it had received nearly \$57 billion in inflows under the measures by August 13, with more than \$50 billion coming through foreign currency deposits. The scale of the inflows prompted the RBI to bring forward the closure of its deposit hedging facility by one month to August 31. — **ANI**

GREED & FEAR REPORT

Jefferies turns bullish on gold

NEW DELHI: Jefferies has turned increasingly bullish on gold, citing worsening fiscal conditions in the US and Japan, growing constraints on monetary policy and improving cash generation among gold-mining companies, according to its latest GREED & fear report.

The brokerage said the deteriorating fiscal position of the US, coupled with rising government debt-servicing pressures, is creating a favourable environment for gold. US federal government debt has crossed the \$40 trillion milestone, while the fiscal deficit for the first ten months of the current financial year has already surpassed the full-year deficit recorded in FY25.

Jefferies noted that the US fiscal deficit rose to \$432 billion in July, the highest monthly deficit



since March 2021 and a record for the month of July. The fiscal deficit for October 2025-July 2026 stood at \$1.799 trillion, compared with \$1.775 trillion for the entire FY25.

The brokerage also pointed to rising Treasury yields and the in-

creasing pressure on the Federal Reserve to avoid raising interest rates because of the implications for government debt servicing.

“The above fiscal issues in America and Japan, and the constraints they impose on monetary policy, are clearly bullish for gold,” Jefferies said.

The brokerage’s bullishness is also linked to geopolitical risks. It highlighted the continuing tensions surrounding Iran and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, while noting that oil and energy stocks remain the best hedge, with gold the second-best hedge.

“Meanwhile the price gap between crude oil and refined products, such as diesel, becomes ever wider,” the report said, adding that “investors need to own oil and energy stocks as the best hedge, with gold second best.” — **ANI**

MARKET

US-Canada trade talks collapse

In a statement posted on X, Prime Minister Mark Carney said Canada will retaliate dollar-for-dollar, matching the \$28 billion in levies to protect workers and businesses

OTTAWA: Trade negotiations between the US and Canada collapsed late on Friday night, triggering fresh tariffs. At 12:01 a.m. ET, the US imposed a 50% tariff on nearly \$28 billion worth of Canadian imports.

Prime Minister Mark Carney immediately pulled Canadian negotiators back to Ottawa, calling Washington's last-minute demands "unfair and uneconomic."

In a statement posted on X, Carney said Canada will retaliate dollar-for-dollar, matching the \$28

billion in levies to protect workers and businesses.

"We have recognised from the beginning that America has changed, and that we will not return to our old relationship. Our government understood, before many, that America is altering all its trade relationships. Putting tariffs on its closest allies and charging for access to its vast market," Carney said.

"We have worked in that context. To strike a fair deal that would provide the best access to the U.S. market and greater certainty to Canadian businesses and workers. Throughout, our goal has been to secure the best deal for Canadians, never a deal at any price or on any deadline," he added.

Carney said that while significant progress had been made in recent weeks towards improving Canada's position in the trade negotiations, it had not been enough to meet Ottawa's objectives.

"As a result, this evening, I have decided to suspend trade negotiations with the US and have directed Canada's negotiators to return to Ottawa," he said.

"They have worked hard, in good faith, to defend the interests of Canadians throughout these negotiations up until the very last minute. However, last-minute changes in the US proposed terms were unfair, uneconomic, and called into question the reliability of any



deal," he added.

Carney further said that the US intends to impose a 50 per cent tariff at midnight on roughly \$28 billion worth of Canadian goods, adding that Canada would "match those tariffs dollar for dollar" to protect its workers and businesses.

"In the coming days, the government will introduce additional measures to support Canadian workers and businesses, building on the nearly \$25 billion in support provided over the past 18 months," he said.

The Canadian Prime Minister said the government's broader economic strategy was focused

on strengthening the domestic economy and diversifying partnerships abroad.

He said Canada was advancing nearly \$500 billion in major infrastructure projects while also working to unlock new export markets for Canadian businesses.

"Our existing free trade deals already provide Canada with preferential access to 1.5 billion consumers, and we are on track to double that market access by the end of this year," Carney said.

He further claimed that Canadian economic growth was accelerating and the country was on course to record the second-fastest growth in the G7 over the next two years.

"Our economy is creating jobs at four times the rate of the United States. Our exports to non-US markets are on track to double over the next decade. Foreign direct investment in Canada is at its highest level in two decades, running at twice the rate of our nearest G7 competitor," he said.

"Canada now ranks as the most attractive country in the world for infrastructure investment," Carney added.

"Canada has what the world wants. And we will not allow any nation to determine our future.

We will set our own course to keep building Canada strong for all," he said.

Meanwhile, Washington hit back, with the US Trade Representative calling it a "missed opportunity for Canada" and accusing Ottawa of walking back commitments and adding new demands. The US said it had offered sector-specific relief in steel, aluminium, autos and lumber.

"This is a missed opportunity for Canada to partner with the United States, which is the fastest-growing economy in the G7," the US Trade Representative said.

"Despite the US offer to Canada to receive the best treatment of any major exporter to our market, new demands and walkbacks of other commitments by Canada have upended the careful balance reached in the past days," the US Trade Representative said in a post on X.

It also accused Canada of continuing to maintain its "prolonged retaliation" against the United States, including "flat-out prohibitions on certain American goods and services".

"For decades, Canada has enjoyed the most favourable access to the U.S. market of any country. And from the beginning of President Trump's trade program, Canada has continued to enjoy the best treatment in the world, even after - like China - retaliating against the United States," it said. — **ANI**

IN A GRAND FINALE

CBSE Oman Cluster Football Championship concludes

MULADHA: The fifth and final day of the CBSE Oman Cluster Football Championship (Boys) 2026-27, hosted by Indian School Muladha, concluded on Monday with three fiercely contested finals in the Under-14, Under-17 and Under-19 categories.

The five-day championship brought together 38 teams from 15 schools across Oman, providing a competitive platform for young footballers to display their skill, determination, discipline and sporting spirit.

The final day's action began at 4 p.m. with the Under-14 final between Indian School Darsait and Indian School Salalah. After an engaging contest marked by skill and teamwork, Indian School Salalah emerged as the Under-14 champions.

In the Under-17 final, hosts Indian School Muladha faced Indian School Ghubra in a keenly fought encounter. Ghubra held their nerve to emerge as the Under-17 champions.

The championship's concluding match was the Under-19 final between Indian School Seeb and Indian School Muscat. In a fitting finale to five days of competitive football, Indian School Muscat secured the Under-19



championship title.

The matches were conducted under the supervision of officials and seven Omani national referees, whose professional officiating ensured the smooth and fair conduct of the tournament. The enthusiastic support of students, parents, teachers and participating schools added to the vibrant atmosphere on the final day.

Valedictory ceremony

The Valedictory Function and

Prize Distribution Ceremony was held following the finals in the presence of Chief Guest Mr. Nidheesh Kumar, Director In-Charge, Indian School Muladha, Board of Directors, Indian Schools, Oman.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. M. T. Musthafa, President, School Management Committee; Ms. Ashifa Asif, Convenor, School Management Committee and Chairperson, Academic Sub-Committee; Dr. Ajeeb Palackal, Treasurer; Mr. Shameer

Ahammed, Chairperson, Sports and Co-scholastic Committee; Mr. Rana Shankaram Singh, Principal, Indian School Seeb; Dr. Nayer Iqbal, Principal, Indian School Muladha; Ms. Anita Rose, Vice Principal, members of the School Management Committee and other dignitaries.

Coordinators, Heads of Departments, teachers, parents, students, officials, representatives of participating schools and the Omani national referees were also present.

Ms. Ashifa Asif presented a bouquet to the Chief Guest.

The valedictory proceedings commenced with the national anthems of Oman and India, followed by the presentation of the tournament report by Mr. Joseph Antony, Physical Education Teacher.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Mr. Nidheesh Kumar congratulated the participating teams, winners, finalists, officials, referees, teachers and the organising team for the successful conduct of the championship. He appreciated the discipline, dedication, teamwork and sporting spirit displayed by the young footballers throughout the tournament.

As part of the felicitation, Mr. M. T. Musthafa, President, School Management Committee, presented a memento to the Chief Guest as a token of appreciation.

Individual honours

The prize distribution ceremony recognised the achievements of teams and players across all three age categories. Champions and runners-up were presented with trophies, while third-place winners received medals.

The Best Player and Best Goalkeeper awards were also presented in each category.

Under-14: Saphtham of Indian School Bausher was named Best Player, while Mohammed Nazim Munas of Indian School Salalah received the Best Goalkeeper award.

Under-17: Aahir Shad of Indian School Ghubra was adjudged Best Player, while Hrivthick S., also of Indian School Ghubra, was named Best Goalkeeper.

Under-19: Mohammed Taiha of Indian School Nizwa was named Best Player, while M.D. Shadin of Indian School Al Seeb received the Best Goalkeeper award.

The individual award winners were felicitated by the Chief Guest in recognition of their outstanding performances during the championship.

The seven Omani national referees who officiated throughout the tournament were also felicitated with mementoes for their professional contribution to the successful conduct of the championship.

The tournament was formally declared closed, bringing to an end five days of competitive football and memorable sporting experiences.

The ceremony concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Miss Sarah Jeevan Varghese, Deputy Head Girl.

DYNAMIC PERFORMANCE

423 HP and a 1,050km range: Why the Chery Tiggo 9 PHEV remains Oman's top pick SUV

MUSCAT: Across Oman, the Chery Tiggo 9 PHEV continues to set a benchmark in the flagship SUV segment, blending an impressive 423 HP hybrid powertrain with a combined driving range of up to 1,050 km on a full tank and full charge under ideal driving conditions. Guided by Chery's "Conquer with You, Guard for Love" philosophy, it delivers dynamic performance, advanced technology, and exceptional comfort designed to meet the needs of modern families.

The Tiggo 9 PHEV is not just about numbers on a spec sheet - it is about giving families in Oman a flagship SUV that feels effortless on the highway and refined in the city. Parked next to any SUV in its class, the Tiggo 9 PHEV is easy to pick out. A bold octagonal front grille and 20-inch multi-spoke alloy wheels give it a confident stance, while the overall design has been shaped to hold up across Oman's varied terrain, from coastal highways to mountain routes.

The cabin carries that same intent inside. A 15.6-inch 2.5K HD center touchscreen puts connectivity and controls within easy reach, and premium 3D-stitched



seating is finished with long journeys in mind.

Together, they turn the interior into a spacious, tech-forward space that suits a school run just as well as a cross-country drive, keeping the whole family comfortable along the way.

The performance behind the

Tiggo 9 PHEV comes from a 1.5T high-performance engine working alongside two electric motors and a Dedicated Hybrid Transmission (3DHT). Combined, they produce 423 HP and 580 Nm of torque, yet the SUV still returns just 1.9 L/100 km on the WLTC cycle - an efficiency figure that is difficult to

match at this level of output.

That efficiency is also what makes the range possible. Running on its Super Hybrid DHT system, the Tiggo 9 PHEV can travel up to 1,050 km on a combined charge and tank, which in practice means families can cover long highway stretches with far fewer stops than

a comparable SUV would require.

With its blend of craftsmanship, technology and efficiency, the Tiggo 9 PHEV keeps setting the standard for what a flagship SUV can offer - making every journey across Oman safer, greener and more enjoyable.

Chery's global reputation con-

tinues to grow, as reflected in recent accolades: Ranked as the best Chinese global brand builder in cars and 14th overall in the 2023 Kantar & Google Chinese Global Brand Builders report. Secured first place among all Chinese automotive brands in the J.D. Power 2023 China Initial Quality StudySM (IQS). For more details please visit (<https://china.jdpower.com/press-release/2023-IQS>). Ranked 233rd on the 2025 Fortune Global 500 list, demonstrating Chery's exceptional global momentum, substantial year-on-year growth, and rapidly strengthening position among the world's largest and most influential companies.

Customers are invited to visit the nearest showroom and experience the future of driving with Chery. For more details, test drive requests, and the latest updates, please visit: www.chery.com, YouTube: @OmanChery, Facebook: CheryAutoOman, Instagram: @cheryoman.

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Contact : 94274470

MARRIAGE NOTICE

I, **ANSHAD VALIYAVALLAPIL** (holder of Indian Passport No. T0687192) S/o Ameer Valiyavallappil having permanent residence in Ameer Manzil, Theruvath, Kannadiparamba, 670604 Kannur Kerala (complete postal address in India) and presently residing at Oman, Nizwa 611, Jabir Masjid BLG 6 (complete postal address in Sultanate of Oman) intend to marry **Ms. RANEEM ABDUL GAFOOR**, (holder of Indian Passport bearing No. U2898826) D/o Abdul Gafoor Poyilingal at Embassy of India, Muscat. I swear that I am marrying her at my own free will and not under any duress and intimidation. Any objection towards this marriage may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P.O. Box No. 1727, Postal Code No. 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman within 30 (thirty) days of publication of this newspaper advertisement.

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Indian male MBA Finance, with +8 yrs of Accounting & finance experience seeks for as audit associate position. NOC available & DL. **Contact: 72420067**

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Looking for Accountant job, with driving license. **Contact: 92092486**

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Cleaning supervisor, 18 yrs GCC experience with UAE licence. **Contact : 96332056**

Indian male graduate with 20 yrs experience seeks job for executive secretary, admin or any other suitable post. Presently available in Muscat. **Contact: 91410074.**

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Experienced driver heavy and light 20 yrs of driving experience. **Contact: 97412505, 78385517**

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Mechanical engineer 11+ yrs experience in Oman HVAC / MEP, projects, facility management. Ready to join immediately. **Contact: 91690765**

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Mechanical HVAC Engineer 4+ yrs Oman experience. Design, execution, commissioning for oil & gas and commercial projects. ASHRAE associate member. with valid D/L Seeking a suitable job. **Contact: +968-75020107**

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Indian male, MCA, experience in network admin, IT support, website and Odoo ERP. **Contact : 79701775**

Indian male B.Sc., 20+ yrs Oman IT exp, seeks IT specialist, system administrator position. Immediate joining. **Contact: 93642216**

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Looking for Sr. Nurse job. **Contact: 96611267**

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Looking job for office boy cum driver. **Contact : 94487194**

Indian male looking for job, building watchman, office boy, personal driver(house,office). Currently in Oman, speak English & Hindi. **Contact: 96781899**

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Iran condemns latest economic sanctions announced by the US

The United States' declaration of new economic sanctions on Iran is far more than continued unlawful 'economic warfare' against a single country. It is an assertion of extraterritorial sovereignty over every independent Member State of the United Nations, spokesperson for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said

TEHRAN: Iran on Saturday slammed the latest economic sanctions announced by the United States, calling them arbitrary and saying they have no basis in international law and violate the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the UN Charter.



The remarks were made by Esmaeil Baqaei, spokesperson for Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a post on X on Saturday. "The United States' declaration of new economic sanctions on Iran is far more than continued unlawful 'economic warfare' against a single country. It is an assertion of extraterritorial sovereignty over every independent

Member State of the United Nations," Baqaei said.

He said no country can lawfully compel foreign banks, enterprises or airports, which are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of their respective sovereign states, to halt lawful commerce with a third country.

"Such secondary sanctions find no foundation in international

law. They violate the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in Article 2(1) of the UN Charter and breach the customary prohibition on intervention affirmed by the International Court of Justice in the Nicaragua case," he said.

Baqaei further alleged that economic coercion aimed at forcing a sovereign state to alter its lawful policy choices amounts to an in-

ternationally wrongful act.

"When combined with a naval blockade amounting to military aggression, these demands reduce the sovereignty of all other States to something provisional, conditional, and revocable at the whim of another power," he said.

He added that compliance with such sanctions does not guarantee immunity or respect, but instead means accepting that banks, enterprises and airports operate "only under a foreign licence."

"The end result would be the complete erosion of sovereignty as the foundational basis of the UN-based inter-State system, and a recipe for an abysmal return to full-scale classic colonialism," Baqaei said.

His remarks come after Washington announced a fresh round of sanctions targeting Iran, amid continued tensions between the two countries and broader instability in West Asia.

Trump recently announced what he called the "most crushing economic operation ever taken" against Iran and warned countries providing financial, business or government support to Tehran of "tremendous economic consequences".

The US President said the measures would target Iran's economic lifelines, including oil smuggling networks, financial transfers, exchange houses, ship registries and front companies.

He also called the campaign an "Economic D-Day" and urged American allies to join Washington in isolating Iran. — ANI

ESCALATING TENSIONS

Trump describes Strait of Hormuz as 'American territory'

MYRTLE BEACH: US President Donald Trump on Friday said Iran must never be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon and described the Strait of Hormuz as "American territory" amid escalating tensions between Washington and Tehran, according to media report.

Addressing a rally in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Trump said, "We cannot let them have a nuclear weapon; we cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon, or you will see some very bad things."

"We went down, and we stopped them; they will never have a nuclear weapon," he added.

Trump said Iran wanted to reach an agreement but questioned whether Washington would accept a deal, asserting control over the strategic waterway.

"They want to make a deal so badly, we don't even know if we want [a deal] because I view the Strait of Hormuz as an American territory right now, it's an American territory," Trump said, as per Al Jazeera.

Earlier, speaking to reporters at Joint Base Andrews before departing for Myrtle Beach, Trump had claimed that the United States had "total control" over the Strait of Hormuz and supported the idea of declaring the strategic waterway a US territory.

He said Washington had control over the region linked to the Strait of Hormuz amid its blockade against Iran.

"We're just going to sort of see what happens, and we have total control, as you know, of the border; we have total control -- if you look at the blockade, we have total control of that entire region having to do with the Strait of Hormuz," Trump said. — ANI

RAGS TO RICHES



Ex-car salesman becomes Belgian prince after DNA test

BRUSSELS: In a remarkable transition from an ordinary life to royal status, a 26-year-old Belgian car salesman has been formally recognised as the son of Prince Laurent, ushering a long-concealed paternity saga straight into the heart of the Belgian monarchy, ABC News reported.

Prince Laurent of Belgium established formal legal parentage with his son, Clement Vandekerckhove, during a civil ceremony at a town hall six months ago, though details surrounding the event have only recently come to light.

Official recognition

The official recognition was initially uncovered by Belgian weekly publication Soir Mag, which indicated that the newly acknowledged prince is set to obtain an equal portion of his father's estate following the legal status change.

Addressing the outcome, Vandekerckhove told the publication that he held little regard for legal technicalities, emphasising instead the "chance to get to know his father".

According to ABC News, the 26-year-old is the offspring of King Philippe's brother and model-singer Wendy Van Wanten.

The identity of his royal father has been the focus of persistent speculation over the years. Born in 2000, Vandekerckhove shares a distinct physical likeness to Prince Laurent. Furthermore, his first name has frequently been viewed as a reference to Villa Clementine, the prince's residence in Tervuren, while Van

Wanten dropped subtle clues within her musical works.

His existence was formally acknowledged by Prince Laurent only last year, with the royal stating that the two had "spoken openly and honestly about this in recent years".

ABC News noted that Vandekerckhove discovered Prince Laurent was his biological father when he was 16 years old. He subsequently initiated contact with the royal at age 20.

Reflecting on the psychological toll of his upbringing, he shared his experience with the Flemish daily Het Nieuwsblad earlier this month.

"My entire childhood, I struggled with the question 'Who is my father?' When I found out, the secrecy weighed incredibly heavy," he said.

As reported by ABC News, Vandekerckhove indicated that he intends to retain his existing family name rather than adopting his father's house name, Saxe-Coburg. "Giving up this family name would be a betrayal of everything my mother has done for me," he added.

Prince Laurent shares three other children with his wife, Princess Claire of Belgium, whom he wed in 2003.

The development follows a similar royal lineage dispute in 2020, when King Albert II recognised an illegitimate daughter, now Princess Delphine, following a prolonged legal campaign. Albert II stepped down from the Belgian throne in 2013 as the paternity dispute escalated into a broader public controversy. — ANI

GREATER COLLABORATION

Indian PM Modi meets CEOs of space startups, urges to expand applications

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged India's private space industry to explore wider applications of space technologies across sectors, saying the country can become a magnet for global talent, companies and investment in the space sector.

He made the remarks while interacting with CEOs and founders of 20 space startups at Seva Teerth, as he called for a greater collaboration between space companies and sectors such as agriculture and environmental protection. The Prime Minister has encouraged space companies to look beyond their existing applications and focus on how their technologies can improve people's lives. He suggested that companies working on space debris could collaborate with environmental organisations, while those developing space technologies for agriculture could work with agricultural universities and departments to help farmers make better-informed decisions and improve output.

He also called for the creation of an ecosystem where, "when the world thinks of space, it looks towards India", saying the country's space sector can act as a magnet to attract global talent, companies and investment.

The CEOs and founders high-



lighted the rapid progress of India's private space industry and said companies across the world were showing growing interest in adopting and leveraging technologies developed by India's emerging space sector. They also said the opening of the space sector to private participation had created new opportunities for industry and expressed appreciation for the support received from government.

The startups represented diverse areas including rockets and reusable semi-cryogenic launch vehicles, avionics, satellites, advanced propulsion systems, space

and defence intelligence, space debris removal and AI-powered hyperlocal weather and climate intelligence.

PM Modi congratulated the space-sector leaders for taking the lead in a new area, saying the confidence shown by the industry had strengthened the vision behind opening the sector to private participation.

He noted that many countries either cannot invest in the space sector or do not wish to do so, presenting India with an opportunity to strengthen its position in the global space sector.

The Prime Minister also called for closer collaboration between space companies and Atal Tinkering Labs to create curiosity and interest in space among young children from an early age.

The interaction included CEOs and founders of Skyroot Aerospace, Agnikul Cosmos, Pixxel, Dhruva Space, GalaxEye, PierSight, Bellatrix Aerospace, Digantara, SatSure, Suhora Technologies, Manastu Space, Astrobase, TakeMe2Space, VyomIC, Cosmoserve Space, OrbitAID Aerospace, SkyServe, Serendipity Space, Vas-sar Labs and mistEO. — ANI

SWEDEN

One killed in sword attack at school

FAGERSTA: A person armed with a sword has wounded multiple people at a school in Fagersta in central Sweden, authorities said Friday.

Police said one person had been taken into custody and there was no longer any danger to the public.

After initially saying three people had been wounded in the attack, two of them severely, police later said an additional person had been killed.

Earlier on Friday, Sweden's healthcare authority said two boys, both aged between 12 and 17, were being treated in hospital.

Police said the suspect was an 18-year-old man, whom they shot during a confrontation and took into custody.

What else do we know?



Police were called to the Brinellskola, a secondary school in Fagersta, at around 2 p.m. local time (1200 GMT). The school, which has some 450 students aged 16 to 20, had just reopened after the summer holidays.

Public broadcaster SVT report-

ed that ambulances, police cars and a police helicopter were outside the property.

The municipality said other schools and some public buildings in the area had been locked down.

Fagersta, home to some 12,000 people, lies around 170 kilometers

(105 miles) northwest of the capital, Stockholm.

Reactions to 'terrible news' "Our thoughts are with all those affected," Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said in a post on X. "We do not yet know what lies behind the act, but we know that the police are working very intensively."

Magdalena Andersson, leader of the opposition Social Democrats, lamented the "terrible news".

"When violence takes place at a school, I know it impacts everyone in our country. All of Sweden stands together with Fagersta at this difficult time," she wrote on X.

Other attacks at educational institutions

Sweden has seen a number of high-profile attacks at educational facilities in recent years. — DW



LIFESTYLE



HOW TO FEED



Inside futuristic labs, plants are scanned, stressed and analyzed. The aim is to use the results to produce plant strains that can better serve a growing population in a warming world



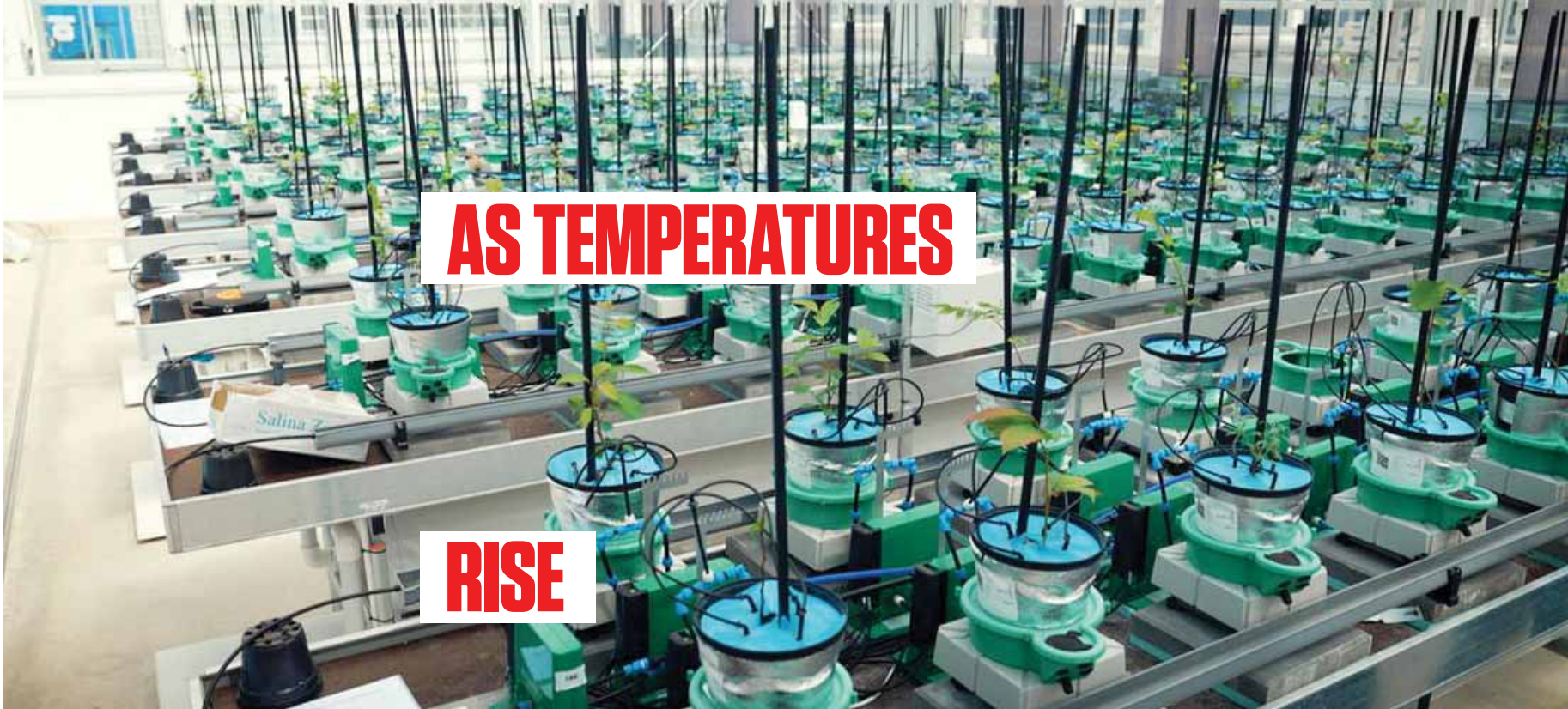
THE WORLD

Rows of tomato saplings stand in a room packed with cameras. Just a few weeks old, they're under constant surveillance as scientists monitor them for tiny changes in color, temperature and photosynthesis.

These plants are growing in a chamber designed to mimic the heat and humidity of India's climate. By analysing their reactions to different stressors, researchers at Wageningen University in the Netherlands are aiming to uncover genetic traits that have the potential to make crops resilient to human-caused climate change.

"We can regulate the temperature. We can give them a heat stress phase, we can freeze shortly, so we can simulate night frost, which could be very disruptive for young plants," explained Rick van de Zedde, programme manager at the Netherlands Plant Eco-phenotyping Centre (NPEC). "We can introduce salinity by adding salt."

In fact, the scientists can simulate almost any condition on the planet. "I would call it a gym for plants," said van de Zedde.



AS TEMPERATURES

RISE

Why understanding plants is so important

This research is becoming ever more essential. Agriculture has traditionally relied on predictable seasons and conditions, with farmers planning around established weather patterns — planting in the spring and harvesting in the autumn, for example.

But as societies burn fossil fuels that heat the planet, rising global temperatures are disrupting that rhythm.

Increasing heat waves, longer and more intensive droughts and severe flooding caused by global heating is increasingly putting crops at risk.

Following soaring temperatures this summer, farmers in some regions of Germany are warning of harvest failure. Grain production losses have already been registered in countries including France, Hungary and the

United Kingdom.

With the global population predicted to hit 10 billion by 2050, the pressure is on to produce enough food. That race is intensified by rising meat consumption, which implies growing more grain for animal feed.

Simultaneously, demand for crops to use as biofuels, which are made from organic material including plants or animal waste, is also on the rise.

For researchers, the question is no longer just how to grow more food, but how to do so under increasingly challenging conditions.

A high-tech way ahead

Dubbed the 'Silicon Valley' of agriculture, the Netherlands has long been a leader in farming innovation. Despite its relatively small size, the country is the world's second-largest exporter of agricultural products by value — after the US.

Inside the Wageningen University greenhouses, scientists recreate environmental conditions such as drought, tropical humidity or frosty nights, and use a range of technology to monitor the plants.

Over a period of weeks, automated scales record the weights of tree species every three minutes to reveal how much water they need. Sophisticated scanners track the movement of leaves as part of a process known as phenotyping — which measures plants and their features.

Though botanists have been tracking flora for thousands of years to select the best plants, the processes were historically manual and therefore slow and painstaking.

"All the lab measurements were restricting the size of the experiments," van de Zedde told DW. "If you look around here in NPEC, you see that we are talking about thousands of

plants in one experiment."

Taking experiments into the field

Despite the sophistication of the lab, it cannot completely mirror real-world conditions. Factors like hailstorms, high winds or differing soil temperatures remain difficult to recreate.

Near the university, experimental barley fields provide an important reality check. It is there that researchers deploy mobile imaging and use GPS positioning systems to collect data on hundreds of crop varieties in the field.

By comparing greenhouse and field results, they are better able to identify the plant traits that will help produce food that is going to be resilient to a changing climate.

"It's all about fitness. We simply score: how do these plants respond to the stress? Which ones can cope with it, which ones suffer from it," said van de Zedde.

Researchers can use the data to see the DNA profiles linked to tolerance to certain stressors. They can then crossbreed varieties — one with a high yield and one that is robust, for example, to produce resilient offspring.

What's next for the research?

The goal is to fast forward evolution. The Dutch government and plant-breeding companies funding the research will decide which variants to continue to breed.

But Alan Pauls, a Ph.D candidate in the university's Laboratory of Genetics, said the process has been met with criticism from some quarters.

"When you talk to the older generation, I definitely do feel like they don't trust it," he said. "The moment you talk about taking food or plants into a lab, immediately [what] you think about is GMO."

Genetically modified organ-

isms, or GMOs, have had their genes changed artificially to make them take on a particular characteristic. One way it's done is to insert a gene from a different species, like bacteria, into a plant.

In the European Union, genetic modification is strictly legally regulated and requires rigorous safety checks. At Wageningen, just 5% of experiments involve genetically modified plants. Most focus on selecting existing traits through phenotyping, speeding up natural processes rather than creating new characteristics.

Pauls believes the argument that too much interference makes food artificial is outdated.

"Are we thinking that it's artificial because a machine is involved? Are we thinking that it's artificial because it's happening so fast, or it's happening in a lab?" he said. "I can still harvest rice with a sickle, but is it going to feed a billion people in time? No." **-dw**

SPORTS

Tzolis shines as Arsenal open season with big win over promoted Coventry



Kai Havertz, Bukayo Saka and captain Martin Odegaard scored for the Gunners, who spurned chances to pad the scoreline even further

LONDON: Newcomer Christos Tzolis helped set up two goals as defending champions Arsenal opened the Premier League season by dismantling promoted Coventry 3-0 to spoil the visitor's long-awaited return to the top flight on Friday.

After ending a 22-year wait for the Premier League title, Arsenal showed why they are favoured to repeat as champions by completely dominating Frank Lampard's side in a game that was one-sided from start to finish.

Kai Havertz, Bukayo Saka and captain Martin Odegaard scored for the Gunners, who spurned chances to pad the scoreline even further.

"The perfect start," Odegaard said.

For Coventry, it was a rude welcome back to the Premier League after a 25-year absence. Having won the second-tier Championship last season by a wide margin, Lampard's side simply looked outmatched as they were repeatedly taken apart by a marauding Arsenal.

Tzolis was the only summer signing to start for the host but the left winger showed he could give this attack an added dimension by helping to set up both opening goals.

First he stole possession to feed defender Riccardo Calafiori, who squared the ball for Havertz to slot home in the 15th minute. The Greece international then sent a cross in from the left that goalkeeper Carl Rushworth managed

to only push into the path of Saka, who scored into an empty net in the 23rd.

"Amazing, he played a brilliant game," Odegaard said of Tzolis. "He has been brilliant all pre-season. He's so lively, it's hard to defend him. He's a really intelligent player, he always looks up and finds the right pass."

Odegaard added the third shortly after the break after his scuffed shot looped in out of reach of Rushworth. The Arsenal captain gave an apologetic shrug as a celebration.

"It was not the best finish but I was there," Odegaard said.

At the other end, the only time Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya was troubled was when a speculative overhead kick from Loum Tchouaoua from outside the box sailed just high of the bar in the 42nd. The visitor's only effort on target came in the 86th, when Jack Rudoni managed only a weak header straight at Raya.

Arsenal introduced their latest signing, England defender Ezri Konsa, before kickoff after he completed a move from Aston Villa earlier on Friday. - Agencies



Hull stun ManU in dream Premier League return

LONDON: Hull City stunned Manchester United 2-0 on a dream return to the Premier League after nine years away with a first ever top-flight win against their shell-shocked visitors on Saturday.

United came into the season high on confidence after their end to the 2025-26 campaign under Michael Carrick, where they finished third to qualify for the Champions League, and some new summer signings.

But it was Sergej Jakirovic's Tigers - promoted through the play-offs last season - who impressed on their home turf with two defenders on the scoresheet.

Semi Ajayi gave them the lead when he lashed in after Oli McBurnie's initial effort was tipped on to the post by United



keeper Senne Lammens.

And fellow defender and club-record signing Nobel Mendy scored on his debut when he headed in from Regan Slater's free-kick to seal a superb success in their first Premier League game since a

7-1 home loss by Tottenham in May 2017.

Tigers keeper Konstantinos Tzolakis was not as busy as he might have expected, but made five saves, including one to stop a Bryan Mbeumo effort late on. - Agencies

Messi fined for slapping opponent in MLS game



NEW YORK: Inter Miami's Lionel Messi has been fined for slapping Philadelphia Union's Quinn Sullivan during their side's Major League Soccer (MLS) 2-2 draw on Wednesday.

Messi, 39, slapped Sullivan around the back of the head towards the end of the game as he complained the Union player had elbowed him after he played the ball.

Sullivan reacted angrily to the slap, but the referee quickly intervened.

The MLS confirmed Messi had been fined, but did not reveal the amount.

Messi scored Miami's second goal at Subaru Park, finding the back of the net for the first time since his father passed away.

The Argentina international was not the only one to clash with Sullivan, as Miami's Ian Fray was also fined

by the MLS.

Fray grabbed the neck of Sullivan after both players got tangled up with one another when Sullivan lost his footing in the box.

A bad-tempered game ended with two red cards as Miami's Yannick Bright and Sullivan's brother Cavan were both sent off in stoppage time.

Cavan's one-game suspension, however, has now been rescinded after review.

Miami are currently second in the Eastern Conference, seven points behind leaders Nashville.

Messi is back in Miami having been in Argentina for the funeral of his father, who was also his agent.

Jorge Messi died aged 68 following a long illness, and in a tribute to his father, Messi suggested he may not continue playing football for much longer. - Agencies

WORLD CUP FINAL SCUFFLE

Paredes banned 10 games as FIFA suspends three Argentina players

GENEVA: FIFA banned three Argentina players on Friday, including a 10-match suspension for midfielder Leandro Paredes, for striking Spain opponents after losing the World Cup final.

The ban for Paredes - who grabbed Spain's Eric Garcia by the throat and pushed Gavi to the ground - ranks with the FIFA sanctions for Uruguay forward Luis Suárez in 2014 as among the most severe in World Cup history.

Argentina defender Nahuel Molina was handed a seven-game ban while Thiago Almada was given a one-game suspension. FIFA imposed fines of \$90,000 on Paredes and Molina, and \$30,000 for Almada. The ban for Paredes is effectively a one-year expulsion from the Argentina team as the FIFA calendar for national team schedules includes 10 games through June 2027.

All of those games could be friendlies with no competitive games currently scheduled.

Spain's Gavi also was banned for one game, which is a Nations League match for Spain against England at Wembley on Sept. 26.



An Argentina coach, Roberto Ayala, also got a three-game ban and \$30,000 fine.

The Argentine Football Association was fined \$110,000 for a range of incidents during the World Cup including players carrying a political banner about the Falkland Islands after the semi-final win against England, and discriminatory chants by fans.

AFA also was ordered by FIFA to spend \$100,000 on anti-racism projects. Argentina received \$34

million in World Cup prize money from FIFA. AFA can appeal the longer sanctions and fines to FIFA, and likely after at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"The AFA legal department will, in a timely manner, request from FIFA the grounds for the reviewable rulings in order to file appeals with the governing body's appeal committee, while retaining the future option of appealing to the CAS as a final recourse," the federation said in a statement.

Suárez and Simunic cases

In 2014, Suárez was banned from all football for four months, including for his new club Barcelona, and eight more competition games for Uruguay for biting Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini in a World Cup group stage game in Brazil.

Paredes' 10-game ban equals that in 2013 for Josip Simunic of Croatia after winning a World Cup qualifying playoff.

Simunic used a megaphone to lead fans chanting a slogan used by the country's pro-Nazi regime during World War II.

The on-field clashes at last month's final in East Rutherford, New Jersey - which were charged by FIFA as assault cases - came after Argentina lost a testy final to Spain where they were mostly outplayed and barely created a scoring chance.

FIFA disciplinary judges also ordered Argentina to play their next home game in a stadium limited to 50% of capacity. FIFA deferred a second stadium sanction and a \$100,000 for probationary periods. - Agencies

BAYERN MUNICH PLAYER

'Musiala had neurological issue for long time'

BERLIN: Bayern Munich have been aware of Jamal Musiala's neurological issue for at least a year, board member for sport Max Eberl said on Friday. Musiala collapsed during successive games over the past week, causing alarm for team-mates, opponents and spectators. Eberl and Bayern coach Vincent Kompany said the incidents were triggered by a change in the treatment Musiala was receiving for the neurological issue.

The player said in an Instagram post after the latest collapse against Heidenheim on Tuesday that he had been diagnosed with "absence seizures caused by a



neurological dysfunction" but there was "no additional health risk" and that he intends to keep playing as before.

While the 23-year-old Musiala's collapses caused what Bayern honorary president Uli Hoeness said Wednesday was a "drama" for the club, Eberl and Kompany pro-

jected an aura of calm on Friday.

"We've been dealing with this all of last season," Eberl said. "We've worked with it, we've handled it, and now it's a situation where a young person is suddenly confronted with this out of nothing - a situation we are helping him navigate."

Kompany said Musiala is being left out of his squad for the German Supercup match at Borussia Dortmund because of the extra attention on the player, but that everyone at the club is relaxed about his condition as "we've been dealing with this for a long time."

"The initial shock happened a

while ago," Kompany said. "Since then, we've gathered much more information, gained a far better understanding of the situation, and made every decision based on the best possible advice from top experts ... we're past the stage where this is a major topic of internal discussion."

Kompany said the speculation from outside was normal because Musiala's condition had only just become public. "I just spoke to Jamal. He said, 'Vinnie, no problem, you can mention it.' But he made a change to his treatment, and that had some side effects," the Bayern coach said. - Agencies



CINCINNATI OPEN



Tiafoe downs Musetti to set up Nakashima clash in semi-final



CINCINNATI: Frances Tiafoe overcame Lorenzo Musetti 7-6(2) 7-5 on Friday to reach the Cincinnati Open semi-finals, setting up an all-American clash with Brandon Nakashima as the US Open approaches.

Tiafoe needed more than two hours and four match points to complete the win over 10th seed Musetti on a humid night in Ohio, with nearby thunderstorms threatening but never interrupting play. Tiafoe, seeking to revive a summer disrupted by early exits in Washington and Montreal as well as a wrist injury, played aggressively throughout, firing 18 winners before sealing victory with an unreturnable serve.

Tiafoe owns a 6-1 career record against Nakashima but will face a player in confident form after Nakashima rallied from a break down in the deciding set to beat fellow American and sixth seed Taylor Fritz 7-6(9) 4-6 6-3.

Nakashima has now reached the last four at back-to-back Masters 1000 events after his run in Montreal last week, capping another impressive turnaround on the North American hard courts ahead of the U.S. Open, which starts later this month.

Nakashima, who came into the match with a 1-4 record against

Fritz, edged a tight first set, with both players dominant on serve as the match went to a thrilling tiebreak. After trading leads and mini-breaks, Nakashima finally converted his fifth set point when Fritz sent a ball just long.

Fritz responded strongly, using aggressive returning to break Nakashima early in the second before closing out the set with an ace to force a decider.

Fritz capitalised on his opponent's unforced errors to break serve and move ahead 3-2 in the decider, but the momentum swung back almost immediately as Nakashima recovered from 30-0 down to convert his second break point of the match and level at 3-3.

Nakashima then won the final three games as Fritz's errors accumulated and the 27th seed's confidence continued to grow, serving out a win that extended the hottest run of his career and gave him his fourth top-10 victory of the season.

Also seventh seed Flavio Cobolli recovered from a sluggish start to beat home favourite Tommy Paul 2-6 6-3 6-4 and reach his first ATP Masters 1000 semi-final.

His opponent will be Arthur Fils after the Frenchman swept past Argentina's Thiago Agustin Tirante 6-3 6-2. -Agencies

Russell wins Dutch GP sprint race from pole

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc took second ahead of Lando Norris at Zandvoort

ZANDVOORT: Mercedes' George Russell led from start to finish to win the sprint race at the Dutch Grand Prix on Saturday.

Russell led a train of four cars for the entirety of the race but was always able to keep his pursuers at arm's length.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc passed McLaren's Lando Norris with six laps to go to take second ahead of the world champion, who fended off a late attack from Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli.

Russell's win cuts his deficit in the championship to Antonelli to 56 points, with Lewis Hamilton in second place. The seven-time champion, who finished seventh behind McLaren's Oscar Piastri and Red Bull's Max Verstappen, is three points ahead of Russell in the championship.

Russell was in control of the race throughout. Norris followed him closely in the opening phases, often within a second of the Mercedes and looking quicker.

But after eight laps Norris radioed his team to say he had no rear grip and he began to lose time to the Mercedes and fall back into the clutches of Leclerc.

The Ferrari driver had chosen the soft tyres for the sprint, rather than the mediums of the other front-runners. But rather than losing his tyres as the race went on, Leclerc grew stronger in his pursuit of Norris and was able to pass into Tarzan, the first corner, on lap 18 of 24. Russell said: "As soon as I saw Charles behind, I dropped the hammer a bit and the two of us pulled away."

Russell's only concern was the weather. Rain was forecast to fall two laps from the end. As it happened, it did not come until after the chequered flag, as the drivers completed their slowing down laps, but it was heavy enough that it would have made the end of the race eventful had it come sooner.

Norris now had to concentrate on holding off Antonelli. The



Italian was 0.3secs behind the McLaren crossing the line into the last lap, but although he feinted a move into Tarzan, he was not close enough to make it work.

Norris said: "I don't think it was the tyres. We lacked pace and we have a bit of work to do.

"We've been losing out in the first three corners all weekend. The car's very good in high speed [corners] but nowhere near good enough in the slow corners. You can't over-push in the high-speed in the race. You have to look after the tyres."

Piastri lacked the pace of the lead group and fell back progressively as the race developed, but he was just able to hold off Verstappen on the final lap, crossing the line 0.3secs ahead, with Hamilton close behind the Red Bull. -Agencies

CINCINNATI WTA

Bejlek continues dream run, to meet Gauff next

CINCINNATI: Czech Sara Bejlek continued her stunning run at the Cincinnati Open as she upset American Madison Keys to reach her first WTA 1000 semi-final, where she will face fourth seed Coco Gauff.

Unseeded Bejlek, 20, has now beaten three major champions on her run to the last four, after taking the scalps of world No.1 Aryna Sabalenk in the fourth round and Barbora Krejickova earlier in the tournament.

She beat Keys 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5) in the quarter-finals as she seeks her second WTA title, having won the Abu Dhabi Open in February.

Bejlek was a set down and trailing 3-1 in the second set when she won five of the next six games to level the match and then fought back from 4-2 down in the decisive tie-break to win in two hours and 37 minutes.

The world No. 35 said: "We had a kind of big talk with my team a couple of weeks ago, and since that moment I feel that it's going quite well and I'm getting better in the believing in myself and improving also physically on the court."



Gauff's net play reaping rewards

American Gauff beat Ukraine's 10th-seeded Marta Kostyuk 6-2 6-2 to reach her third consecutive semi-final, having lost in the last four at Wimbledon and the Canadian Open earlier this month.

Gauff said she has changed tactics and is going to the net more which is reaping rewards.

"I didn't realise how good I was at it until Wimbledon," Gauff said. "Everyone has been telling me to come to the net more. Actually, Chris Evert has been texting me sometimes to come to the net more."

"And I tell her yeah, I'm going to, and then I just don't. I finally did at Wimbledon and I won so many points that way."

"And obviously here, there's just a big difference when you're able to finish the point at the net."

World No.3 Jessica Pegula survived a stirring fightback from Amanda Anisimova to win 6-4 2-6 7-6(4) and reach the Cincinnati Open semi-finals, while Iga Swiatek also advanced when Elena Rybakina retired injured. -Agencies

WORLD NO.1



Sinner rules himself out of US Open 2026

LONDON: World No.1 Jannik Sinner on Friday confirmed that he will not be taking part in the US Open 2026 owing to an injury which needs more time to heal.

"Even though I have been working hard with my team and my medical staff, we have now had to make the difficult decision that I will not be able to compete at the US Open this year," Sinner said in a statement posted on X.

"We have been back on court in Monte Carlo over the last couple of days and have realised that I still need more time to recover

from my right knee issue. I'm obviously very sad and disappointed, as New York has a special place in my heart," the Italian added.

Sinner had finished runner-up in the 2025 edition after losing to rival Carlos Alcaraz 2-6, 6-3, 1-6, 4-6.

Alcaraz, meanwhile, confirmed that he will return to action at the US Open after missing four months of action with a wrist injury.

The US Open runs from August 23 to September 13. -Agencies

BOXING

Two-time world champ Tete shot dead outside home

JOHANNESBURG: Two-time world boxing champion Zolani Tete was shot dead outside his home in South Africa on Friday.

The 38-year-old was killed in what has been described as an ambush in Mdantsane, Eastern Cape on Friday.

Officials said Tete was in his car waiting for the gate to his house to open when two armed suspects in balacavans emerged from a vehicle and fired "multiple

shots" at him and a 27-year-old female passenger, who remains in hospital.

South Africa's minister of sport, arts and culture, Gayton McKenzie, said: "South Africa has lost one of the finest fighters it has ever produced."

The two suspects fled the scene and a major investigation has been launched, McKenzie added.

Tete held the WBO bantamweight title from 2017 to 2019, as

well as the IBF super-flyweight title in 2014.

Tete beat Liverpool's Paul Butler in 2015 in one of the eight times he fought in the United Kingdom.

He also holds a Guinness World Record for the fastest knockout in a title fight, ending his match with Siboniso Gonya inside 11 seconds in 2017.

Tete last fought in July 2022, beating Briton Jason Cunningham by knockout in London, but it was

later ruled a no-contest after he failed a drugs test.

He tested positive for anabolic steroid stanozolol and was given a four-year ban by the UK Anti-Doping Agency.

His ban ended on 29 July, 2026 and after his death, manager Mla Tengimfene confirmed he had been training for a comeback fight.

Tete had 29 wins in 34 fights, with four losses and one no-contest. -Agencies



IN PICTURES



Tourism and culture festival launched to mark Qixi Festival
An aerial drone photo shows a view of the tourism and culture festival themed on floating lanterns for the Qixi Festival, also known as Chinese Valentine's Day, in Rongchang District of southwest China's Chongqing Municipality. The tourism and culture festival features a concert, a parade and various performances including molten iron fireworks and bamboo raft shows. *Xinhua*

A glimpse of sika deer in Heilongjiang's nature reserve
Sika deer are pictured at the Xiandongshan sika deer national nature reserve in Qiqihar, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. *Xinhua*



Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor attends the screening of the re-release of the film '1942: A Love Story'
Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor attends the screening of the re-release of the Indian Hindi-language romantic drama film '1942: A Love Story', in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



BC Fast & Furriest Races held at Town Centre Park in British Columbia, Canada
A corgi competes during the BC Fast & Furriest Races at Town Centre Park in Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada. *Xinhua*



Festival of Folk Arts held in Budapest, Hungary
An artist plays a traditional horn during the Festival of Folk Arts at Buda Castle in Budapest, Hungary. The annual festival showcases traditional Hungarian crafts and folk art as part of the celebration of Hungarian cultural heritage. *Xinhua*



Sprint Qualifying session of 2026 F1 Dutch Grand Prix
Ferrari's Charles Leclerc of Monaco competes during the Sprint Qualifying session of the 2026 Formula One Dutch Grand Prix at the Zandvoort Circuit in Zandvoort, the Netherlands. *Xinhua*



DR Congo receives 1st batch of Ebola vaccine doses as outbreak kills over 2,500
Roger Kamba (left, front), health minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), receives the first batch of Ebola vaccine doses in Kinshasa, DRC. *Xinhua*



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