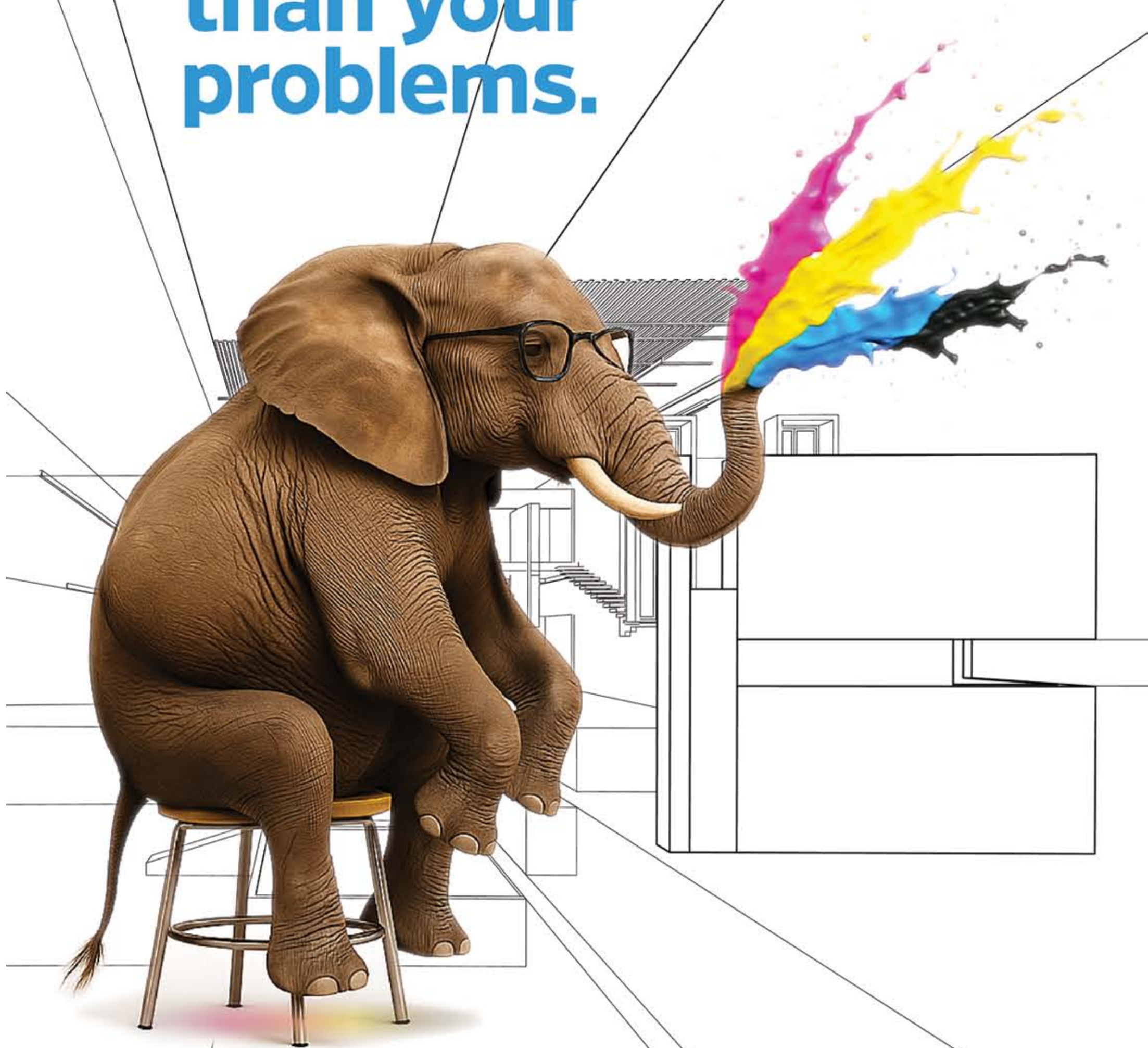


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SULTANATE’S PUBLIC REVENUES RISE 13% TO REACH OMR6.6 BILLION

Total public expenditure stood at approximately OMR6.619 billion by the end of Q2 2026, marking an increase of OMR521 million

MUSCAT: The state public revenues recorded a 13 percent increase by the end of the second quarter of 2026, reaching approximately OMR6.602 billion, compared to approximately OMR5.839 billion during the corresponding period of the previous year. This growth is primarily attributable to higher oil revenues.

According to the Fiscal Performance Bulletin issued by the Ministry of Finance, total public expenditure stood at approximately OMR6.619 billion by the end of Q2 2026, marking an increase of OMR 521 million, or 9 percent, relative to the OMR6.098 billion recorded during the same period in 2025. This rise reflects higher development and current expenditures compared to the equivalent period last year.

The bulletin further indicated that net oil revenues rose by 10 percent by the end of Q2 2026, reaching approximately OMR3.332 billion, compared to OMR3.018 billion recorded during the same period in 2025.

The realised average oil price stood at USD 74 per barrel, while average daily oil production reached 1.074 million barrels per day.

Net gas revenues also increased by 32 percent to OMR1.164 billion, up from OMR884 million in the corresponding period of 2025.

Current revenues collected by the end of Q2 2026 grew by 6 percent to OMR2.045 billion, compared to OMR1.928 billion during the same period in 2025.

On the expenditure side, current expenditures rose by approximately OMR251 million to OMR4.369 billion, against OMR4.118 billion recorded at the end of Q2 2025.

Development expenditures for ministries and civil units reached OMR798 million by the end of Q2 2026, of which OMR146 million was allocated to economic transformation projects.

The disbursement rate stood at approximately 61 percent of the total development expenditure budget for 2026, which amounts to OMR1.3 billion.

Total contributions and other

expenditures recorded OMR1.132 billion by the end of the second quarter of the current year, reflecting a decrease of approximately OMR29 million, or 2 percent, compared to OMR1.161 billion during the same period in 2025.

Subsidies allocated to the social protection system, the electricity sector and petroleum products amounted to approximately OMR323 million, OMR288 million and OMR162 million, respectively, by the end of Q2 2026. Transfers to the debt service provision stood at OMR 150 million.

Suspense expenditures reached approximately OMR320 million by the end of Q2 2026, compared to approximately OMR130 million during the corresponding period in 2025.

The bulletin noted that total public debt amounted to OMR14.16 billion by the end of Q2 2026, relative to OMR14.12 billion recorded at the same period in 2025, representing a marginal increase of approximately 0.3 percent. **-ONA**

STUDENTS' COMFORT

Ministry of Health issues guidelines for safe school bags

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With the new school year approaching, Oman's Ministry of Health (MoH) has issued guidelines to help parents choose school bags that support students' comfort and protect their back health.

The Ministry said selecting the right school bag is not merely a matter of appearance, but an important step in reducing strain and ensuring students remain comfortable throughout the school day.

According to the guidelines, a safe school bag should be lightweight and preferably made of

fabric. The back of the bag should have thick, flexible support along with small ventilation holes.

The Ministry also recommends bags with multiple pockets, which can help distribute the weight more evenly. Shoulder straps should be wide, adjustable and padded to reduce pressure and strain on the shoulders.

Proper sizing is also important. The width of the bag should not exceed the student's body width, while its length should correspond to the height of the student's torso. The bottom of the bag should sit approximately 5 centimetres above the waist.

The Ministry further recommends using an adjustable waist belt that fits the student properly and helps distribute the weight of the bag more evenly.

The guidelines come as families prepare for the new academic year, encouraging parents to consider both comfort and health when purchasing school supplies.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Salalah Eye: New panoramic viewpoint

1 The Salalah Eye represents a new addition to the tourism and entertainment experience ecosystem in Dhofar Governorate, coinciding with the Khareef 2026 season. The attraction offers a panoramic experience allowing visitors to view the sea, plains and mountains from an elevation of 55 metres, situated at Al Haffah Beach in Salalah. **>A4**

OMAN Governors discuss decentralisation

2 The meeting of the Governors' Forum, attended by the Governors of Oman's governorates, alongside the Chairmen of Muscat Municipality and Dhofar Municipality, commenced at Dhofar Municipality. **>A2**

SPORTS Australia crush Bangladesh

3 A ten-wicket haul from Mitchell Starc helped Australia crush Bangladesh by an innings and 51 runs in two days, ending the two-match Test series drawn with a vengeful performance. **>A8**

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COMMENTARY

The war will never change the Gulf nationals

The region has been in the international spotlight since the first Gulf war when Iraq invaded Kuwait. But now we are in the middle of another one and life continues as usual for GCC citizens.

A century ago when the desert sands were aimlessly blowing in the wind, nobody, but the so-called explorers, had any interest in the region. When oil started gushing out in plentiful, the natives started dancing with joy not knowing exactly what the wealth may mean to them.

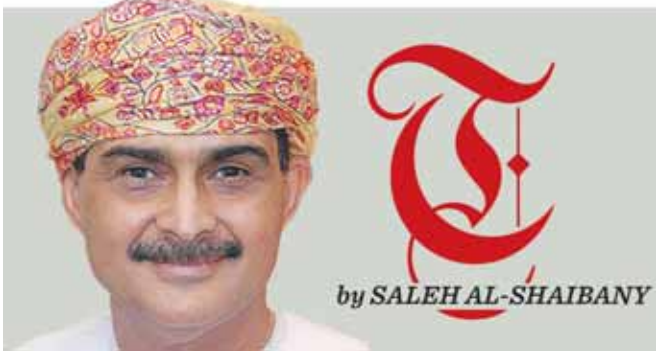
Perhaps it was the ignorance about the rest of the world or plain naivety that made Gulf Arabs think that they would be allowed to live in fabulous wealth without external interference.

Last week, I was sitting in a traditional souk, one of the few surviving marketplace still to retain its old charms, with an elderly man. He was silently tugging his beard looking blankly at the empty space.

He must have been well in his nineties but his brains, when he finally came out from his trance, was remarkably sharp. I asked him a question and when I was beginning to think the man was not in the same world I was, he blinked twice before speaking.

“Do you see that man over there?” He lifted his stick to point to a European coming out of a car.

I looked at the congested parking space to meet the blue



by SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

eyes of a man who realised he had been singled out from the crowd. There was an apprehensive look on his face as he first looked at me then at the frail old man with a fierce expression on his wrinkled face. I think the stick unnerved him and he took a few uncertain steps forward, smiled nervously at us as if to seek reassurance. I did smile back and nodded my head in greeting but the old timer fixed a stern stare on him.

“I remember a man like him,” the old man told me, his eyes following the European as he kept walking away from us,” they came over in big vehicles carrying big machines and camped just outside our village.”

It was more than sixty years ago, he said, when the Europeans first came to look for oil. He remembered when they polluted an important source of drinking water with “oil mud.” The villagers were desperate and were forced to leave their homes in search of fresh water.

“We had to do it because our animals were dying of thirst, the date trees were drying and we had to walk for miles to get water just to survive,” he explained further and then knocked the empty chair with his stick which such force that the furniture toppled over with a crashing sound.

That was it. The old man returned to his stance and stared at nothing in particular, completing ignoring me. I thought it was time to move on. The narrow streets of the beautiful marketplace were bustling with European tourists served by Indian traders. The souk itself was dwarfed by tall buildings where multinational companies had offices. I could not help noticing that I was one of the very few nationals walking in the streets. It was then I remembered the words of a British lawyer when I was a teenager, “it is not the Gulf your ancestors knew but what the explorers made it to be.”

That sums it up with what is going on in the region now.

ROAD NETWORK

Road projects worth over OMR120 million underway in Al Wusta Governorate



ROAD NETWORK: Asphalt road maintenance works across the governorate continue with an approximate cost of OMR6,004,000, covering a total length of 1,244 kilometres. - ONA

HAIMA: The total cost of road maintenance and completion projects being executed by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in Al Wusta Governorate has exceeded OMR120 million, as part of the Ministry’s ongoing efforts to develop the road network, enhance its efficiency and improve road safety standards.

Asphalt road maintenance works across the governorate continue with an approximate cost of OMR6,004,000, covering a total length of 1,244 kilometres. These works aim at preserving

the efficiency of the road network and elevating safety levels for all users. In the construction projects segment, the Ministry is continuing the implementation of the project to complete a section of Sultan Said bin Taimour Road – North of Haima, extending over 58 kilometres at a cost of OMR44 million, with a construction period of 24 months.

Works are also progressing on the project to complete a section of Sultan Said bin Taimour Road – Phase Three, covering 124.5 kilometres at a cost of OMR70 million, with a completion rate of 23

percent and a construction period of three years.

These projects are part of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology’s strategic plans to develop the road infrastructure system in Al Wusta Governorate, enhance its efficiency and sustainability, and improve connectivity between the governorate’s wilayats. This contributes to supporting economic and developmental activity, facilitating mobility and transport operations and raising road safety and traffic flow standards. - ONA

Governors discuss cooperation efforts, exchange of expertise

These efforts are aligned with the strategic objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and are designed to support the comprehensive and sustainable development agenda



SALALAH: The deliberations of the Governors’ Forum, attended by the Governors of the Sultanate of Oman’s governorates, alongside the Chairmen of Muscat Municipality and Dhofar Municipality, commenced on Sunday at Dhofar Municipality headquarters in Salalah.

The Forum is convened as part

of ongoing efforts to enhance institutional cooperation and integration among governorates, facilitate the exchange of expertise, experiences and successful practices in administrative and developmental spheres.

It comes to foster synergy of efforts, complementarity of roles and elevation of performance and achievement standards. These efforts are aligned with the strategic

objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and are designed to support the comprehensive and sustainable development agenda.

In his welcome address, HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, emphasized that the forum represents a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas and perspectives, as well as drawing upon the diverse experiences of the various governorates.

He noted that the distinct characteristics, resources and challenges of each governorate constitute a source of mutual learning and experiential integration.

Charting future aspirations

His Highness affirmed that the current phase calls for a transition from reviewing past accomplishments to charting future aspirations, while enhancing the

capacity of governorates to shape development policy and efficiently leverage their resources and comparative advantages.

He highlighted that one of the key agenda items for this year’s forum is the deliberation on a proposal to reform the decentralisation framework in the Sultanate of Oman, developed by a joint team of governorate representatives over the preceding period.

The objective is to come up with a more mature and practical vision that accurately reflects the needs of the governorates and reinforces integration among them.

The forum featured the presentation of several working papers and briefings, including a paper on “His Majesty the Sultan’s Award for Governorate Development,” delivered by Eng. Mohammed bin Saif Al Amri, Director General of Governorate Affairs at the Ministry of Interior.

His presentation addressed the award’s objectives and its role in stimulating positive competition and raising the standards of developmental performance and achievement.

Additionally, Dr. Saud bin Mo-

ammed Al Farsi, Advisor to the Governor of Dhofar, delivered a presentation on perspectives regarding administrative and economic decentralisation in the governorates, encompassing a number of proposals and visions related to strengthening the governorate framework and empowering it to manage local development while optimising the utilization of its resources.

Participants engaged in discussions on various perspectives and proposals related to the development of governance mechanisms within the governorates, with a view to formulating a shared and integrated vision for subsequent review by a joint committee comprising relevant authorities and governorate representatives.

The forum underscores the importance of inter-governorate communication and the exchange of expertise and best practices in administration, development and investment, thereby enhancing operational efficiency, coordinating efforts and advancing the trajectory of decentralisation and local development across all governorates of Oman. - ONA

SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Fishermen’s villages set to transform coastal communities

DUQM: The fishermen’s villages represent a cornerstone project within the supporting infrastructure framework for the fisheries sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

These villages play a pivotal role in providing stable residential and service environments for Omani fishermen in close proximity to high-yield landing sites and fishing grounds, thereby attracting fishermen, enhancing the sustainability of the fishing profession and revitalising coastal communities.

Asaad Salim Al Amri, Director of the Fisheries Department in Al Wusta Governorate, stated that the concept of fishermen’s villages extends beyond the provision of housing to encompass the creation of integrated fishing communities equipped with the essential services required by fishermen in their daily lives and professional practice.

This approach fosters stability, creates conducive conditions for sustained activity, and elevates productivity levels, he said.



Al Amri told Oman News Agency (ONA) that Al Wusta Governorate ranks among the primary target areas for such projects, owing to its extensive coastline along the Arabian Sea, the diversity of its fishery resources, the multiplicity of fishing seasons and its rich fish-

ing grounds.

He noted that the governorate represents a promising region for the growth of economic activities linked to the fisheries sector.

He explained that the establishment of fishermen’s villages in Al Wusta Governorate constitutes an

integral component of a comprehensive system for fisheries sector development.

The initiative is not viewed merely as a housing project, but rather as a mechanism to attract Omani fishermen to production sites, stimulate activity at landing

points and enhance the circulation and marketing of fish—thereby generating positive ripple effects across the entire fisheries value chain.

Fishing village at Ras Madrakah

He further highlighted that the model fishing village at Ras Madrakah in the Wilayat of Duqm exemplifies this strategic approach. The village, he said, comprises 19 residential villas, each containing 3 rooms, in addition to a mosque, 3 commercial outlets and an office for Ministry staff. The target occupancy capacity of the village is 228 fishermen.

The current actual completion rate stands at 60 percent, surpassing the planned rate of 47.98 percent. He noted that construction work is progressing favorably, with the project now advancing into finishing phases, electromechanical works and the completion of facilities and services.

Al Amri affirmed that the signifi-

cance of fishermen’s villages lies in their capacity to generate economic impact that extends beyond direct beneficiaries to encompass various fisheries-related activities—through increasing the number of active fishermen at production sites, invigorating fish landing operations, supporting transport and marketing services, creating new opportunities for small and medium enterprises, and strengthening ancillary industries and services supporting the sector.

He stated that the proximity of fishermen to fishing and landing sites contributes to enhanced efficiency across the fisheries value chain, reduced distances and associated operational costs, and the transformation of fishing production sites into more dynamic and sustainable economic communities. He affirmed that this aligns with national strategic approaches to maximise the utilisation of fishery resources and elevate their contribution to the national economy. - ONA

Al Sunainah records 46.2° Celsius as temperatures across Oman soar

The CAA’s meteorological stations recorded temperatures of 46°C in Muqshin, while Hamra Al Droaa reached 45.5°C. Haima and Ibri each recorded 45.3°C

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman recorded scorching temperatures over the past 24 hours, with Al Sunainah registering the country’s highest temperature at 46.2°C, according to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The CAA’s meteorological stations recorded temperatures of 46°C in Muqshin, while Hamra Al Droaa reached 45.5°C. Haima and

Ibri each recorded 45.3°C.

Other areas also experienced extreme heat, with temperatures reaching 45.1°C in Marmul and Dima Wattayeen, and 45°C in Al Kamil Wal Wafi, Al Buraimi and Mukhaizna. Fahud recorded 44.9°C.

The readings were recorded during the 24 hours ending on Sunday, August 23, 2026, highlighting the intense summer heat



across several parts of Oman.

Chance of rain, thunderstorms and dust

Oman is expected to experience partly cloudy to cloudy conditions

along the coasts and mountains of Dhofar Governorate, with intermittent drizzle, according to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Clear skies are expected across most other governorates, although

clouds may develop during the afternoon, bringing chances of isolated rain and occasional thunderstorms over parts of the Al Hajar Mountains. The thunderstorms may be accompanied by hail and

strong downdraft winds.

The CAA also forecast a chance of late-night to early-morning low clouds forming over coastal areas of the Arabian Sea and Oman Sea.

Dust is also expected to rise over deserts and open areas, potentially causing reduced visibility.

Authorities warned of several weather-related hazards, including: Reduced visibility due to dust, reduced visibility caused by fog and rain, strong downdraft winds, possible flows of wadis. Motorists are advised to exercise caution, particularly in mountainous areas and locations affected by rain, dust or reduced visibility.



TWO-DAY WORKSHOP

Workshop in Salalah discusses strategy for waste management



SALALAH: A workshop to discuss the draft national strategy for integrated waste management began on Sunday in the Wilayat of Salalah.

Representatives of government units and the waste management sector are taking part in the two-day workshop, which is organized by the Environment Authority.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Abdullah bin Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority.

The workshop aims to review the status quo of the waste management sector, the challenges involved and future scopes for growth, in addition to reviewing the master plan for waste management as a roadmap for developing the sector.

The waste management strat-

egy seeks to build a sustainable national system that protects the environment and safeguards public health, besides supporting investment and innovation, raising the level of governance and institutional integration and consolidating the Sultanate of Oman’s commitment to relevant international environmental agreements.

The strategy focuses on developing an integrated national framework for managing various types of waste, based on the outcome of assessment of the waste sector.

This envisages developing the necessary policies, legislation and executive programmes and upgrading the waste management system in a manner that gradually leads to circular economy.

The strategic approaches also include enhancing the efficiency of the institutional and operational structure, defining roles and responsibilities of the parties concerned, enabling partnerships with the private sector and society, encouraging investment in projects of recycling of resources and adopting innovative and sustainable technologies and solutions in various stages of waste management.

The workshop reflects the keenness of the Environment Authority to develop a national strategy that is based on consensus and institutional partnership and forms a clear roadmap for developing the waste management system in the Sultanate of Oman in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040. -ONA

KHAREEF DHOFAR

Dhofar bowling championship kicks off in Salalah wilayat

SALALAH: The Bowling Championship of Khareef Dhofar (monsoon) season kicked off on Sunday in Salalah.

Dhofar Bowling Championship, which is organized by Oman Bowling Committee in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality, runs until 28 August 2026. It will see the participation of 92 Omani bowlers and a number of Arab players.

Meanwhile, a local bowling championship, exclusively for players from the Dhofar Governorate, is being held on the sidelines of Khareef Dhofar events, until 27 August 2026. Omani Bowling Committee has allocated financial



prizes for the winners of top places in the two championships. The committee will also honour tech-

nical and administrative staff in appreciation for their contribution to the championships. -ONA

SOUTH AL BATINAH

7 Asian nationals arrested

MUSCAT: Seven individuals of Asian nationalities were arrested in the Wilayat of Barka for possessing more than 185 kilograms of crystal meth, hashish, marijuana, morphine, and more than 120,000 psychotropic tablets with intent to traffic them.

The arrests were carried out by the Directorate General for Combating Drugs & Psychotropic Substances in the South Al Batinah Police Command, and legal procedures are being completed against them.



454 CONTAINERS

CPA seizes smokeless chewing tobacco in Sur

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, in cooperation with Sur Police Station, has seized 454 containers of prohibited smokeless chewing tobacco during a raid on a residential property in the Wilayat of Sur.

The operation was carried out after authorities received information that an expatriate worker was using the residence to sell and distribute banned tobacco products.

Following the completion of legal procedures and coordination with the police, inspection teams raided the property and confiscated 454 containers of smokeless chewing tobacco marketed under the brand names “Al Afdhal” and “Al Niswar.”

All seized products were confis-



cated, and legal action was taken against the offender, who was subsequently deported from the Sultanate. Authorities said the seizure forms part of ongoing efforts to curb the circulation of prohibited products and safeguard consumer health and safety.

The Consumer Protection Authority reiterated its commit-

ment to intensifying inspection campaigns across the country and taking firm action against individuals involved in the sale and distribution of banned products.

The authority also urged the public to report suspicious products and illegal activities through its official communication channels.

ROP

12 foreigners held for trying to enter Oman illegally

Times News Service

MUSCAT : More than 10 foreigners have been arrested by Royal Oman Police (ROP), for

trying to enter the Sultanate of Oman illegally.

The ROP said in a statement, “The Musandam Governorate Police Command arrested 12 in-

dividuals of Asian nationalities while they were attempting to enter the country illegally. Legal procedures are being completed against the suspects.”



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Salalah Eye: New panoramic viewpoint enhancing tourism experience in Khareef Dhofar

The project harmoniously combines a prime coastal location with a modern entertainment experience, set against the backdrop of the governorate’s distinctive natural assets during the Khareef season

SALALAH: Salalah Eye represents a new addition to the tourism and entertainment experience ecosystem in Dhofar Governorate, coinciding with the Khareef 2026 (monsoon) season. The attraction offers a panoramic experience allowing visitors to view the sea, plains and mountains from an elevation of 55 meters, situated at Al Haffah Beach in the Wilayat of Salalah.

The project harmoniously combines a prime coastal location with a modern entertainment experience, set against the backdrop of the governorate’s distinctive natural assets during the Khareef season—when clouds and mist form, and mountains and plains don their verdant greenery, offering visitors ever-changing vistas from a unique perspective.

The Ferris wheel comprises 30 enclosed, air-conditioned cabins, each accommodating up to six persons, ensuring a comfortable viewing experience for families and individuals alike. The



panoramic glass facades provide sweeping views of the surrounding landscape throughout the wheel’s rotation, encompassing the Arabian Sea, the coastal strip, Salalah city and the mountainous areas.

Eng. Khalid Hamad Al Mahrouqi, Executive Director of the Salalah Eye project, stated that the initiative introduces a new tourism and entertainment experience to Dhofar Governorate, capitalizing on the natural and climatic attributes that distinguish Salalah during the Khareef season. He noted that the project’s location on Al

Haffah Beach enables visitors to combine recreational enjoyment with coastal views in a single destination.

He told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the wheel stands at 55 meters in height and features 30 enclosed, air-conditioned cabins, each with a capacity of six persons. A complete rotation takes between 12 and 15 minutes, offering a 360-degree panoramic view encompassing the Arabian Sea, the coastal strip and the natural landscape of Salalah city.

He added that Al Haffah Beach was selected as the project site due

to its tourism significance, vibrant atmosphere, high visitor footfall and its strategic position that enables the delivery of an experience combining sea, city and natural scenery. He affirmed that the project represents an enhancement to the diversity of tourism and entertainment options available to visitors to the governorate.

Eng. Khalid emphasized that the project exemplifies a partnership model between local investors and companies with global expertise, facilitating the transfer of international best practices in the implementation and operation

of modern tourism projects, while supporting investment attraction opportunities in the tourism sector. He noted that the project cost approximately RO 3 million, reflecting the scale of investment in developing a contemporary tourism and entertainment product that leverages the distinctive tourism location of Al Haffah Beach and the natural endowments of Dhofar Governorate.

He pointed out that the experience offered by Salalah Eye varies according to the time of day; during daylight hours, visitors can observe the expanse of the coastline, sea, city and mountainous areas, while the evening affords a distinctly different ambience with views of the waterfront and the city lights.

He explained that the project aligns with the strategic approach toward developing modern tourism products and experiences in Dhofar Governorate, thereby enhancing the diversity of the tourism offering and interconnecting the natural, recreational, cultural and heritage assets with which the governorate is abundantly endowed. He underscored the importance of integration between new projects and existing tourism destinations in enriching the visitor experience.

Eng. Khalid further explained that the investing and operating company conducted a comprehensive market study and benchmarked pricing against similar projects when determining ticket prices, ensuring the delivery of a tourism experience at accessible rates for various visitor segments.

Ticket prices commence at RO 5 per person, with family discounts available and the option to book private cabins, enabling visitors to select an experience tailored to their preferences. Additionally, the project provides facilitated access for persons with disabilities through complimentary tickets and dedicated cabins, thereby empowering them to benefit from the tourism and entertainment experience offered by the project.

STRENGTHENING SME COMMUNITY

AmCham Oman and DHL Express put networking at the heart of SME growth



MUSCAT: AmCham Oman and DHL Express reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Oman’s SME community by bringing local entrepreneurs and corporate leaders together for an evening of focused relationship-building at the Diplomatic Club on Tuesday, August 18.

The SME Speed Networking Event formed part of the ongoing AmCham Oman SME Forum series, powered by DHL Express and delivered in partnership with Riyadh. The event was also supported by Abdullah Al Moshyqri Advocates and Legal Consultants, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, and venue partner the Diplomatic Club.

For small and medium-sized businesses, growth is driven not only by knowledge or access to resources, but by relationships. The right introduction can lead to a new client, trusted adviser, corporate supplier opportunity, mentor, or long-term business partner. The

event was designed around that principle, creating a space where SME owners could expand their networks and build relationships with people capable of helping their businesses move forward.

During a series of structured three-minute networking rounds, entrepreneurs introduced their businesses directly to corporate executives and other SME owners. Participants discussed potential partnerships, local supply-chain opportunities, mentorship, referrals, and areas of mutual interest before continuing their conversations during an informal reception.

“Networking is at the heart of business, particularly for SMEs,” said Rebecca Olson, CEO of AmCham Oman. “A single conversation can open the door to a customer, a partnership, an introduction, or an opportunity that changes the direction of a growing company. AmCham Oman’s role is to bring



the right people into the room and create the conditions for those relationships to begin. We are tremendously grateful to DHL Ex-

press for sharing that vision and powering this important series, and to Abdullah Al Moshyqri Advocates and Legal Consultants and

Enterprise Rent-A-Car for their valuable support and commitment to Oman’s SME community.”

“Supporting Oman’s SME ecosystem is central to our commitment in the region,” added Yasser Al Lamki, Multichannel Territory Manager & SME specialist at DHL Express. “Partnering with AmCham Oman across this entire series allows us to help local business owners unlock new commercial channels, gain practical insights, and connect with global-standard logistics and trade opportunities.”

“For SMEs, the right connection can make a real difference. We’re proud to support an event that brings Oman’s entrepreneurs and business community together and creates opportunities for meaningful partnerships,” said Founder, Abdullah Al Moshyqri Advocates and Legal Consultants.

The SME Forum series was established by AmCham Oman and DHL Express to support the

long-term growth of local enterprises through business education, mentorship, access to expertise, and meaningful commercial connections. Each event addresses a different element of building and growing a successful business while strengthening the wider community surrounding Oman’s entrepreneurs.

The evening was made possible through the support of partners committed to the development of Oman’s SME ecosystem:

- DHL Express: Title sponsor powering the full SME Forum series
- Riyadh: Strategic institutional partner advancing national SME development
- Abdullah Al Moshyqri Advocates and Legal Consultants: Supporting emerging enterprises with legal expertise
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car: Supporting stronger local business connectivity
- Diplomatic Club: Venue partner

Suhail star heralds seasonal changes

Suhail has also become part of Oman’s popular cultural memory through traditional proverbs reflecting generations of local experience in observing seasonal changes

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Stargazers across Oman are turning their eyes towards the southeastern horizon as the star Suhail (Canopus) makes its annual appearance in the second half of August, a celestial event



traditionally associated with the gradual end of the intense summer heat and the transition towards a change in seasons.

Wisal bint Salem Al-Hinai, head of the Community Outreach Committee at the Omani Society for Astronomy and Space, said Suhail is located about 313 light-years from Earth and is the second-brightest star in the night sky. The star has

a distinctive yellowish-white appearance.

Speaking to Oman News Agency, Al-Hinai explained that while the appearance of Suhail does not directly cause changes in temperature or weather, it has long served as an important seasonal marker in Oman’s traditional astronomical knowledge.

The traditional “Suhail calcula-

tion” was used to identify seasonal changes and help organise agricultural and maritime activities. Omani sailors and captains also relied on the stars for navigation, particularly during long sea journeys.

Astronomical observations also played a role in traditional irrigation practices.

The movement of stars at night was used to regulate water shares in the aflaj and adjust irrigation schedules under traditional systems such as athar and badah. Suhail has also become part of Oman’s popular cultural memory through traditional proverbs reflecting generations of local experience in observing seasonal changes. Al-Hinai said Suhail first becomes visible before sunrise towards the southeast, close to the horizon, before gradually rising higher and becoming easier to observe. She described the annual return of Suhail as an opportunity to combine modern astronomy with Oman’s rich traditional astronomical heritage, helping preserve and document this knowledge for future generations.



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TRAVEL TO BOTSWANA

Visa exemption

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Foreign Ministry announced that the Republic of Botswana has informed the Sultanate of Oman that it is not included among the countries whose nationals require a visa to enter the Republic of Botswana, for holders of all Omani passports. Accordingly, holders of Omani passports may enter Botswana

without a visa for stays of up to 90 days, provided that their passport is valid for at least six months from the date of entry and contains at least three blank pages. The Foreign Ministry advises citizens travelling to Botswana to ensure they have health insurance covering the duration of their stay. The Foreign Ministry wishes everyone a safe and successful journey.

FSA

Regulation on insurance loss assessment issued

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has issued the Regulation Governing Insurance Loss Assessment and Estimation Activities pursuant to Decision No. (E/12/2026), with the aim of regulating professional practices related to risk assessment and loss estimation, enhancing the efficiency and quality of insurance services, and strengthening the protection of policyholders’ rights, while reinforcing the principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality in loss assessment and the

settlement of insurance claims. The regulation forms part of the FSA’s efforts to regulate professions and activities supporting the insurance sector in accordance with clear professional and technical standards. It seeks to enhance the reliability of insurance assessment and loss estimation activities and improve the quality of technical reports used by insurance and re-insurance companies in assessing risks and claims and making decisions related to insurance coverage and compensation. It establishes an integrated reg-

ulatory framework for conducting insurance risk assessments prior to the conclusion of insurance contracts and estimating losses arising from insured risks. It sets out the technical and professional requirements to be met by licensed entities, as well as the rules governing their activities and obligations towards insurance companies and policyholders, ensuring that such activities are conducted efficiently, independently and impartially. The regulation also sets out a range of requirements and controls governing the licensing of insurance

loss assessment and estimation activities, requiring prior authorisation from the FSA before conducting such activities and prohibiting insurance companies from dealing with unlicensed entities. These requirements include legal, financial and professional conditions, as well as competency and experience requirements for personnel engaged in the activity, thereby enhancing the quality and reliability of assessment and estimation services. The regulation governs the duration and renewal of licences and the obligations of licensed entities.



INDIAN SCHOOL AL MAABELA
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TENDER NOTICE

Sl No.	Description
1	Printing of school Attendance register, lesson design, desk diary, certificates, report cards, envelopes and related printing jobs.
2	Supply of Stationary items For School.
3	Supply of Mementos, Trophies, Medals & Recognition Items For School.
4	Sewage water removal & Ground Maintenance of School.
5	Group General Insurance - Group life policy with WC Top Up - Property all risks including fire - Fidelity Guarantee Insurance - Money Insurance - General Public Liability Insurance - Group Personal Accident for Students

Competitive tenders are invited from the establishments specialized in each area. The collection of tender documents from School will commence from **24/08/2026** after a **payment of R.O. 10/-** (inclusive of vat 5%) **for each job**. Last date of tender submission is on or before **03/09/2026 before 3:00pm**. The completed tender in all aspects should be dropped in the box kept in school office. A tender should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to: **The Chairperson, Purchase Subcommittee, Indian School Al Maabela.** **Note:** Respective tenders shall clearly mention the: name of service quoted by the bidding party".
The school reserves the right to reject any tender without providing any reason and does not find itself accepting the lowest or any tender.

Philips Wins Best Brand in Customer Experience Award in Small Domestic Appliances



Philips was felicitated with the ‘Times of Oman Best Brand Award in Small Domestic Appliances’ 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. With more than 130 years of innovation, Philips has built a global legacy of transforming everyday living through technology designed to improve people’s lives. Exclusively distributed by MHD-ITICS in Oman, Philips continues to strengthen its position in the Sultanate’s small domestic appliances market through innovative products, exceptional quality, and a customer-first approach. Designed to make everyday living smarter and more enjoyable, Philips’ portfolio combines innovation, functionality, and thoughtful design. From its renowned Air Fryers and garment care solutions to food prepara-

tion appliances, coffee makers, kettles, vacuum cleaners, and personal care products, Philips continues to develop solutions that simplify daily routines while supporting healthier living and lasting performance. Philips pioneered the revolutionary Airfryer, transforming healthier cooking with Rapid Air Technology, and continues to innovate across coffee machines, high-performance blenders, garment steamers, and food preparation appliances. Its advanced coffee machines bring authentic café-style beverages to homes with convenience and consistency. Supported by MHD-ITICS’ trusted sales and after-sales network across Oman, Philips continues to deliver quality, innovation, and convenience while ensuring a seamless customer experience for consumers across the Sultanate. 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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meeting and exceeding the customers expectations. The winners are selected based on an extensive consumer survey conducted by the Times of Oman.



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Advertisement No.(29/2026)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following bidding :

Sr.	Bidding No.	Bidding description	Document fee		Deadline for obtaining docs.	Deadline for inquires submission	Deadline for submission
			LO/RE	SMEs			
1	10/2026	Design, Construction, and Management of a Multi-Storey Parking in Al Ghuraifah, Wilayat Muttrah	150/- OMR	100/- OMR	13/09/2026	24/09/2026	04/10/2026
2	11/2026	Investment of Plot No. (1711), Block (M/4), Wilayat of Al Seeb	50/- OMR	10/- OMR	13/09/2026	24/09/2026	04/10/2026
3	12/2026	Investment of Plot No. (1176), Block (M/4), Wilayat of Al Amerat	40/- OMR	10/- OMR	13/09/2026	24/09/2026	04/10/2026
4	13/2026	Investment of Plot No. (269), Block (M/4), Wilayat of Al Seeb	25/- OMR	10/- OMR	13/09/2026	24/09/2026	04/10/2026

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

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

Bank Muscat	0423010702710024
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- A copy of the transaction’s receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (BID.QS@mm.gov.om), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name,office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commerical registration number of the company).
- The tender document will be provided to the company via email.
- 2:00 PM on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents.
- Documents must be enclosed in a plain closed envelope (without any company information) and place in the box located in building (A) in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait.

NOTES:

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

Website: www.mm.gov.om



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PANEL DISCUSSION

Beyond Expectations: Women at the Forefront of Progress



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Iran’s FM Araghchi dismisses Trump’s sanctions threat as ‘old bullying tactic’

Speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony, Araghchi said that Washington's resort to economic pressure demonstrates desperation following failed measures. ‘America has no choice but to speak respectfully to the Iranian people,’ he further added



TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Sunday dismissed renewed US threats of economic sanctions as a “recurring scenario,” stating that Washington has no choice but to speak respectfully to the Iranian nation.

According to state broadcaster IRIB, speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony, Araghchi said that Washington's resort to economic pressure demonstrates desperation following failed measures.

“America has no choice but to

speak respectfully to the Iranian people,” Araghchi declared in comments broadcast by IRIB.

Rebuffing claims of new American economic manoeuvres, Araghchi described Washington's approach as a familiar routine that Tehran is fully prepared to counter.

“The economic operation that Trump claims is a recurring scenario and the same old bullying in American politics. In a sense, it is a recurring movie that we have watched many times and we know how to deal with it,” IRIB cited him as saying.

Araghchi emphasised that

Washington's return to economic pressure tactics highlights its inability to counter Iran's national resilience:

“The fact that they have returned to the same old plans after the military operations and the fact that we are doing this and that shows that they are desperate. They cannot think of any solution against the great nation of Iran and they are constantly putting repetitive plans into action,” he said.

According to IRIB, the Iranian Foreign Minister reiterated that the Islamic Republic remains undeterred by sanctions campaigns,

maintaining that Washington's repeated reliance on coercive policies yields no results against the Iranian populace.

His remarks came after Trump announced what he called an “Economic D-Day” campaign against Iran, describing it as the “most crushing economic operation ever taken against any country.”

Trump said the campaign would amount to “Economic Warfare and Isolation on an unprecedented scale” and called on US allies to join Washington in isolating Iran.

In response, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref

on Saturday slammed Trump's latest economic pressure campaign, saying the country's experience shows that economic pressure cannot alter the Iranian people's resolve and instead produces the opposite result.

In a post on X, Aref said the Iranian government would not allow US “economic terrorism” to undermine the country's economic stability and people's livelihoods.

“The government will not allow America's economic terrorism to target the economic stability and livelihoods of the people. The experience of the Islamic Revolution has shown that economic pressure is incapable of altering the will of the Iranian nation and instead yields the opposite result,” the post read.

Pezeshkian lauds Iranian resistance against US attacks

Meanwhile, the Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian lauded the resilience and power of the Iranian people in the wake of continued conflict with the United States, highlighting that while an outcome like Venezuela was expected, Iran stood brave in the face of aggression.

His remarks were shared by Iranian state broadcaster Press TV on Sunday as Pezeshkian delivered a speech marking the beginning of Government Week.

The Iranian president said, “They (US) sought to turn Iran into another Venezuela, but instead, Iran emerged as a power that amazed the world with its resistance, solidarity and unity. Our people achieved something remarkable.”

He urged solidarity and said, “In the face of the enemy's all-out economic war, we must stand together, just as we did during the US-Israeli war, supporting and helping one another.”

According to Press TV, Pezeshkian called for following the path shown by the leadership and urged solidarity and unity.

“If we act wisely, no power can force us into surrender or leave us helpless. But this requires unity, solidarity, and empathy, as well as following our Leader and pursuing the path we must take,” he said.

His remarks come in the wake of continued hostilities in West Asia.

Meanwhile, tensions between Washington and Tehran escalated further on Sunday after US President Donald Trump again shared an image that depicts the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz as “NEW US Territory”, even as Iran reiterated that the crucial maritime corridor will remain closed unless the United States alters its stance.

The latest post on Truth Social follows Trump's earlier sharing of the identical graphic on August 18, after he previously floated the prospect of claiming jurisdiction over the waterway.

Addressing a police academy gathering on Long Island on August 14, Trump had stated, “Pretty soon I'll be declaring the Strait of Hormuz a territory of the United States”.

Rejecting Washington's territorial assertions, Iran's Supreme National Security Council secretary Mohsen Rezaei launched a sharp critique against the US president's statements regarding the narrow channel.

TRADE PARTNERSHIPS



Trump hits back at Canada amid trade talks stalemate

WASHINGTON DC: The trade stalemate between Washington and Ottawa has seen US President Donald Trump bring back his jibe of referring to Canada as an American state following the suspension of trade talks, which PM Carney termed “uneconomic, unfair, and undermining the net benefits for Canada”.

Trump made the remarks in a post on Truth Social, making them his first remarks since Carney asked his negotiating team to return as the talks hit a dead end between Canada and the United States.

Trump also argued that Canada has charged massive tariffs on American farmers.

He said, “Canada wants the benefits of being a State, without being one!!! They have also charged our great farmers, for many years, massive amounts of Tariffs. No more!!! President DJT.”

Earlier, Canadian PM Mark Carney hit out at the US following suspension of trade talks and said US demands revealed the limits of their commitment to a true economic partnership and he had directed the country's negotiators to return to Ottawa.

The Canadian Prime Minister also said his country will match the United States' new tariffs dollar-for-dollar to protect Canadian workers, farmers, families and businesses, after trade negotiations between the two countries collapsed.

Carney said on Saturday that the US asked too much and offered too little.

He said Ottawa felt that the two countries were moving towards a mutually beneficial agreement but in recent days, the United States proposed new terms that were “uneconomic,

unfair, and undermined the net benefits for Canada”.

He said it raised questions about the reliability of any deal. “They asked too much, and they offered too little,” he said.

Carney said the US stance revealed the limits of their commitment to a true economic partnership. “Last evening, I suspended trade negotiations with the United States and directed our negotiators to return to Ottawa,” he added.

The development came after trade negotiations between Washington and Ottawa broke down late Friday night, with the United States imposing a 50 per cent tariff on nearly \$28 billion worth of Canadian imports from 12:01 am ET.

The levies affect nearly 5.5 per cent of Canada's total exports shipped across the southern border, with targeted items ranging from hockey sticks to cement.

Carney said Ottawa would not accept any restrictions on its ability to independently execute trade deals around the globe and emphasised Ottawa's position as a sovereign global trade partner.

The latest development comes amid growing efforts by countries to diversify trade partnerships in the wake of the Trump administration's tariff measures.

According to a report by Canada's Office of the Chief Economist on the country's trade landscape, exports to the US fell 3.7 per cent last year amid global shocks and trade tensions.

The decline was offset by an 11.1 per cent increase in exports to non-US markets, which now account for 32.8 per cent, or almost one-third, of Canada's total exports -- the highest share in four decades.

— ANI

MEDIA REPORT

Zelenskyy claims Russia preparing to mobilise at least 300,000 more troops

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday warned that Russia is preparing a fresh wave of military mobilisation, expecting Moscow to draft at least 300,000 additional troops to expand its operations in Ukraine.

According to CNN, Zelenskyy stated that he expected the Russians would end the year occupying the same amount of Ukrainian territory as at the beginning of the year, despite enormous losses of manpower.

“Russia has lost 267,000 personnel since the start of the year, including around 155,000 killed to date,” Zelenskyy claimed, as cited by CNN.

Furthermore, Zelenskyy indicated that Putin would “deploy the 300,000 newly mobilized troops depending on the situation in the east of our country,” having instructed his military leadership to complete the occupation of Donetsk by year's end.

“They'll lose all 300,000 of these newly mobilised Russians there; we'll wipe them out,” Zelenskyy asserted, according to CNN.

Meanwhile, Zelenskyy, in a series of posts on X, detailed the strategic calculations behind long-range operations targeting Russian logistics and commercial infrastructure, while emphasising shifting domestic sentiment within Russia and issuing an urgent international plea for critical air defence systems.

Zelenskyy further claimed internal Ukrainian assessments show that over 60% of Russian society now favours an end to the war, noting that opposition party support was rising before candidates were barred from ballots.



“Many people in Russia want the war to end. They put it this way: they just want it to end. In our view, the statistics are as follows: more than 60% of Russian society wants an end to this war, a ceasefire. So this shows that public sentiment is moving in that direction, and the trends are clear. We have also seen a sharp decline in support for Putin's government. We are talking about United Russia,” he said.

“They removed Yabloko from the election because they expected Yabloko to get a maximum of 3% or 4%, and then they looked at public sentiment, and there it was immediately at 11-12%, with an upward trend,” Zelenskyy stated. “They struck them off the ballot simply to ensure there would be no alternative to the war and to his rule.”

His remarks come as Russia's Supreme Court, earlier this month, annulled the opposition Yabloko party's registration for the country's parliamentary elections, scheduled for September. The court ruling, which effectively eliminates the only officially registered political party opposed to Moscow's war in Ukraine, fol-

lowed a lawsuit filed by the pro-Kremlin nationalist Rodina party seeking Yabloko's removal, according to Euronews.

Addressing the escalation of long-range operations, Zelenskyy explained that ongoing strikes against logistics networks, including the e-commerce giant Wildberries, were direct responses to continuous Russian attacks on Ukrainian civil infrastructure, logistics, and postal providers like Ukroposhta and Nova Poshta.

“Why, in particular, do we strike Wildberries? Because it involves both the supply of military goods and big money for Russia. Our operation was very carefully calculated,” Zelenskyy stated, noting that direct losses from that single operation reached roughly one trillion roubles, escalating to three trillion roubles when factoring in corporate debts and operational restructuring,” he stated.

To counter Russia's expanding air campaign targeting Ukrainian logistics and civilian infrastructure ahead of the winter, Zelenskyy issued a renewed plea to Western partners for air defence interception,

specifically targeting Patriot missile stockpiles.

“We have become quite effective at intercepting other types of missiles. Our combat aircraft are doing so, and we have more IRIS-T systems now - the relevant systems are in place, and missiles for them are arriving to counter Russian cruise missiles. We have Hawks as well - we are using many different systems to intercept cruise missiles. But ballistic missiles are ballistic missiles. We are now working to ensure that they do not reach those 1,300 - to reduce that number,” Zelenskyy stated.

Highlighting a severe budget shortfall facing the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence and the need to intercept Russian ballistic missiles before winter, Zelenskyy urged international allies to accelerate military funding and supply shipments.

“In addition, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine currently has a budget shortfall of \$27 billion....I wanted to secure 300 missiles for the Patriot systems as part of the winter package. The request from our Air Force is for 360. But when only 600 are produced a year, 360 is not easy to obtain... And I would very much like to believe that we can find a way to access some small percentage of U.S. stockpiles -- say, 5% or 10%. And we are ready to pay for those supplies,” he emphasised.

On the other hand, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Ukraine is facing a “catastrophic scenario” resulting from Russian retaliatory operations after it “opened Pandora's box” by targeting economic and civilian infrastructure, according to Russia Today.

METEOROLOGICAL OFFICIALS

5.9-magnitude quake strikes eastern Japan

TOKYO: A preliminary 5.9-magnitude earthquake rattled eastern Japan early on Sunday, resulting in multiple injuries across prefectures surrounding Tokyo and causing widespread transit disruptions, according to local authorities and meteorological officials.

The tremor struck at 2:00 am, with its epicentre located in the southern section of Ibaraki Prefecture at a depth of 68 kilometres, Kyodo News reported. The Japan Meteorological Agency confirmed

that the seismic event did not trigger a tsunami threat.

The quake registered a lower 5 on Japan's 7-point seismic intensity scale across portions of Ibaraki as well as central Tokyo. The weather agency categorises a lower 5 intensity as shaking pronounced enough to cause alarm, compelling individuals to seek stability while unanchored items risk falling from shelves.

The earthquake triggered delays for early morning train operations,

while several services were compelled to proceed at reduced speeds, according to JR East and regional transit operators.

Chiba Prefecture

Keisei Line, which links central Tokyo's Ueno to Narita Airport in Chiba Prefecture, reported that normal operations resumed after 9:40 am, Kyodo News reported. However, selected express routes operated by Tobu Railway remained suspended.

The seismic activity resulted in several injuries across neighbouring regions, according to local fire departments. Casualties included a young man and a woman in her 70s in Saitama Prefecture, north of Tokyo, alongside three injured individuals in Kawasaki, situated just south of the capital.

In Tokyo's Koto Ward, a ruptured water main prompted metropolitan officials to examine whether the structural damage was directly connected to the tremor. — ANI

SPORTS



Starc bags 10 to demolish Bangladesh in two days



It became the second-shortest Test ever played on Australian soil after Bangladesh were bundled for 95 in Mackay

MACKAY: Australia bounced back from the Darwin loss and levelled the Test series against Bangladesh with an innings-and-51-run win in under two days on Sunday. Mitchell Starc led the onslaught with his fourth 10-wicket haul, making it the second-shortest Test on Australian soil. Starc finished with 10 for 51, as Nathan Lyon wrapped up Bangladesh with two quick wickets shortly after tea. Having been bundled for 64 and 95, it became the first time Bangladesh got bowled out for under 100 in both innings of a Test, while Australia's 210 is the fourth-lowest total in an innings

win. Bangladesh had taken the last two Australia wickets in the morning, but the hosts added 45 runs after the break, led by Lyon's unbeaten 32. Australia's total of 210 gave them a lead of 146, which Bangladesh couldn't get close to. Starc was relentless again from the start of Bangladesh's second innings. Shadman Islam was squared up once again, giving Marcus Labuschagne a simple catch at point. Mominul Haque was bowled next ball, leaving a fuller length ball that nipped in to clip his off stump. Tanzid Hasan holed out at deep fine leg, when he hooked Pat Cummins in his first over.

Najmul Hossain Shanto counterattacked from the other end, hitting Starc for five boundaries, which included four good drives down the ground and a streaky edge through the slips. Looking to force the issue after lunch, Shanto chipped Lyon right down long-off's throat for 31. Litton Das was next to go, edging to third slip off Starc for his third duck in a row. Litton didn't score a single run in the Test series. Mehidy Hasan Miraz edged a wide one from an otherwise parsimonious Cummins, who then got Hasan Mahmud gloving a sharp bouncer to short leg. Starc started his third spell by taking Taijul Islam's wicket to complete his match 10-wicket haul. Bangladesh lasted just three balls after the tea break. Lyon picked up his second wicket when Taskin Ahmed edged one to Steven Smith at first slip. It was his 219th catch, taking him to the top of the list of most Test catches, level with Joe Root. Starc then took his fourth

catch in the innings when Shoriful Islam skied Lyon towards point, to end the Bangladesh innings. Australia began the day with just two wickets in hand in their first innings, but Cameron Green and Lyon made the best of their situation. They put on 38 runs for the ninth wicket, with Green reaching an important half-century. He struck the ball nicely in the morning session, before a Shoriful yorker floored Green to trap him lbw. Lyon then smacked Taskin for a four and a six in a 17-run over before Josh Hazlewood became the last wicket to fall. Shoriful grabbed career-best figures of 7 for 47 in a match that will otherwise be remembered for Starc's haul, making it an otherwise forgettable game for Bangladesh. **Brief scores:** Australia 210 (Green 67, Smith 42, Shoriful 7-48) beat Bangladesh 64 (Starc 6-12, Cummins 3-25) and 95 (Shanto 31, Starc 4-39, Cummins 3-10, Lyon 3-25) by an innings and 51 runs.

SECOND TEST

Padikkal century puts India ahead

COLOMBO: Devdutt Padikkal scored his second Test century and shared two crucial partnerships to help India to 300-5 at stumps on the opening day of the second cricket Test against Sri Lanka on Sunday. Continuing his top form from the first Test when he scored 167 in the first innings to set up win, Padikkal made 117 off 193 deliveries. He spent nearly five hours at the crease and hit 12 boundaries. He got reprieves as soon as he came to bat when Sonal Dinusha at covers and captain Dhananjaya de Silva at slip dropped two sharp catches. From there he batted with concentration, sharing 120 runs for the third wicket with captain Shubman Gill and 74 runs for

the fourth wicket with Ravindra Jadeja, before being bowled by off-spinner Keshara Nuwantha. Gill was out for 50, his ninth Test half-century, when he edged fast bowler Asitha Fernando to wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella. Rishabh Pant, who came in to bat at No. 5, was retired hurt after taking a hit on his forearm off fast bowler Lahiru Kumara. Sri Lanka took the second new ball after 80 overs and saw quick results when Fernando bowled Ravindra Jadeja (43) with an inswinger. India went to lunch at 88-2 with Padikkal and Gill trying to steady the innings after losing two wickets for 66 runs, following Gill's decision to bat first at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

Opening batters Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul added 37 runs for the first wicket before Rahul (18) slashed at a wider delivery from Kumara for a catch to Dickwella. Jaishwal (45) was bowled by a sharp inswinger from Fernando, leaving India at 66-2. Fernando had the best bowling figures for Sri Lanka with 3-46, as Kumara and Nuwantha picked up a wicket each. Sri Lanka recalled Pasindu Sooriyabandara for his first full Test and Nishan Madushka was also replaced by Kamil Mishara, who made his Test debut. India left out left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav for spin-bowling all-rounder Saransh Jain, who made his Test debut. - Agencies



Karn Sharma calls time on India and domestic career

MUMBAI: Karn Sharma, the leg-spinner who played four games for India, has retired from international and Indian domestic cricket on Saturday. Karn finishes with four IPL trophies to his name and played one Test, two ODIs and one T20I in a short international career in 2014. Karn made his ODI debut in the match where Rohit Sharma scored 264. Karn played another ODI in the series, but failed to take any wickets in either games. Later in the year, he made his Test debut in the Adelaide Test and took two wickets in each innings.



That, though, was Karn's last international appearance. In 2018, Karn became the first player to win three IPL titles in a row, a short list that includes only Suyash Sharma and Phil Salt. What was unique about his feat was that he did so with three different teams: SRH (2016), MI (2017) and CSK (2018). - Agencies

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INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

North Al Sharqiyah has witnessed the rollout of 46 investment opportunities across various productive sectors, alongside 22 signed and submitted contracts pending final execution, representing an estimated total value of OMR74.3 million. **>B2**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 7,509.36 points, down by -0.18% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.39% at 604.61 points. Al Madina Investments, up 9.84%, was the top gainer while, Liva Group, down 2.78%, was the top loser. **>B2**



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Oman’s alternative lending sources growing rapidly in supporting SMEs

The businesses being funded by alternative lending are ordinary ones: food and drink, logistics, media and marketing, interior design, small factories, shops and beauty salons. These are the firms that banks have found hardest to serve



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MUSCAT: Alternative lending in Oman is growing rapidly, driven by Oman Vision 2040 to support startups and small businesses. Alternative lending is any credit that does not come from a normal bank. It covers peer-to-peer lending, debt and equity crowdfunding, invoice finance, buy-now-pay-later and private credit funds. “Crowdfunding platforms raised about OMR19 million in 2025, more than three times the OMR5.9 million raised in 2024 and the number of funded projects by them have more than doubled, from 114 to 243,” said an industry watcher. “Since 2022 these platforms have provided OMR29.4 million to

357 projects, having started with just 21 projects worth OMR1.7 million in their first year,” Shuja Khan, Business Head (GCC), Graystone Capital. He further pointed out that the regional picture is bigger and alternative lending in the Middle East is expected to grow from \$18.9 billion in 2025 to \$31.3 billion by 2029. Saudi Arabia had licensed 14 debt crowdfunding companies by late 2025. The need is clear: the SME funding gap in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is estimated at about \$250 billion, and small firms receive only around 3 per cent of total bank lending. When asked whether alternative lending can transform SME

financing in Oman, Shuja Khan said, “Not yet as OMR19 million is very small next to a banking system where SME lending is still around 3.7 per cent of total credit, below the 5 per cent floor set by the regulator. “What these platforms have proved is that the model works here. If it grows into invoice finance, sales-linked lending and Sharia-compliant private credit, the picture will change. If it stays a niche, the gap will stay where it is,” he further elaborated. Oman’s alternative lending landscape is young but working with the first licensed crowdfunding platform beginning its operation in 2022, Shuja Khan pointed out. “Seven platforms were active in 2025, down from nine, which the regulator reads as a sign that the stronger operators are surviving,” he said. “The businesses being funded are ordinary ones: food and drink,

logistics, media and marketing, interior design, small factories, shops and beauty salons. These are the firms that banks have found hardest to serve. Alongside the platforms sit finance and leasing companies, buy-now-pay-later providers and a small venture capital scene,” he further added. “While a bank asks what a business owns. These lenders ask what a business earns, and they check it through payment records, invoices and sales data rather than years of audited accounts. Loans are usually smaller, decisions come faster, and no property is pledged,” Shuja Khan pointed out. Online lending platforms are finally putting real money into Omani small businesses but the question is whether the amounts are big enough to change anything, said an industry watcher. “Ask an Omani business owner why the bank turned down their loan, and the answer is usually not

about the business. It is about collateral,” said Shuja Khan. “Banks in the Gulf often ask a small firm to pledge assets worth 200 to 250 per cent of the loan, while large companies are asked for about 140 per cent. Most service firms, tech firms and young businesses do not own that much. Their sales may be healthy, but they still get a no,” he further added. Speaking about regulatory bodies for alternative lending in Oman he elaborated that there are two bodies who share this job. The Financial Services Authority (FSA) licenses crowdfunding platforms under Decision No. 153/2021. “It set the minimum capital for a platform at only OMR25,000, a deliberate choice to let young Omanis start their own platforms,” he said. The FSA also acts when standards slip, and it cancelled two platform licenses in 2025. Then the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) covers the rest. Under the Banking Law it supervises financing, leasing, money transfers, electronic services, crowdfunding and Islamic finance, and it must decide on licence applications within 90 days. “It has also built the support system that makes lending without collateral possible: a fintech regulatory sandbox opened in December 2020, a fintech innovation hub, and an accelerator whose graduates include the platform Wadiaa, buy-now-pay-later firm Tasheel and savings app Zumr. The Mala’a credit bureau supplies the credit data that lenders need,” he added. When asked about whether there are non-bank financial institutions in Oman that offer alternative lending, Shuja Khan said: “Yes, and the range is widening. Finance and leasing companies have served vehicle and equipment buyers for years. Oman Development Bank lends up to OMR20,000 for mi-

cro projects and OMR250,000 for SMEs, and it takes on sectors that commercial banks avoid. “In addition, licensed crowdfunding platforms now provide short-term working capital. Investors such as Oman Technology Fund and Phaze Ventures back young companies with equity. Oman’s fintech market was worth about OMR1.1bn in 2025 and is growing by around 16 per cent a year.” Elaborating on whether Sharia-compliant are also offering alternative finance options, he said, “Yes, and it matters here, because many Omani owners will not take interest-based loans. Islamic banking assets reached OMR9.8 billion by May 2026, about 19 per cent of all banking assets, with Islamic financing up 10.5 per cent in a year to OMR7.9 billion.” Fitch expects Oman’s Islamic finance industry to reach about \$45bn in 2026, up from around \$36bn. Sharia-compliant platforms already operate, including a licensed venture run by Ethis. The CBO has approved a Sharia-compliant framework for finance and leasing companies and launched a Sharia liquidity system built on Qard Hasan and restricted Mudaraba. **SMEs and startups in Oman** Shuja Khan further that public support is large and growing. Oman had about 267,535 SMEs at the end of 2025. Riyadh issued more than 19,000 Entrepreneurship Cards in the first half of 2026 and has financed over 400 projects worth OMR38 million since 2022. “Future Fund Oman, which has OMR 2 billion to invest over five years, sets aside 7 per cent for SMEs and 3 per cent for startups. A national SME strategy for 2026 to 2030 puts finance and market access at the centre,” he added.

A STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

Sohar International signs MoU with Lahunna Oman to support ‘Siraj’ programme empowering growth of women-owned SMEs

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to strengthening Oman’s SME ecosystem and advancing women’s entrepreneurship, Sohar International has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Lahunna Oman to support the development of women-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Sultanate. The MoU was signed by Dr. Mazin Mahmood Al Raisi, Chief Marketing Officer at Sohar International, and Shatha Salim Al Maskiry, Founder of Lahunna Oman, marking a strategic collaboration focused on equipping Omani women entrepreneurs with the knowledge and capabilities needed to take their businesses forward. Under the collaboration, Sohar International will support Lahunna Oman’s Siraj SME Mentorship Programme as Main Partner. The 22-week initiative is designed for established Omani women-owned businesses seeking to advance to their next stage of growth through structured mentorship, enhanced financial understanding, practical business guidance, and access to relevant markets and networks. Commenting on the bank’s involvement, Dr. Mazin Mahmood Al Raisi, Chief Marketing Officer at Sohar International, said, “Financial literacy is not simply about understanding numbers; it is a practical business capability that

shapes the quality of decisions made within an enterprise. For SMEs, this understanding provides a more reliable basis for evaluating opportunities and planning expansion. Women-owned enterprises already make a meaningful contribution to Oman’s economy, and their continued development requires sustained engagement. Our participation in the mentorship program is grounded in this perspective and in recognition of the role the SME sector plays in employment creation and the economic diversification envisioned under Oman Vision 2040.” Shatha Salim Al Maskiry, Founder of Lahunna Oman added, “We believe that every business led by a woman holds a story, hard work, and potential that deserve to be empowered. Through Siraj, we partner with female entrepreneurs to translate their hard work into measurable growth, scalable ventures, and greater economic impact. The programme enables participants to gain deeper insight into their businesses, streamline their priorities, and make well-informed decisions confidently. As these businesses scale, their positive impact ripples out thereby creating new job opportunities, boosting in-country value, and driving economic diversification in Oman.” Participation is focused on Omani women who own regis-



tered, revenue-generating businesses that have been operating for at least one year. This directs the program towards enterprises

with an established track record and clearly identified commercial priorities. An initial assessment will inform the mentorship

provided, which will be linked to implementation and measurable progress. At the concluding Demo Day, participants will also have the

opportunity to demonstrate how the program has influenced their business decisions and priorities for the period ahead. The program will include workshops that will be hosted at Sohar International Academy, which will connect participants with banking specialists, industry practitioners, and other experts. These interactions will offer relevant perspectives on financial planning and credit readiness, while also addressing wider considerations associated with business growth. By working closely with businesses at this stage of development, the bank also seeks to deepen its understanding of how SME needs evolve and differ across sectors. Drawing on these insights, the bank aims to further enhance its solutions in areas such as payments, working capital, business finance, and corporate services. Sohar International will continue to extend its role beyond traditional financial services as both a banking and knowledge partner to Oman’s business community. By supporting women entrepreneurs and enabling SMEs to pursue further growth, the bank seeks to reinforce the contribution of local enterprises to the Sultanate’s broader economic development. Women entrepreneurs can join the Siraj program by applying through this link: <https://forms.gle/wNrnKY3IDD29CXwt9>.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Madina Investments, up 9.84%, was the top gainer while, Liva Group, down 2.78%, was the top loser, at the end of trading session

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,509.36 points, down by -0.18% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.39% at 604.61 points. Al Madina Investments, up 9.84%, was the top gainer while, Liva Group, down 2.78%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 7,978 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR27.57 million, with more than 100.85 million shares changing hands. Out of 75 traded securities, 21 advanced, 31 declined, and 23 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR1,503,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR841,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR662,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 13,232.44 points, down -0.12%. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Muscat Finance, National Bank Oman, Al Anwar Investment, Oman & Emirates Investment were up by 9.84%, 4.84%, 1.26%, 1.07%, 0.79% respectively. Prices of Liva Group, Al Omaniya Financial Services, OMINVEST,



Global Financial Investments, Oman Arab Bank were down by 2.78%, 2.67%, 1.50%, 1.18%, 1.14% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,416.27 points, up 0.02%. Prices of Oman Chromite, Oman Packaging, Oman Cement, Al Anwar Ceramics, Voltamp Energy were up by 5.00%, 2.27%, 0.86%, 0.74%, 0.58% respectively. Prices of Oman Refreshment, Gulf Mushroom Products, Galfar Engineering, Oman Cables Industry were down by 4.35%, 1.40%, 0.67%, 0.09% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.32% before closing at 3,027.07 points. Prices of Abraj Energy, Sembcorp Salalah, National Gas, National Gas were up by 2.76%, 2.00%, 0.92%, 0.92% respectively. Prices of Al Maha Marketing, Al Jazeera Services, Majan College, Phoenix Power, Oman Telecom were down by 1.64%, 1.56%, 0.72%, 0.72%, 0.72% respectively.

— United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

OMAN STOCKS

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	7,553.44	7,503.87	7,509.36	7,522.85	-13.49	-0.18
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,313.88	13,227.36	13,232.44	13,248.14	-15.70	-0.12
Industry Index	9,436.47	9,401.50	9,416.27	9,414.44	1.83	0.02
Services Index	3,030.63	3,017.57	3,027.07	3,017.57	9.51	0.32
MSX Shariah Index	605.45	602.25	604.61	602.25	2.37	0.39
MSX TR INDEX	11,686.04	11,609.35	11,617.84	11,638.72	-20.88	-0.18
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16,366.72	16,262.35	16,268.55	16,287.90	-19.30	-0.12
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,085.72	12,040.93	12,059.85	12,057.50	2.34	0.02
SERVICES TR IDX	4,060.48	4,042.97	4,055.71	4,042.97	12.74	0.32
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,253.83	1,253.83	1,253.83	1,253.83	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
100,853,243	27,572,263	7,978	38,292,534,687	21	31	23	75

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST HD	LAST OFFER	PWA VALUE	MARKET CAP	
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	2,370,513	956,483	843	0.400	0.410	0.400	0.410	0.399	0.011	2.757	0.410	0.401	0.410	0.100	315,782,000
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	2,125,213	535,144	120	0.249	0.255	0.249	0.255	0.250	0.005	2.000	0.255	0.254	0.255	0.100	243,415,947
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	2,031,000	974,880	9	0.479	0.481	0.479	0.481	0.475	0.006	1.263	0.481	0.472	0.500	0.100	782,080,197
OM0000000172	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	550	104	3	0.189	0.190	0.189	0.189	0.187	0.002	1.070	0.189	0.185	0.189	0.100	58,119,289
OM0000003688	OAREDOO	51,043	16,317	15	0.319	0.321	0.319	0.320	0.317	0.003	0.946	0.320	0.317	0.332	0.100	208,302,154
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,574	921	2	0.585	0.585	0.585	0.585	0.580	0.005	0.862	0.585	0.581	0.635	0.100	193,590,535
OM0000000181	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	15,930	2,067	8	0.136	0.138	0.125	0.128	0.127	0.001	0.787	0.128	0.127	0.138	0.100	16,380,000
OM0000000430	BANK NIZWA	621,186	88,215	17	0.142	0.143	0.142	0.143	0.142	0.001	0.704	0.143	0.143	0.143	0.100	319,884,284
OM0000000070	VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,180,830	205,433	13	0.173	0.175	0.173	0.174	0.173	0.001	0.578	0.174	0.170	0.174	0.010	174,000,000
OM0000000296	BANK MUSCAT	13,901,312	5,501,069	1,388	0.386	0.389	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.002	0.505	0.388	0.389	0.388	0.100	2,887,440,031
OM0000000150	DHOAFAR INTL DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	189,072	54,025	44	0.284	0.289	0.281	0.281	0.280	0.001	0.357	0.281	0.276	0.288	0.100	139,391,776
OM0000000216	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	17,100	15,381	6	0.900	0.900	0.895	0.900	0.898	0.002	0.223	0.900	0.897	0.900	0.100	112,408,164
OM0000000574	UNITED FINANCE	39,544	3,490	4	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.085	0.091	0.100	31,338,202
OM0000000248	SMN POWER HOLDING	5,000	950	3	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.100	37,930,764
OM0000000711	MUSANDAM POWER	2,064	700	1	0.339	0.339	0.339	0.339	0.339	0.000	0.000	0.339	0.339	0.369	0.100	23,862,210
OM0000000602	QOGAS NETWORKS	14,684,397	3,322,470	1,437	0.225	0.228	0.222	0.225	0.225	0.000	0.000	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.100	974,390,382
OM0000000093	ASFIAD SHIPPING	1,538,570	387,898	509	0.239	0.241	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.000	0.000	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.100	1,238,681,139
OM0000000107	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	1,000	3,295	1	3.295	3.295	3.295	3.295	3.298	-0.003	-0.091	3.295	3.270	3.620	0.100	295,561,500
OM0000000975	QO EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	4,085,338	1,964,549	127	0.480	0.483	0.478	0.480	0.481	-0.001	-0.208	0.480	0.475	0.480	0.100	3,840,000,000
OM0000000083	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	12,901	3,548	3	0.275	0.275	0.275	0.275	0.275	0.000	0.000	0.275	0.277	0.277	0.100	405,140,624
OM0000000495	ALBATAHA POWER	86,112	15,758	17	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.184	-0.001	-0.543	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.100	123,504,400
OM0000000483	AL SUWADI POWER	94,000	17,202	10	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.184	-0.001	-0.543	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.100	130,736,360
OM0000000308	OMAN TELECOM	2,103,384	2,933,502	51	1.397	1.398	1.388	1.388	1.386	-0.010	-0.715	1.388	1.390	1.388	0.100	1,041,000,000
OM0000000583	PHOENIX POWER	779,531	215,466	43	0.276	0.278	0.276	0.277	0.279	-0.002	-0.717	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.100	405,140,624
OM0000000478	MADINA TAKAFUL	1,561,853	171,806	68	0.111	0.111	0.110	0.110	0.111	-0.001	-0.901	0.110	0.110	0.114	0.100	19,250,000
OM0000000259	RANK DHOAFAR	187,837	40,606	56	0.220	0.220	0.216	0.216	0.218	-0.002	-0.917	0.216	0.215	0.216	0.100	656,596,483
OM0000000240	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	19,000	1,880	6	0.099	0.099	0.098	0.098	0.099	-0.001	-0.100	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	8,820,000
OM0000000024	DHOAFAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	25,366,758	4,656,878	1,334	0.183	0.185	0.182	0.182	0.184	-0.002	-1.087	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.100	1,397,033,032
OM0000000315	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	1,001,900	339,984	12	0.340	0.340	0.335	0.335	0.339	-0.004	-1.180	0.335	0.335	0.349	0.100	67,000,000
OM0000000908	QO BASE INDUSTRIES (SP2)	14,396,415	3,582,145	1,275	0.250	0.251	0.245	0.247	0.250	-0.003	-1.200	0.247	0.248	0.247	0.040	854,494,240
OM0000000224	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	1,219	521	3	0.430	0.430	0.423	0.423	0.429	-0.006	-1.398	0.423	0.423	0.430	0.100	21,294,825
OM0000000133	OMINVEST	1,300	530	3	0.415	0.415	0.395	0.395	0.401	-0.006	-1.496	0.395	0.395	0.424	0.100	443,527,296
OM0000000226	AL JAZEERA SERVICES	6,184	1,553	3	0.255	0.255	0.251	0.253	0.257	-0.004	-1.556	0.253	0.248	0.253	0.100	10,839,277
OM0000000300	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODS MKTG	1,500	1,800	2	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.220	-0.020	-1.639	1.200	1.200	1.200	0.100	82,800,000
OM0000000207	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	138	20	1	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.150	-0.004	-2.667	0.146	0.146	0.147	0.100	46,050,882
Total	35	88,484,598	25,996,591	7,437												

Parallel Market

OMD0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	100	7	1	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.061	0.006	9.836	0.067	0.055	0.067	0.100	2,887,000
OMD0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	1,422	4,868	5	3.300	3.465	3.300	3.465	3.300	0.165	5.000	3.465	3.350	3.630	1.000	12,577,950
OMD0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	80,240	5,253	8	0.063	0.066	0.063	0.065	0.062	0.003	4.839	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.100	19,964,511
OMD0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	100	23	1	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.220	0.005	2.273	0.225	0.198	0.225	0.100	7,298,069
OMD0000009569	JABAL REIF	53,835	5,597	8	0.103	0.105	0.103	0.105	0.104	0.001	0.962	0.105	0.103	0.105	0.100	18,270,000
OMD0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	444,630	48,563	40	0.109	0.110	0.108	0.110	0.109	0.001	0.917	0.110	0.108	0.119	0.100	9,350,000
OMD0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	84,523	11,464	24	0.136	0.137	0.134	0.136	0.135	0.001	0.741	0.136	0.135	0.136	0.100	29,920,000
OMD0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	10,000	1,370	1	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.100	4,170,000
OMD0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	22,500	1,528	3	0.067	0.068	0.067	0.068	0.068	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.068	0.070	0.100	1,428,000
OMD0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	4,000	892	1	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.000	0.000	0.223	0.222	0.226	0.100	4,126,581
OMD0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	14,430	11,036	8	0.762	0.765	0.762	0.765	0.765	0.000	0.000	0.765	0.762	0.765	0.100	72,675,000
OMD0000004669	SHARGIYAH DESALINATION	18,634	3,168	2	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.000	0.000	0.170	0.171	0.175	0.100	16,628,367
OMD0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	8,128	2,071	2	0.252	0.255	0.252	0.255	0.255	0.000	0.000	0.255	0.251	0.254	0.100	14,025,000
OMD0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	19,386	3,336	9	0.184	0.185	0.180	0.185	0.185	0.000	0.000	0.185	0.179	0.185	0.100	109,415,823
OMD0000010823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	300	309	1	1.029	1.029	1.029	1.029	1.033	-0.004	-0.387	1.029	1.030	1.035	0.000	28,220,162
OMD0000011151	OMIFCO	3,347,843	682,095	227	0.203	0.205	0.203	0.203	0.204	-0.001	-0.490	0.203	0.203	0.210	0.000	1,357,943,125
OMD0000003521	GALFAR ENGO & CONTRACTING	727,151	108,964	47	0.149	0.150	0.149	0.149	0.150	-0.001	-0.667	0.149	0.145	0.149	0.100	30,244,980
OMD0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	19,571	2,623	6	0.131	0.138	0.131	0.138	0.139	-0.001	-0.719	0.138	0.133	0.137	0.100	13,662,000
OMD0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	159,851	17,026	40	0.108	0.108	0.106	0.107	0.108	-0.001	-0.926	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.100	9,006,403
OMD0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	558,111	146,751	60	0.264	0.264	0.260	0.261	0.264	-0.003	-1.136	0.261	0.260	0.281	0.100	522,716,000
OMD0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	3,676	563	3	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.089	-0.002	-2.222	0.088	0.087	0.088	0.100	13,686,435
OMD0000007043	OMAN REAL ESTATE	460,010	49,011	7	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	14,687,000
OMD0000007043	LIVTA GROUP	1,000	3,500	2	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.360	-0.010	-2.778	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.100	139,431,020
OMD0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	1,200	1,320	1	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.150	-0.050	-4.348	1.100	1.100	1.200	0.100	55,000,000
Total	NATIONAL GAS	12,314,651	1,553,198	507												



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Trump’s 75-country immigrant visa ban struck down by US judge

Judge Jeannette Vargas of the Federal District Court in Manhattan issued the ruling on Friday, in another setback to the Trump administration’s immigration policies

WASHINGTON: A US federal judge on struck down the Trump administration’s policy suspending immigrant visa issuance for nationals of 75 countries, ruling that the measure was “contrary to law” and exceeded the statutory authority of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, according to media report.

According to CNN, Judge Jeannette Vargas of the Federal District Court in Manhattan issued the ruling on Friday, in another setback to the Trump administration’s immigration policies.

The US State Department had paused the issuance of immigrant visas from nearly 40 per cent of the world’s countries in January, including Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Haiti, Somalia and Russia. The de-



partment had said the move was intended to prevent the entry of people who would “take welfare and public benefits.”

Vargas rejected the rationale behind the policy and ordered the reversal of visa denials that were based solely on the measure.

According to CNN, under US law, an immigrant can be denied a visa as a potential “public charge”—meaning someone expected to depend on government assistance—only after a consular officer assesses the applicant’s individual circumstances, includ-

ing finances, age, health, skills and family situation.

The judge found that the policy, in practice, directed US officers to reject applications based solely on an applicant’s nationality, including cases where applicants could demonstrate that they were capa-

ble of supporting themselves.

The policy suspended immigrant visas for people seeking permanent residence in the US, including those seeking to join family members or take up employment. It did not cover nonimmigrant visas such as tourist or student visas.

A cable sent by Rubio to US diplomatic and consular posts, which was included in the court record, instructed officers to deny applications even where an applicant “provides additional evidence that demonstrates he or she overcomes the public charge refusal,” CNN reported.

“The outcome is predetermined,” Vargas wrote. “The visa will be refused.”

According to the judge, the policy conflicted with a 1965 law prohibiting discrimination based on nationality in the granting of visas.

She also cited a separate provision that limits the secretary of state’s authority over decisions made by individual consular officers.

However, visa denials based on separate legal grounds will remain in effect even where the policy was also cited, leaving uncertainty over the number of cases that could ultimately be reversed.

Most of the 75 countries affected by the policy are outside Europe, spanning the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, Central Asia and Southeast Asia.

The list included several US partners, among them Jordan, Egypt and Georgia.

The State Department compiled the list using data from the

Council of Economic Advisers and targeted countries where more than 30 per cent of immigrant households received some form of public assistance.

The case included six US citizens who had filed family-based petitions and said the policy prevented relatives in Ghana, Jamaica, Guatemala and Ethiopia from obtaining immigrant visas.

Five Colombians who had applied for employment-based immigrant visas were also among the plaintiffs. One of them received a denial notice that specifically cited the policy.

The Trump administration secured a limited victory on one issue, with Vargas agreeing that the policy was not a formal rule that required public notice and a period for public comment before it could be implemented, CNN reported.

In defending the policy, administration lawyers relied on a 2018 Supreme Court ruling that upheld the third version of Trump’s first-term travel ban, which restricted entry by nationals of several countries, most of them Muslim-majority.

Vargas distinguished that case from the present dispute, saying the earlier ruling concerned the President’s authority to determine who could enter the United States, while the current case involved the separate question of whether a visa could be issued.

Vargas, who was appointed by former US President Joe Biden, gave both sides until September 11 to submit proposals on how to address the remaining issues in the case. — ANI

145-SEAT PARLIAMENT



Kazakhstan holds parliamentary election, expected to cement president’s grip

ASTANA: Kazakhstan’s 12.3 million eligible voters will elect the Central Asian country’s parliament on Sunday.

The polls come after a new constitution approved in March did away with the Senate to create a new unicameral Kurultai — a reference to the medieval councils of the region’s nomadic past.

Backers of the new body say it will give parliament more say in decision making, critics argue it will only cement the power of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The 73-year-old took the reins from authoritarian Nursultan Nazarbayev — who himself ruled the country for 30 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union — in 2019.

The pro-presidential Adilet party is expected to win an overwhelming majority in Sunday’s vote, with a number of smaller parties loyal to Tokayev also pegged to enter parliament.

Seven state-approved parties have been allowed to field candidates for the 145-seat parliament while genuine opposition parties have been banned.

The election is taking place amid soaring inflation (which is hovering around 10.2%) and rising taxes, fueling concerns for the government — and particularly Tokayev — of a repeat of January 2022 cost of living unrest that left 238 protesters and police dead.

Press crackdown and financial strain colour Kazakhstan’s election

Beyond financial strain, Sunday’s vote is also taking place against

the background of crackdowns on press freedom, with numerous reporters under house arrest and official criminal cases being brought against 10 independent journalists and bloggers.

Tokayev, a former Soviet official and Kazakh diplomat who worked at the UN, has touted his reforms and justified the many changes he has initiated — including the introduction of the new constitution — as necessary in a fast-changing world.

“Without a doubt, these elections will be remembered as perhaps the most interesting in our country’s history,” said Tokayev on Friday.

“Amid unprecedented geopolitical tensions and mounting global challenges, we must firmly and consistently implement our strategy to transform Kazakhstan into a truly developed state,” he added.

Tokayev has sought to maintain a delicate balance between Moscow — with their shared Soviet ties — and the West since sanctions were imposed on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. Resource-rich and strategically located Kazakhstan also has ties to China and the European Union.

Although Tokayev has said that he has no plans of staying in power beyond his current term, the constitutional reform that 87% of voters backed this March effectively reset term limits for the office — making him eligible to run for another seven-year stint in 2029 should he change his mind. — DW

AMID TENSIONS WITH PETE HEGSETH

US Army Secretary Dan Driscoll to step down by year-end: Report

WASHINGTON: US Army Secretary Dan Driscoll is anticipated to step down from his post by late 2026 or potentially earlier, following months of friction with Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, according to people familiar with the discussions cited by The Wall Street Journal.

A separate report by The Hill stated that Driscoll is aiming to exit his role around the end of 2026. A source familiar with the discussions told the publication that Driscoll had previously indicated that 23 to 24 months is the expected tenure of an Army secretary under the Trump administration.

Spokespeople for Driscoll and the Pentagon declined to comment on the matter, according to the reports.

Driscoll’s impending departure would leave the Army without a Senate-confirmed secretary, while the service also currently lacks a Senate-confirmed chief of staff.

Pete Hegseth removed Gen Randy George as Army Chief of Staff in April without providing an explanation, and President Donald Trump has yet to nominate a permanent successor.

Gen Christopher LaNeve, the Army Vice Chief of Staff and a former senior military aide to Hegseth, is currently serving as acting Army Chief of Staff. Though LaNeve has engaged with lawmakers in recent months, his confirmation is encountering objections from senators across both parties, according to The Hill.

These administrative changes mark further shifts within the senior leadership of the Pentagon during President Trump’s second term.



Driscoll, a longtime associate and ally of Vice President JD Vance, has been involved in an ongoing power struggle with Hegseth.

According to The Wall Street Journal, friction surfaced early in the administration after Driscoll offered to arrange a visit for Vance and Trump to meet soldiers and discuss Army reforms.

Tensions escalated further after Trump selected Driscoll to lead discussions with Ukrainian officials aimed at resolving the Russia-Ukraine conflict, according to The Hill.

During his tenure, Driscoll formed a close working relationship with George. Together, they urged the military branch to inte-

grate advanced technologies and established the Army Transformation Initiative, which aimed to deliver combat capabilities, streamline force structure, and eliminate waste and obsolete programmes, including integrating drones and artificial intelligence into Army formations.

Driscoll had also travelled to Ukraine alongside George and Gen Chris Donahue, then the top US Army general in Europe, to discuss diplomatic efforts with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

A former Army Ranger and venture capitalist, Driscoll advocated for improved living conditions for personnel, equipment modernisation, and applying insights from Ukrainian forces regarding commercial technology in combat.

Under his leadership, private

enterprises pledged to invest over USD 25 billion into data centres, critical mineral refineries, and dining facilities on US Army installations. A source told The Hill that Driscoll had been aggressive in securing support from general officers for these efforts due to his limited expected time in office.

The working relationship between Driscoll and George ended following Hegseth’s decision to remove the Army chief in April, a move that drew criticism from Republican lawmakers alongside praise for George’s service.

When questioned about the dismissal during a congressional hearing, Driscoll described George as “an amazing, transformation leader”.

Driscoll also received praise from Trump during a defence event in Pennsylvania last month.

“With that beautiful smile, but he’s actually a killer. Look at that beautiful, nice, face. Everything’s so happy. He’s a killer. Would you believe it? Those are the best guys, actually,” Trump said.

Driscoll was confirmed by the Senate on February 25, 2025, in a 66-28 vote. Trump had previously nominated him as Army secretary, highlighting his background as a former soldier, investor, and political adviser.

Driscoll previously served in the US Army as a Cavalry Scout Platoon Leader with the 10th Mountain Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom before graduating from Yale Law School. He later worked in venture capital and private equity, and served as a senior adviser to Vance.

— ANI

NIGER STATE

Rebels in Nigeria kidnap dozens from mosque

ABUJA: Extremists attacked and abducted a number of worshippers in Nigeria’s Niger State, authorities said on Saturday.

Police said the armed men attacked a number of villages in the Borgu Local Government Area before storming a mosque in the village of Kpenya during Friday prayers.

“People were abducted while praying at a Juma’at mosque on Friday,” Borgu area council chair Abdullahi Mohammed Nasir told

the Associated Press.

“That was when the bad people came and surrounded the mosque and took them away.”

Some witnesses counted extreme violence.

“Soon after finishing the normal Friday prayer, the armed group [...] in their hundreds, wielding guns, knives and machetes, began to attack us,” one survivor told the AFP news agency. “They slaughtered some of our people, saying we are

not practicing the true teachings of Islam.”

Local residents told the AFP and Reuters news agencies that dozens of people — as many as 60 — were kidnapped.

Witnesses also told AFP that the armed men killed several people, although according to police, “the developing report indicated that no life was lost.”

No group claimed responsibility for the attack on the day that followed and police have not identi-

fied the culprits. One witness told AFP that the gunmen belonged to Lakurawa — an increasingly radical outfit that researchers link to the “IS Sahel Province” group.

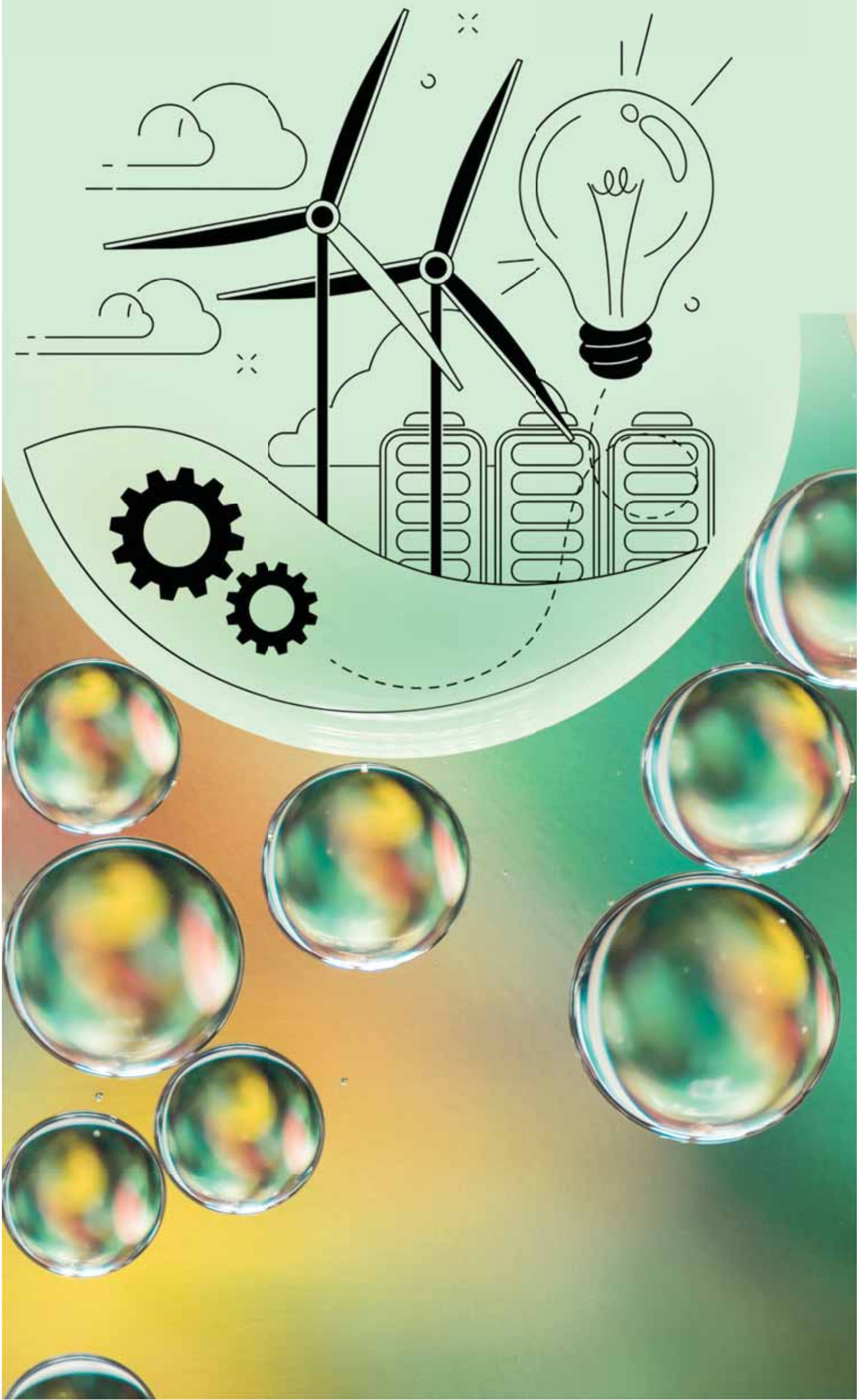
Another resident told AFP that the attackers were Ansaru, which split from Boko Haram and is now aligned with al-Qaeda.

Witnesses also said that a third, rival group known as Mahmuda clashed with the attackers and allowed some of the abductees to escape. — DW



LIFESTYLE

DOES THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION
NEED FOREVER CHEMICALS?



As nations globally move to ban forever chemicals, should renewable energy technologies be exempt for the sake of saving the climate?

From solar panels to wind turbines, batteries and hydrogen cells, many renewable energy technologies driving the energy transition share a common ingredient: a class of man-made substances known as “forever chemicals.”

The group contains 10,000 synthetic chemicals also known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which persist in the environment and can take thousands of years to degrade.

Widely detected in drinking water, exposure to certain levels of PFAS is linked to increased risk of cancer, suppressed immune function, decreased fertility and developmental delays in children.

These health impacts have inspired bans on well-publicised sources of toxic PFAS such as clothing waterproofing sprays, Teflon non-stick cookware, fire-fighting foam, packaging and cosmetic products.

While recent bans in France, New Zealand and Denmark target specific PFAS used in consumer products, the European Union wants a broader ban.

The thousands of forever chemicals the EU proposes outlawing includes fluoropolymers, which are valued for their resistance to extreme temperatures, corrosion and UV degradation, and are present in numerous green technologies from lithium-ion batteries to solar panels.

In EV batteries, for example, binders created with PTFE fluoropolymers — also found in Teflon products — are used to coat dry electrodes for greater energy efficiency.

The chemicals industry has pushed back against Europe’s mooted ban. An alliance of the world’s leading chemical companies, the Performance Fluoropolymer Partnership (PFP) says health concerns about “some types of PFAS” are leading to “unwarranted restrictions” on fluoropolymer production and use.

In a statement on its website describing fluoropolymers as “critical in the fight against climate change,” the PFP stated that any bans would “hamstring our climate and energy goals by possibly making the transition more expensive or simply impossible.”

Are PFAS necessary to fight climate change?

PFP members include the chemicals arm of US multinational conglomerate, 3M — which is be-

ing sued more than \$2 billion by the Australian government for its firefighting foam that has leached forever chemicals into the environment — and the Chemours Company, which manufacturers Teflon and was established by chemicals powerhouse, DuPont.

The European Environment Agency says these polymers are considered “relatively less problematic” than the building blocks for PFAS known as monomers. This is due to a larger molecular size that “limits their uptake into living cells” and potential toxicity.

Yet fluoropolymers still degrade over time, raising “additional environmental and human health

concerns,” according to the agency. Experts say these polymers will inevitably emit PFAS during their life cycle and enter the environment — and living organisms — through weathering and physical stress over long periods.

“I don’t think we’re going to solve the climate crisis by getting cancer,” said Gretchen Salter of US-based Safer States, which lobbies to safeguard the environment from toxic chemicals. “You can’t demonstrate that these chemicals aren’t going to do harm.”

“Since chemical makers cannot escape the fact that these types of PFAS are harming our health, they are trying to claim that they

are necessary for the clean energy transition,” Salter said, adding that research shows how PFAS themselves fuel climate harm and toxic pollution.

The petrochemical industry accounts for 30% of global industrial energy demand — which is higher than the iron, steel and cement sectors — and generates 18% of the industrial sector’s greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, chemicals used to produce everything from pharmaceuticals to fertilizers, plastics, paints, electronics and cleaning products are responsible for around 6% of global emissions.

Salter said PFAS categorised as fluorogases (F-gases) are also

being marketed as “climate-friendly” since they are used for clean tech like heat pumps, and in electric car batteries. But PFAS gases, though largely non-flammable, are “now the largest source of PFAS pollution globally,” she said.

This is partly due to their global warming impact, which is potentially thousands of times higher than carbon dioxide. F-gas leaks can happen throughout a heat pump life cycle via worn seals and improper maintenance and end-of-life disposal. F-gases are also present in fridges and air-conditioning units as a synthetic coolant, where they can leak too.

Are there PFAS-free green tech alternatives?

According to UK-based Chem Trust, which advocates for safer alternatives to toxic chemicals, a suite of PFAS-free clean energy technology is already on the market, including for heat pumps that are being rolled out across Europe as part of a transition from gas heating.

Instead of relying on F-gases, propane is just one alternative energy efficient refrigerant for domestic heat pumps, and with the right design has a negligible fire risk, notes a 2025 Chem Trust report.

The group also says several companies are now producing solar cells without fluoropolymers. Equally, polymer paint that protects wind turbine blades and makes them more efficient is available PFAS-free.

“We are seeing more companies in the EU and across the world embrace the challenge of developing PFAS-free green technologies,” said Shubhi Sharma, scientific researcher at Chem Trust, in a statement.

But plastics and chemical lobby group Plastics Europe released an assessment report of PFAS-free substitutes in May that argued that “in many critical uses” such as transport, electronics and semiconductors, these alternatives are “either not available or simply do not match the necessary criteria to be considered a viable alternative to fluoropolymers.”

Salter of Safer States said efforts to exempt so-called critical and low concern PFAS from class-wide bans means “destroying any sort of incentive to switch to safer alternatives.”

“As long as the chemicals industry insists that there are no alternatives, there will be no market to develop any,” said the campaigner.

Chemours insists its fluoropolymers and F-gases are “made and used with minimal environmental impact,” and says it will achieve a 99% PFAS emissions reduction in the manufacture of fluorinated organic compounds by the end of the decade compared to 2018.

Liz Hitchcock, director of the federal policy programme at US environmental nonprofit, Toxic-Free Future, told DW that the extreme persistence of PFAS in the environment will inevitably lead to human exposure.

“We’ve heard claims that there are better PFAS, there are safer PFAS, but we haven’t seen the proof.” - **DW**

SPORTS

IN PORTUGAL



Ex-West Brom midfielder Castro, 25, dies during friendly

LISBON: Former West Brom midfielder Quevin Castro has died at the age of 25 after collapsing during a match in Portugal. Castro fell to the ground during the first half of third-tier Real Sport Clube's friendly against top-flight side Estrela de Amadora at the Estadio das Seixas in Lisbon on Saturday. The Lisbon Football Association

(AFL) said that Castro "passed away this morning during the pre-season friendly". Real Sport Clube said the midfielder was a "beloved member of our sporting family". "Quevin Castro was much more than just a player; he was an integral part of our family, leaving an indelible mark on all those who knew him."

Castro, who grew up in Thetford in Norfolk, joined West Brom in 2021 and made his debut for the club against Arsenal in the Carabao Cup. His second appearance for the club came against Swansea later that season, before joining Burton Albion on loan. West Brom said they were "devastated" by the news of Castro's death and will pay tribute to the

midfielder with a period of applause in the 25th minute of their Championship fixture against Burnley on Sunday, as well as wearing black armbands. The former Sporting Clube academy product appeared for several sides in England - including Cambridge City, York City and Notts County - before returning to Portugal last summer. - Agencies

Tottenham make woeful start



The Spurs, one of the biggest spenders in Europe this summer with \$300 million, were overwhelmed in a 3-0 defeat at Brentford

LONDON: It took just one round of the Premier League to puncture the pre-season positivity surrounding Tottenham Hotspur. Saturday in England's top division began with Man United, the 20-time champions with a new permanent manager and a freshly renovated midfield, getting rolled over by promoted Hull in an embarrassing 2-0 loss. It ended with Tottenham, one

of the biggest spenders in Europe this summer with \$300 million — and counting — of new players in its squad, getting overwhelmed in a 3-0 defeat at Brentford. In the middle was a win for Everton in front of Britain's recently installed prime minister and a victory for another promoted club, Ipswich. Across Europe, only Chelsea has spent more on new players than Tottenham this summer but it didn't show at Brentford's Gtech Community Stadium. Italy midfielder Sandro Tonali, who joined for a club-record

\$133 million from Newcastle, was among the new signings in a Spurs team that was completely outplayed by a settled Brentford lineup. Brentford were two goals ahead by the 33rd thanks to close-range strikes by Keane Lewis-Potter and Vitaly Janelt. Michael Kayode slid in to add a third just after the break and Igor Thiago, Brentford's top scorer last season, missed a chance to pad the scoreline by hitting the post with a penalty. **British PM sees Everton win** Everton had a famous fan in their

stadium watching a 2-0 win over Crystal Palace. Andy Burnham took in his first Everton match since becoming Britain's prime minister last month and saw Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall and Thierno Barry score goals for the hosts. Everton manager David Moyes said he spoke to Burnham, a season ticket-holder at the club, on the phone after the match. Ismaila Sarr, linked with a move away from Palace, wasn't in the matchday squad for Pierre Sage's first game in charge of the team, though the manager said the Sen-

egal forward's absence was injury-related. Palace lost Morocco defender Chadi Riad to what appeared to be a serious knee injury that forced him to be carried off on a stretcher in the second half. Ipswich were another promoted team to win in the opening round of games, scoring in the 90th minute through Jack Clarke to beat his former club Sunderland 2-1. Leeds also scored a late winner, with Anton Stach's 88th-minute free kick enough to dispatch Nottingham Forest 1-0. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Mourinho accuses opponents of bullying Vinicius in Real victory

BARCELONA: Real Madrid manager Jose Mourinho accused opponents and supporters of bullying Vinicius Jr after the Brazil winger was targeted with rough treatment in the club's opening 2-1 La-Liga win at Espanyol on Saturday. Real, which kicked off Mourinho's return to the club with a late victory, was furious inside the opening five minutes when Alex Calatrava brought down Vinicius from behind and then appeared to catch him again while the forward was on the ground. Madrid's players appealed for a red card but the referee took no action against Calatrava, who later scored Espanyol's equaliser after Jude Bellingham had put Real ahead. Late Real substitute Carlos Espi struck in the 90th minute to give the visitors victory. Mourinho said the treatment of Vinicius had become a recurring theme. "Vinicius is no saint, but what they're doing to him was too much. Right from the first minute. It's a pattern that repeats itself from one opponent to the next," Mourinho said. "I'll give him one, now you give him one. If I get a yellow card, you give him one. If I'm substituted, another player comes on who hasn't been booked yet, and you give him one." The Portuguese coach said Vinicius, who has often been the focus of abuse from rival defenders and



crowds, needed to stay composed despite the provocation. "He needs to have a lot of emotional control. I've told him that if he scores a goal, he needs to be careful how he celebrates it," Mourinho said. "We're in an era where society is against bullying, yet with Vini we're still seeing bullying - from opponents and from the crowd. We have to educate him and prepare him as best we can, and that's it." The row also carried echoes of last season, when Mourinho was Benfica manager and Vinicius was subjected to discriminatory abuse by Benfica's Gianluca Prestianni during a Champions League match against Real Madrid. - Agencies

BEAT BORUSSIA DORTMUND

Olise stars as Bayern lift German Super Cup

BERLIN: Michael Olise produced a stunning finish as Bayern Munich narrowly overcame Borussia Dortmund 2-1 to retain the German Super Cup on Saturday. With Vincent Kompany's side winning both the Bundesliga and German Cup last season, Dortmund qualified for the annual match through their second-place finish. Bayern, who won the trophy last year thanks to goals from Harry Kane and Luis Diaz, took the lead in the 28th minute through German left-back Nathaniel Brown. They did not have to wait long to take a two-goal advantage, as Olise latched on to a loose pass in the Dortmund midfield and used his pace to burst into the box. Despite being knocked off balance, the Frenchman was able to stab a left-footed finish into the far corner from a tight angle. Dortmund - for whom Ramy Bensebaini had a first-half goal ruled out for offside by the video assistant referee - did pull one back with 15 minutes to play through former Wolves striker Fabio Silva. Defender Bensebaini was then shown a red card in the 90th minute for a late challenge on Moroccan forward Ismael Saibari. **Kane is Germany's player of the year** Bayern Munich forward Harry Kane has been voted Germany's



player of the year 2026 and Vincent Kompany won the coach's accolade after another outstanding season for the Bavarian powerhouse. Kane scored 61 goals across all competitions, including the German Supercup for Bayern



last season, helping the team defend its Bundesliga title and win the German Cup. He scored a hat-trick in the cup final. The England forward gathered more votes (272) than team-mate Michael Olise (203) in the yearly

poll of 659 members of the Association of German Sports Journalists (VDS) organised by Kicker magazine. Kicker said on Sunday that Deniz Undav received 61 votes followed by Bayern's Joshua Kimmich (21) and Hoffenheim goalkeeper Oliver Baumann (14). There were three invalid votes. Kompany received nearly half the votes for the coach's award, more than Freiburg's Julian Schuster, who won it last year. Florian Wirtz won the player's award last year. The player of the year accolade has been awarded since 1960, with the coaches honoured since 2002. Franz Beckenbauer leads the player category with four wins, while Jürgen Klopp and Felix Magath both won the coach's award three times. - Agencies

MLS

Messi scores but Inter Miami suffer defeat to Toronto

MIAMI: Lionel Messi found the back of the net but it was not enough to stop Inter Miami's winless run extending to five games as they suffered a 2-1 defeat to Toronto on Saturday. Goals from Josh Sargent and Derrick Etienne Jr. either side of the hour mark gave the Canadian side a commanding lead, and it ultimately proved enough to give it all three points. Messi pulled one back in the 82nd minute after running onto a glorious through-ball from compatriot Rodrigo de Paul, but Inter Mi-

ami were unable to find a leveller. They have now lost four and drawn one of their last five outings, including MLS and Leagues Cup play. They were knocked out of the Leagues Cup in the group stages. They are in second place in the MLS Eastern Conference, seven points behind leaders Nashville, who have a game in hand. Messi is second in the goal-scoring charts with 14 goals, two behind Dallas's Petar Musa on 16. **Griezmann brace** Antoine Griezmann, who joined

Orlando City after the World Cup break, scored two second-half goals on Saturday night to help the Lions beat Real Salt Lake 2-1. The victory ended Orlando City's four-match winless streak in all competitions and improved the Lions to 7-11-3, 25 points. Real Salt Lake fell to 8-8-4 and remained with 28 points as their winless streak increased to seven games. The 35-year-old forward scored the winner in the 81st minute after a scramble in the box. He settled the ball after receiving a

backheel flick before slotting it home with right-footed shot for the 2-1 lead. The French standout now has four goals in all competitions for Orlando. "It was a complicated game," Griezmann said. "It's never easy starting off with a negative mark like that, but we made changes at halftime and put more guys further up the field. "In the final zone, we were a lot more aggressive. We were pressing more and more aggressive with our press, and it was a really good way to get the win tonight." - Agencies



Norris edges past Russell to pole position at Zandvoort

The McLaren driver had won the Dutch Grand Prix from pole position in 2024

ZANDVOORT: McLaren's Lando Norris beat Mercedes' George Russell to pole position at the Dutch Grand Prix during a frantic scramble to complete laps before a late shower of rain on Saturday.

Norris pipped Russell by 0.102 seconds as raindrops began to appear on the drivers' visors. They completed their runs earlier than they would normally do because of the weather.

Russell's team-mate Kimi Antonelli was the first to improve on his final lap, briefly rising to the top of the times.

However, he was beaten to first by Norris, who consolidated the first place he had picked up on the first laps in the final session, and then Russell.

Antonelli, the championship leader, was 0.031secs behind Russell and 0.009secs faster than the second McLaren of Oscar Piastri.

In the end, significant rain did not come as expected, and Lewis Hamilton, who left it late to do



his final lap, snuck ahead of team-mate Charles Leclerc as the Ferraris locked out the third row in fifth and sixth places.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen starts his final home grand prix, with the Dutch race falling off the calendar after this season, from seventh place.

His stand-in team-mate Liam Lawson, replacing Frenchman Isack Hadjar who broke his wrist in the run-up to the race, was impressive in lapping just 0.0115secs slower than the Dutchman to take eighth place ahead of the Audi of Gabriel Bortoleto and Racing Bulls' British rookie Arvid Lindblad.

So high was the expectation of rain heading into the final session that the teams all raced to finish their two runs as quickly as possible. Russell demonstrated the urgency as the drivers headed out for their final laps by nipping ahead of Piastri as they exited the pits.

Russell also attacked Norris on his out loop, trying to gain track position. However, Norris held him off and Russell had to back off before starting his lap.

In the end, all the panic was for nothing as while rain came, it was

only a few spots and not enough to affect the conditions.

Norris said that, if anything, the rain might have helped lap times by cooling the tyres a little.

"It wasn't a lap that felt mega," the world champion said. "It was one where I committed a lot more because I knew how close it would be, and I almost made more mistakes."

"But I seemed to gain more than I seemed to lose at times. It was a lap where I just felt I had nothing to lose and it just paid off."

Russell said a mistake in Turn Eight on his final run had cost

him as the tyres got too hot and he was unable to keep improving.

Antonelli, too, was left to rue a mistake on his final run, saying he lost 0.2secs in Turn One taking things too easy because of the rain - he missed out on pole by 0.133secs.

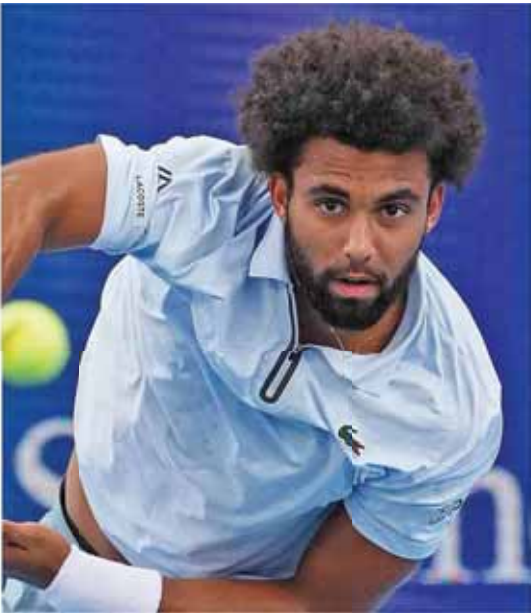
Hamilton benefited from that by leaving his run late and benefiting from the usual improvement in track conditions through qualifying to pip Leclerc by 0.064secs.

Yuki Tsunoda, back on the grid to replace Lawson at Racing Bulls, was 12th. And while Aston Martin believed their upgraded Honda engine had delivered what they

expected, Fernando Alonso was not able to hold on to the 12th place he held going into the final runs of the first session, and dropped down to 18th.

Top 10 starting grid: 1. Lando Norris (McLaren) 1:11.163, 2. George Russell (Mercedes) +0.102, 3. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes) +0.133, 4. Oscar Piastri (McLaren) +0.142, 5. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) +0.331, 6. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) +0.395, 7. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) +0.455, 8. Liam Lawson (Red Bull) +0.570, 9. Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi) +0.916, 10. Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls) +1.022. - Agencies

ATP MASTERS



Tiafoe to take on Fils for Cincinnati crown

CINCINNATI: Frances Tiafoe is through to his second Cincinnati Open showpiece in three years after beating Brandon Nakashima in straight sets in an all-American semi-final on Saturday.

Tiafoe defeated Nakashima 7-5, 6-3 in one hour and 43 minutes in the final four and is now chasing his biggest career title in the final against Arthur Fils.

It was a topsy-turvy first set that featured four consecutive breaks of play between the third and sixth games.

Nakashima had twice cancelled out Tiafoe's advantage and had the chance to take the first set after going 5-4 up, but he saw three set points go begging on the American's serve.

Tiafoe then earned another break before converting his first set point to grab the lead.

The 28-year-old did not let an advantage slip through his hands in the second set, though, as he reeled off three straight games to take a 4-2 lead before breaking to love to seal the match.

"It feels pretty damn good," Tiafoe said when asked about how it feels to be in the final.

"I'm really happy with it. It's been a great week and a great weekend, unexpectedly, so I'm super happy."

Tiafoe will face Fils for the trophy, with the Frenchman set to play in his first-ever ATP Masters 1000 championship match.

Fils secured a statement 6-3, 6-4 victory over Flavio Cobolli in 68 minutes, despite a long lightning delay before the match.

Tiafoe and Fils both chasing biggest career win

It is set to be an intriguing final,

with Tiafoe set to contest just his second Masters 1000 final - after Cincinnati in 2024 - while this is Fils' first, having never reached the final two above ATP 500 level.

Only Alexander Zverev (46) and Jannik Sinner (44) have claimed more ATP-level main draw wins than Tiafoe (37) this season.

He is also the first player since the format's introduction in 1990 to reach his first two ATP Masters 1000 finals in Cincinnati.

Tiafoe is the third American man this century to reach multiple Cincinnati finals, alongside Andy Roddick (2003, 2005-06) and Mardy Fish (2003, 2010).

As for Fils, he is the third-youngest French player to reach the final of an ATP 1000 event since the format's introduction, older only than Sebastien Grosjean and Richard Gasquet. - Agencies

CINCINNATI WTA

Pegula rallies to beat Swiatek, sets up title clash with Gauff

CINCINNATI: Jessica Pegula came from a break down in the final set to defeat Iga Swiatek 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 and secure a spot in the final of the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Masters on Saturday.

The world No.3 secured her victory in close to three hours, knocking out the defending champion Swiatek in the process.

She will now face American Coco Gauff, who ended the dream run of unseeded Czech Sara Bencik in the other semi-final 6-4, 6-1, for the title.

Having traded the opening two sets in a rain-affected opening, the Pole Swiatek claimed a 3-1 lead early in the third set. Pegula, however, refused to accept defeat and clawed her way back to 4-4 before holding her nerve to break in the following game.

Pegula won the match that lasted almost three hours.

Pegula-Gauff will contest the



first all-American women's final in Cincinnati in 56 years.

Rosie Casals beat Nancy Richey in the 1970 final.

Pegula said: "I felt like we were playing well at times and then not playing well at times, so it was really tough to get a gauge on the match."

"Sometimes there's matches like that where you just see a lot

of breaks back and forth, and I just kept telling myself to not get too upset about it. "It is a little emotionally draining."

"It was a really tough match. She (Swiatek) is in great form. To beat someone who is such a great athlete like Iga in the semis and to make it to another 1000 final, it's awesome," Pegula said after the match. - Agencies

Serena to play with Alcaraz at the US Open

NEW YORK: Serena Williams will team up with Carlos Alcaraz to create a powerhouse mixed doubles pair in her return to the US Open.

The US Tennis Association announced on Saturday that Serena and Alcaraz had been given a wild card into the tournament. The mixed doubles main draw begins on Tuesday, with the winning team sharing \$1 million.

It will be Serena's first time playing at the US Open since 2022. The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion re-



turned to tennis this summer.

"Let's gooooo!" Alcaraz posted on X, with a fire emoji and tagging Serena.

Serena is not planning to play singles in New York. The USTA had been holding one women's wild card, presum-

ably in case Serena wanted it. However, the tournament announced on Saturday that it had been given to American Sofia Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open champion.

Serena played singles at Wimbledon but sustained a knee injury in her first-round loss. She played doubles with older sister Venus at the Cincinnati Open. Alcaraz announced this week he would return to defend his US Open singles title after being sidelined since April with a right wrist injury. - Agencies

BMW GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Clark pulls away for 5-shot lead at Bellerive over McIlroy and Cantlay



ST. LOUIS: Wyndham Clark was doing everything right until it all went wrong on Saturday at the BMW Golf Championship. Just not for long.

Bogey-free through 36 holes, he went from the bunker left of the fairway to the right rough on the opening hole at Bellerive. He came up short of the green, chipped to 7 feet and missed the putt, taking a double bogey that cost him the lead.

The conversation on the second tee included a few choice words and a message from his caddie to embrace the challenge and move on. Clark wound up finding an-

other gear. He had five birdies in an eight-hole stretch and turned a bad start into a big lead.

Even closing with a bogey, Clark had a 5-under 65 and a five-shot lead. "Hit a bad shot on 2, but then really made a nice recovery and then got into a nice groove after that," Clark said.

It was the second time this year Clark has led by at least five shots going into the final round. He had a six-shot advantage at the US Open and held on to win by one for his second major.

Rory McIlroy ran off three straight birdies late in the round

and saved par from a bunker on the 18th for a 65. Patrick Cantlay birdied the 18th for a 66. They were tied for second, a position far more relevant to Cantlay. He is at No. 43 in the FedEx Cup and needs a high finish to be among the top 30 who advance to the FedEx Cup finale next week in Atlanta.

"That's a lot to make up," McIlroy said of his deficit. "But if I focus on myself, try to shoot a good score - I shot a 64 and a 65 this week - shoot something similar tomorrow, you never know."

Gary Woodland, trying to cap off his remarkable year with a return

to the Tour Championship, only managed two birdies in a round of 70. Otherwise, the final round is a matter of who gets to East Lake in Atlanta, where all 30 players only have to win to claim the FedEx Cup and the \$10 million payoff.

Justin Thomas took a step back with a 71, leaving him in a tie for 15th. Sungjae Im shot 70 and was alone in seventh. Ben Griffin shot a 68 but was still tied for 35th, jeopardising his chances of being on the US team at Medinah next month. Scottie Scheffler shot 68 and was tied for 15th, 12 shots out of the lead. - Agencies

Nama Water Services drives major sustainability agenda by embedding ESG principles across its operations

The approach is designed to support the transition towards a more efficient, resilient and sustainable water sector, while keeping pace with global trends that increasingly connect the management of critical infrastructure with climate priorities, economic development and long-term sustainability

MUSCAT: Amid accelerating global shifts driven by climate change and the growing imperative to safeguard natural resources, water is increasingly emerging as a strategic resource closely linked to economic resilience, urban stability, sustainable growth and community wellbeing.

Against this backdrop, Nama Water Services (NWS) is advancing a new operating model that brings water, sustainability and

technology closer together by embedding Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles into its operations and corporate decision-making.

The approach is designed to support the transition towards a more efficient, resilient and sustainable water sector, while keeping pace with global trends that increasingly connect the management of critical infrastructure with climate priorities, economic development



and long-term sustainability.

The company's sustainability strategy is aligned with the Global Reporting Initiative standards. NWS is also implementing a phased roadmap extending to 2027, focused on developing frameworks and policies, strengthening operational integration and driving continuous improvement, with the longer-term objective of enhancing the company's readiness for internationally recognised sustainability and governance ratings.

Eng. Ahmed bin Rashid Al
Khamisi, Chief Executive Officer of
Business Assurance and Excellence,

said water could no longer be viewed merely as an operational resource.

“Water has become a strategic resource directly linked to economic resilience, sustainable cities and community wellbeing. Against this backdrop, Nama Water Services continues to integrate ESG principles across its operations and strategic decision-making, strengthening its future readiness and supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040,” he said.

“For NWS, these principles represent an integrated approach to resource management and the creation of sustainable value for

society, the economy and the environment. Sustainability is a day-to-day practice whose impact is felt today while extending its benefits to future generations.”

Al Khamisi said innovation remains central to the company's sustainability journey, with NWS increasingly leveraging data, artificial intelligence and advanced technologies across its operations.

“As part of our approach to harnessing innovation for sustainability, we are developing a more intelligent operating ecosystem powered by data and artificial intelligence, while deploying advanced technologies across our operations. This reflects a vision that sees water as a long-term investment in a more secure and resilient future,” he said.

"As digital solutions expand across our operations, data is becoming a key driver of decision-making and more efficient resource management, strengthening operational resilience, enhancing infrastructure readiness and enabling the company to anticipate and respond to future challenges more effectively."

NWS has also developed and

launched a Sustainable Finance Framework, one of the company's key initiatives supporting its broader sustainability ambitions. The framework enables the company to access sustainable financing instruments, including green, blue and social bonds and sukuk, to support projects that generate positive environmental and social outcomes and create sustainable economic and developmental value.

Al Khamisi said NWS is among the first companies under the Oman Investment Authority to develop an integrated Sustainable Finance Framework, strengthening its position within Oman's and the region's evolving sustainable finance landscape and supporting its ability to attract sustainability-linked investment.

"This direction is aligned with our long-term vision, which looks beyond infrastructure projects themselves. We see these investments as long-term commitments to resource security, sustainable cities and community wellbeing, while strengthening water security and safeguarding the continuity of essential services for future generations," he added.

PREMIUM DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS OMAN

BankDhofar expands homeownership opportunities for expatriates with housing loans starting from 4.15% interest

MUSCAT: BankDhofar is widening access to property ownership in Oman with competitive housing finance solutions designed to enable both resident and non-resident expatriates to purchase homes and investment properties in eligible Integrated Tourism Complexes (ITCs) and other premium developments across the Sultanate.

Under its Housing Loan for Expatriates, BankDhofar offers financing of up to OMR350,000, with interest rates starting from 4.15%, for eligible properties in ITC projects registered with the bank and approved by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning for sale to non-Omanis.

The facility can finance up to 70% of the property's value, with repayment periods extending to 20 years, making ownership more accessible to expatriates seeking to establish a long-term stake in Oman.

The financing covers a broad spectrum of residential options, including apartments, condominiums, villas and other qualifying residential units, giving customers the flexibility to select properties that match their lifestyle, investment objectives and financial capacity. The bank has also expanded its real-estate financing proposition to include properties under construction and off-plan projects through arrangements with developers of integrated residential communities.

The initiative comes as Oman accelerates the development of a new generation of integrated, lifestyle-oriented communities combining residential, tourism, leisure and commercial facilities. Established ITCs such as Al Mouj Muscat, Muscat Hills and Jebel Sifah, alongside major developments including AIDA and emerging master-planned communities, are expanding the range of high-quality properties available to eligible non-Omani buyers.

At the same time, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning is advancing a pipeline of integrated urban and residential developments aimed at creating more livable communities, attracting investment and supporting sustainable urban growth.

Together, these initiatives are reshaping Oman's real-estate landscape and creating new avenues for individuals and investors to participate in the coun-

try's long-term development.

BankDhofar's housing finance offering complements these national priorities by helping translate the availability of eligible property into a practical ownership opportunity. For expatriates who live and work in Oman, the facility provides a route to put down longer-term roots in the country; for eligible buyers, it offers an avenue to invest in a market benefiting from expanding tourism, infrastructure and economic diversification.

The proposition also reflects Oman's wider ambition to attract international capital and talent by making the Sultanate an increasingly attractive destination not only to visit or work, but also to live, own and invest. By providing housing financing for qualifying ITC properties, BankDhofar is supporting expatriates become participants in Oman's next phase of economic and urban development.

BankDhofar is the second-largest bank in terms of branch network in the Sultanate of Oman, with more than 145 branches strategically located across the country. Through its extensive network, the Bank offers a wide range of banking solutions tailored to serve all segments of society, including women, youth, children, minors, and high-net-worth individuals. In addition, BankDhofar also provides specialized wealth management services for its affluent clients and their families, ensuring that their assets are managed securely, prudently, and with the highest level of confidentiality.



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