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HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN RETURNS HOME



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik returned home yesterday evening, following a private visit to the United Kingdom. May the Almighty Allah grant His Majesty success and guide him toward all that brings goodness and prosperity.

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Oman launches tourism promotion campaign across London taxis and buses

MUSCAT: Oman has renewed its presence in the British capital London as part of an international tourism promotion campaign aimed at strengthening the Sultanate's position as a leading travel destination in one of the world's most important tourism markets.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is implementing an outdoor advertising campaign featuring Oman's tourism identity across 100 taxis and 100 buses in London, showcasing the country's diverse attractions and unique experiences to millions of residents, commuters and visitors.

The campaign highlights Oman's varied tourism offerings, including its natural landscapes, cultural heritage, adventure experiences, coastal destinations, mountains, deserts and traditional hospitality.

The initiative forms part of the Ministry's efforts to increase Oman's visibility in key international markets, attract more visi-



tors and promote the Sultanate as a year-round destination.

The United Kingdom remains one of Oman's priority tourism

markets, with strong historical, cultural and economic ties between the two countries. London's global connectivity and status as a major tourism hub make it a strategic platform for reaching international travellers.

Through the campaign, Oman aims to inspire visitors to explore the country's heritage sites, scenic landscapes and authentic experiences while supporting the growth of the tourism sector in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040

ON 24 OCTOBER

Dhofar to host Middle East Ironman 70.3 teams championship

SALALAH: Acting in cooperation with the Ironman Group and the Middle East Global Events company, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism today held a press conference during which it announced that "Middle East Ironman 70.3 Championship for Teams" will be held in Dhofar Governorate on 24 October 2026. The championship constitutes part of "Experience Oman Ironman 70.3 Dhofar 2026" race being held in partnership with Hawana Salalah Resort, in conjunction with individual run competitions.

The race consists of three stages: A 1.9-km swim, a 90-km bike ride and a 21.1-km run. Individual racers take all three stages on their own, while team members share the race stages before coming together to cross the finish line.

Haitham bin Mohammed Al Ghassani, Director General of



Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said that launching the first Ironman 70.3 Championship for Teams, at the level of the Middle East, represents a new milestone in the Sultanate of Oman's march to es-

tablish its status as a global destination for sports tourism.

"The event embodies the success of the strategic partnership between the Ministry and Ironman Group in hosting international sporting events. The

championship also contributes to diversifying tourism activity, increasing the number of visitors and maximizing economic revenue across different sectors," Al Ghassani explained.

He added that the championship is in pursuance of the Ministry's strategy aimed at attracting high-quality international tourism events that keep in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

For his part, Talal bin Hamid Al Khasaibi, Director General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate, said that hosting the championship stems from joint efforts to enhance the governorate's position as an attractive tourist destination throughout the year.

Al Khasaibi pointed out that the championship provides an opportunity to showcase Dhofar Governorate's natural and cultural assets

and unique tourism experiences. The event makes participation in the event an experience that goes beyond sports competition to supporting the tourism sector through high demand for hotel and tourism services.

Mohammed bin Khalfan Al Obaidani, CEO of Middle East International Events foundation, also underlined the significance of "Experience Oman Ironman 70.3 Championship for Teams--Dhofar".

The championship, he said, provides a new opportunity to participate in global Ironman races and allows wider segments of athletes and amateurs to experience team spirit. Al Obaidani added that the championship provides a platform for public and private establishments to form teams to represent them. — **ONA**

OMAN BRACES FOR HOTTER DAYS, LOWER RAINFALL IN AUGUST

The outlook follows a warmer-than-normal July across much of Oman, the CAA said

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman is expected to experience above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall during August 2026, according to the latest seasonal outlook issued by the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre.

The August seasonal bulletin forecasts that rainfall across the Sultanate is likely to remain below the long-term climatic average, while temperatures are expected to stay higher than normal throughout the country.

The CAA said the bulletin forms part of its Seasonal Expec-



tations for the Current Month and the Coming Months (August–September–October 2026), providing an early indication of expected weather patterns over the longer term.

The authority explained that the seasonal bulletins are issued every month as a preliminary outlook to provide an initial picture of expected weather conditions in the coming months. However, it stressed that these

forecasts do not replace the importance of following short- and medium-range weather bulletins, which provide more detailed and updated information for day-to-day planning.

The monthly seasonal outlook is intended to help government agencies, businesses and the public prepare for anticipated climatic conditions while complementing, rather than replacing, regular weather forecasts.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Labour market issues reviewed

1 Legislative and regulatory procedures related to the labour market, developing mechanisms for drafting ministerial decisions, raising the efficiency of the legal system, and enhancing governance and transparency principles was discussed by the Ministry of Labour on Tuesday at the Labour Forum 2026 in Salalah. **A2**

OMAN Governor of Dhofar meets Shura members

2 HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, emphasised the importance of enhancing partnership and integration with various work sectors and community institutions, as well as benefiting from the views and proposals of Shura Council members to support development efforts. **A4**

MARKET Electricity generation in Oman rises by 5.7%

3 Electricity generation in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 5.7% during the period from January to June 2026, reaching 26,075.3 GWh, compared with 24,676.6 GWh during the corresponding period in 2025, according to the latest preliminary data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). **B1**

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MUSCAT







Legislative, regulatory procedures related to labour market reviewed

Experts from the Ministry of Labour and other government units, alongside representatives from the private sector and relevant entities, are participating in the two laboratories

SALALAH: The Ministry of Labour organised on Tuesday in the Wilayat of Salalah two laboratories: “Governance of Legislative Procedures and Ministerial Decisions” and “Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Sector,” as part of the activities of the third edition of the Labour Forum 2026.

A number of officials, specialists, and experts from the Ministry of Labour and other government units, alongside representatives from the private sector and relevant entities, are participating in the two laboratories.

Nasser Salim Al Hadhrami, Director General of the Directorate General of Labour in Dhofar Governorate, delivered a speech in which he emphasised the importance of governance in developing administrative and legislative procedures, and its role in enhancing



ing transparency, simplifying procedures, raising decision quality, and achieving integration among various organisational units and partner entities, thereby contributing to providing a more stable and attractive work environment and achieving a balance between the rights and duties of the parties of production.

The two laboratories will continue over two days with the goal of reviewing several strategic files, anticipating challenges, and formulating practical, applicable solutions based on a participatory methodology that brings together experts, specialists, decision-makers, and representatives of government entities and the private sector.

The Governance of Legislative Procedures and Ministerial Decisions Laboratory focused on reviewing legislative and regulatory procedures related to the labour market, developing mechanisms for drafting ministerial decisions, raising the efficiency of the legal

system, and enhancing governance and transparency principles, thereby contributing to simplifying procedures, accelerating completion, raising service quality, and achieving integration among relevant entities, which positively reflects on the business and investment environment.

The laboratory featured the presentation of a working paper titled “Regulatory Bylaw for the Labour System in Oil and Gas Field Areas,” presented by Dawood Sulaiman Al Hinai, Director of the Legal Department at the Ministry of Labour. During the presentation, he reviewed the legal frameworks governing work in these areas, the most prominent challenges associated with implementing the bylaw, alongside several proposals aimed at developing regulatory procedures, enhancing compliance with legislation, and achieving a balance between economic development requirements and protecting the rights of the parties of production.

The laboratory also addressed the “Devolution” agreement, reviewing the legal and procedural aspects governing this type of agreement, implementation mechanisms, and their impact on regulating the transfer of obligations and rights among relevant entities, while discussing best practices that enhance legislative clarity and limit practical challenges.

On the other hand, the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Sector Laboratory discussed ways to develop the sector as one of the promising economic sectors by reviewing investment opportunities, analysing challenges facing its growth, and examining mechanisms to enhance its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP), diversify income sources, and create sustainable job opportunities.

Huda Humaid Al Shibli, Director of Labour Market Studies, and Al Mirdas Hilal Al Ma’ani, Director of Statistics, presented a working paper addressing the sector’s



current reality, necessary foundations for its development, and the importance of building a regulatory and legislative framework supportive of investment and innovation, contributing to raising the sector’s competitiveness and enhancing its presence in the national economy.

Panel discussions

The proceedings of the two laboratories continued through panel discussions and specialised working groups, during which participants discussed key legislative, regulatory, and sectoral challenges, analysing their causes and effects before moving on to formulate solutions, initiatives, and recommendations according to a scientific methodology based on diagnosis, analysis, and foresight, ensuring the preparation of actionable outputs with a sustainable impact.

On the second day, the working groups are scheduled to present their outputs, discuss proposed recommendations, and evaluate their impact prior to adopting them as part of the labour market laboratories’ outcomes, thereby contributing to developing the legislative system, enhancing procedure governance, supporting the

growth of the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, raising institutional performance efficiency, improving the business environment, and boosting labour market competitiveness.

These laboratories come as an extension of the Ministry of Labour’s approach in adopting participatory working methods, engaging stakeholders in studying priority issues, and transforming challenges into development opportunities through institutional dialogue. This contributes to building more efficient and flexible policies and legislation and enhancing the contribution of new economic sectors to development, in line with the targets of Oman Vision 2040 and the next phase’s requirements for modern legislation and regulatory procedures capable of keeping pace with economic, social, and technological transformations.

It is worth noting that the labor market laboratories are part of the activities of the Labour Forum 2026, organised by the Ministry of Labor under the slogan “A Nation’s Vision: Empowerment and Action,” which continues until 13 August.

— ONA

ROYAL OMAN POLICE



1 killed and 4 injured in Bidbid car crash

MUSCAT: One person was killed and four others were injured in a road accident in the Wilayat of Bidbid after a vehicle overturned and veered off the road, the Royal Oman Police (ROP) said.

The ROP Air Wing carried out a medical evacuation opera-

tion, transporting the body of the deceased Omani citizen to a nearby hospital.

The four injured Omani citizens were taken by Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority teams to Nizwa Hospital and Khoula Hospital to receive the necessary treatment.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND YOUTH

Specialised medical testing facility for athletes inaugurated

This initiative by Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth enhances the quality of medical care and consolidates the concepts of prevention and health safety within the sports sector



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, represented by the Department of Medicine and Sports Science, inaugurated the Medical and Testing Laboratory, signalling the start of its operations and the provision of its services within the medical screening programme for athletes.

This step enhances the quality of medical care and consolidates the concepts of prevention and health safety within the sports sector.

The operation of the laboratory comes after completing the stages of preparation and equipment to provide medical and laboratory testing services according to integrated scientific procedures. These services aim to evaluate the health status of players prior to participating in training programs and competitions, thereby contributing to enhancing their safety, detecting health problems early, and reducing the risks of injuries and complications associated with athletic activity.

The laboratory represents a specialised national platform for sports medical examination services. Its services launch by examining promising (elite) players, and will sequentially cover all athletes registered in sports associa-

tions and committees across various sports, within the framework of the Ministry’s efforts to unify medical screening procedures and elevate the quality of health services provided to athletes.

A player’s journey inside the laboratory begins with taking an accurate medical history, followed by performing essential vital measurements, which include measuring blood pressure, heart rate, height, weight, and body mass index (BMI). This is followed by a clinical examination conducted by the physician, alongside an electrocardiogram (ECG), leading up to comprehensive laboratory tests, ensuring an integrated medical evaluation of the health status and medical fitness of each player.

The operation of the laboratory highlights the pivotal role of allied medical personnel, where the nurse

receives the players, documents their medical history, and performs initial vital signs measurements, while the laboratory technician draws blood samples and conducts laboratory tests in accordance with approved professional standards, ensuring the accuracy and swift completion of results while enhancing the efficiency of the medical screening system.

The opening of the laboratory is an important step in the journey of developing sports medicine services at the Ministry by providing an integrated medical screening system in a single location, contributing to saving time and effort, elevating the quality of health services, and enhancing the efficiency of medical follow-up programmes for athletes in accordance with best practices and approved standards in the field of sports medicine. — ONA

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COMMENTARY

Before You Make Me Rich: How Rich Are You, Really?

Every day, someone promises to make you rich. Open YouTube, scroll through social media, attend a seminar, or browse a bookstore, and you will quickly find countless people claiming they possess the secret formula for financial success.

Some promise that you can become a millionaire within a year. Others insist that financial freedom is only one investment, one online business, or one course away. Before I accept any of these promises, however, allow me to ask a simple question: How rich are you, really? And perhaps an even more important question follows: What does it actually mean to be rich?

Let us begin with honesty. If we cannot honestly define wealth, then every conversation about becoming rich loses its meaning. How much money is enough? Is one million dollars enough? Ten million? One hundred million? Or does the definition of "enough" continue to change every time our income increases?

Throughout history, human desire has rarely been satisfied by numbers alone. As economists explain through the principle of diminishing marginal utility, the first achievement often brings tremendous happiness, while every additional gain produces a smaller sense of satisfaction. The first home changes your life; the fifth home may only change your maintenance expenses.

Today, the internet has become the world's largest marketplace, not only for products but also for dreams. Every minute, thousands of videos, blogs, podcasts, websites, and coaching programs promise to transform ordinary people into extraordinary millionaires.

Some educators genuinely share valuable knowledge, practical financial skills, and years of experience. Their contribution deserves appreciation.

Unfortunately, there is also a rapidly growing industry that profits more from selling the dream of becoming rich than from actually creating wealth itself. Ironically, some individuals earn far more by teaching others how to become wealthy than by practicing the very strategies they promote.

This reality should encourage us to pause and think critically. The American economist Thorstein Veblen introduced the idea of conspicuous consumption, describing how people often purchase expensive goods not because they need them, but because they wish to display their social status.

More than a century later, social media has amplified this phenomenon beyond imagi-



nation. Luxury cars, designer watches, exotic holidays, private jets, and impressive offices fill our screens every day. Yet appearances can be deceiving. Some of these lifestyles represent genuine success, while others are carefully staged performances designed to attract attention, followers, and ultimately, customers.

In today's digital economy, attention itself has become a valuable currency. More views generate more advertising revenue. More followers create greater influence. Greater influence sells more courses, subscriptions, coaching sessions, and investment programmes. The appearance of wealth has itself become a profitable business. Consequently, we must ask ourselves an uncomfortable question: are we pursuing real wealth, or are we simply chasing the appearance of being wealthy?

Capitalism has undoubtedly created extraordinary opportunities. Never before in history has it been easier to start a business, learn new skills, invest globally, or build a career from a laptop.

These opportunities should be celebrated. At the same time, capitalism also rewards marketing, branding, and perception. Sometimes perception grows much faster than reality. A person with excellent marketing skills may appear richer than someone who has patiently built genuine wealth over several decades through disciplined saving and investing.

Real wealth rarely makes loud announcements. It grows quietly through patience, consistency, knowledge, and disciplined decision-making. Warren Buffett did not become one of the world's wealthiest individuals by chasing shortcuts or overnight success. His remarkable fortune was built through decades of careful investing, long-term thinking, and the extraordinary power of compound growth. His story reminds us that wealth is not a sprint but a marathon.

Perhaps our definition of wealth itself needs to change. True wealth is not simply measured by the balance in a

bank account or the price of a luxury car. It is the freedom to make choices without constant financial anxiety. It is living below your means rather than beyond them. It is having savings for unexpected emergencies, educating your children, caring for your parents, supporting charitable causes, and sleeping peacefully without worrying about tomorrow's bills. A schoolteacher with modest earnings, no debt, healthy savings, and a peaceful family life may be far wealthier than someone earning ten times more while struggling under enormous loans and endless financial pressure.

There is another trap that deserves our attention. Social media encourages us to compare our ordinary lives with other people's carefully edited highlights. We compare our reality with their performance. We compare our beginning with someone else's apparent destination. Such comparisons quietly steal gratitude, confidence, and contentment, replacing them with unnecessary dissatisfaction and endless consumption.

Before anyone promises to make you rich, ask one simple question: "What is your definition of wealth?"

If the answer revolves only around money, luxury, and material possessions, listen carefully but remain cautious. However, if the answer includes wisdom, integrity, knowledge, discipline, generosity, financial responsibility, and inner peace, then perhaps you have found someone worth learning from.

The richest people are not always those who possess the most. Often, they are those who know when they have enough, who live with purpose rather than appearance, who create value rather than illusion, and who understand that money is an excellent servant but a terrible master.

Before you teach me how to become rich, first teach me how to become wise. Wealth built upon wisdom lasts for generations; wealth built upon illusion disappears as quickly as the applause that once celebrated it.

HM SENDS WRITTEN MESSAGE TO RWANDAN PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a written message to President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda, pertaining to the bilateral relations between the two friendly nations. The message was handed over by Nasra Salim Al Hashmi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Rwanda, when President Kagame received her at the Rwandan capital, Kigali.. — ONA



EVENT

Jashn-E-Shaam to bring Raman Kapoor's Live Sufi & Bollywood concert to Muscat

MUSCAT: Music lovers in Oman are set for an evening of soulful melodies and high-energy entertainment as Venture Entertainment and ORO Events present Jashn-E-Shaam, a live Sufi and Bollywood musical extravaganza featuring renowned Indian singer Raman Kapoor and his troupe.

The concert will be held on Friday, August 14, 2026, from 7:00 pm onwards at The Grand Sphere, Al Falaj Hotel, Ruwi, promising audiences a memorable celebration of music, culture and live performance.

Recognised for his powerful voice and engaging stage presence, Raman Kapoor has gained popularity through his performances in Sufi, Bollywood and Punjabi music. A former contestant on India's television music reality shows Sa Re Ga Ma Pa and Rising Star, Kapoor has performed extensively across India and internationally, earning acclaim for his ability to blend soulful classics with contemporary favourites.

The Muscat concert will feature a carefully curated repertoire of timeless Sufi compositions, Bollywood hits, ghazals and energetic live performances, accompanied by a talented troupe of musicians. Organisers say the production has been designed to offer audiences a premium live entertainment experience while celebrating the richness of Indian



The organisers added that the event reflects the growing demand in Oman for high-quality live entertainment and cultural experiences, with Jashn-E-Shaam expected to attract music enthusiasts from across the Sultanate.

Tickets are now available at platinum list, with organisers encouraging early bookings due to anticipated demand.

Event Details

Event: Jashn-E-Shaam – Live Sufi & Bollywood Extravaganza
Artist: Raman Kapoor & Troupe
Date: Friday, August 14, 2026
Time: 7:00 pm onwards
Venue: The Grand Sphere, Al Falaj Hotel, Ruwi, Muscat
Organised by: Venture Entertainment & ORO Events
For ticket bookings, sponsorship opportunities and media enquiries, contact . 72229542



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DURING KHAREEF DHOFAR FESTIVAL



Salalah to organise Omani Traditional Games Season

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani Traditional Games Season 2026, organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, will begin on August 13th at Al-Dahariz Beach in Salalah. The event coincides with the Khareef Dhofar Festival 2026. It will run for three days.

The event aims to promote cultural and sporting awareness by introducing visitors to Oman's heritage, represented by traditional games and sports.

It also seeks to revitalise local communities through interactive activities that contribute to preserving these games, their concepts, and their methods of practice.

Furthermore, it aims to support the tourism sector by offering a unique event within the Khareef Dhofar Festival, thus contributing to attracting tourists to the region.

Sultan bin Saeed Al Sinani, Head of the Traditional Sports Department at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, said that that the Omani Traditional Games Season event comes within the framework of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to pre-

serve cultural and civilizational components and enhance inter-generational communication by preserving traditional games that reflect the depth of history and form a pillar of national identity. The Sultanate of Oman continues to exert diligent efforts to ensure the continuity of this heritage and its transmission to future generations.

"This event contributes to supporting the concept of sports tourism by offering an integrated experience that combines cultural heritage and sporting activities, thus enhancing visitor attraction and stimulating tourism. It also reinforces the concepts of environmental sustainability through the practice of traditional games that harmonise with the local environment."

Al Sinani pointed out that this idea involves implementing an event at the level of clubs in the Dhofar Governorate, coinciding with the Khareef Dhofar Season 2026, with the aim of providing an interactive experience showcasing various types of Omani traditional games, along with daily accompanying activities for the public that aim to enrich the experience and strengthen

national identity.

He explained that this year's event will feature the participation of clubs from Dhofar, Al-Nasr, Salalah, Mirbat, Taqah, and Al-Ittihad, all from the Dhofar Governorate.

The tournament will consist of three games included in the traditional games book. Each team will have eight players, a coach, and a manager.

The tournament will be played in a group stage format, with the teams divided into two groups of three clubs each, or in a league format for all six clubs, with each club playing either three or two games.

He further explained that the event includes several sections: an interactive field area for practicing and experiencing traditional games suitable for the ages of the participants; a mini-exhibition featuring photographs, paintings, and explanatory notes about traditional games; a refereeing workshop offering training in judging traditional Omani sports; and various accompanying sections designed for families and visitors to create a comprehensive recreational and educational environment.

DISCUSSION



Governor of Dhofar meets Shura Council members

SALALAH: HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, emphasised the importance of enhancing partnership and integration with various work sectors and community institutions, as well as benefiting from the views and proposals of Shura Council members to support development efforts in the governorate.

This came during a meeting on Tuesday at the Office of the Governor of Dhofar between the Governor and the Shura Council members representing the governorate's wilayats, in the presence of Dr. Ahmed Mohsin Al Ghasani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, and several officials from the governorate.

At the outset of the meeting, the Governor explained that the governorate adopts the principle of partnership and continuous coordination with various entities and societal groups, paying great attention to the ideas and proposals presented by Council members as an important supporter for the governorate's development process.

The meeting reviewed several introductory presentations. The first addressed key aspects related to service affairs in Dhofar Governorate during the first half of 2026, while the second presentation reviewed the work and achievements of the Governorate's Municipal Council during its third term. The third pres-

At the outset of the meeting, the Governor explained that the governorate adopts the principle of partnership and continuous coordination with various entities and societal groups, paying great attention to the ideas and proposals presented by Council members as an important supporter for the governorate's development process

entation covered the initiatives, achievements, and projects executed and planned by Dhofar Municipality during the current year.

The meeting also included a visual presentation on the Comprehensive Strategy for Dhofar Governorate, which is based on six main pillars: human resource development, promoting economic diversification, improving the business and investment environment, sustainable urban planning and humanising cities, social and cultural development, and environmental sustainability.

Participants also viewed a presentation on key Dhofar Municipality projects, which included road and lighting projects, the "Shaht Viewpoint" project, alongside pro-

jects for rehabilitating and beautifying several heritage and tourist sites, as well as other executed and ongoing projects across various wilayats of the governorate.

The meeting witnessed an extensive discussion during which views, ideas, and proposals were exchanged between the Governor of Dhofar, the Shura Council members and governorate officials.

The discussion covered a number of topics related to development and service affairs, with participants emphasising the importance of continuing the approach of integration and coordination among various entities to enhance the execution of development projects and meet citizens' needs and aspirations. — **ONA**

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إعلان مناقصة
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The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tender:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
102/2026/ MTCIT/ HO-14	KASPERSKY Antivirus Renewal and Technical Support Services	3-8-2026	12-8-2026	1-9-2026	LOCAL COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority (ALL GRADES)	(25/-) TWENTY-FIVE OMANI RIAL FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMPANIES (10/-) TEN OMANI RIAL (FOR SME) NON-REFUNDABL

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Internal Tenders Committee

GULF HOTELS (OMAN) COMPANY LIMITED SAOG
P O Box: 1455, P C 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman
C.R. No. 1059459

DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE HALF YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2026

Dear Shareholders,

The company has recorded total revenue of **3.581 Million** (30th June 2025: **3.627 Million**) and net profit after tax of **0.126 Million** (30th June 2025: net profit after tax **0.379 Million**) for the six months period ended 30th June 2026.

During the period under review the total revenue saw a decrease of 1.27% and net profit after tax a decrease of 66.75% as compared to the same period last year. This was mainly due to higher depreciation and finance cost related to the room renovation project carried out in second half of 2025.

The conflict in GCC region which started by end-February 2026 has significantly impacted the tourism sector and resulted in significant decrease in occupancy, room rates and revenue. The executive management has implemented various cost savings initiatives to mitigate the impact on profitability and cash flow.

The continued escalation of conflict has impacted travel and tourism, leading to cancellations of hotel bookings. We believe this could result in lower revenue and profitability of the company for the year 2026. While this is a difficult period for the company and tourism sector, we remain hopeful for an early resolution of the conflict and resumption of normalcy.

We express our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq Al Said for His Majesty's inspiring leadership and wise policies. We pray to the Almighty Allah to bless His Majesty with good health and strength to lead our nation to progress and prosperity. We would also like to thank the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for implementing right policies to encourage growth in tourism sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

Ali Ahmed Al Najjar
Chairman

Note:
The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder or other interested party, who requests them either in Arabic or English, within 7 days from the receipt of request at company's address: Gulf Hotels (Oman) Co. Ltd. SAOG, P O Box: 1455, P C 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

INCOME STATEMENT AND STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SIX MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	3 months period from 01.04.2026 to 30.06.2026	3 months period from 01.04.2025 to 30.06.2025	6 months period from 01.01.2026 to 30.06.2026	6 months period from 01.01.2025 to 30.06.2025
Revenue	1,087,036	1,255,962	3,580,705	3,626,669
Cost of materials consumed	(203,953)	(184,530)	(588,976)	(591,355)
Service expenses	(246,095)	(274,089)	(581,313)	(618,833)
Employee benefit expenses	(569,124)	(608,536)	(1,307,793)	(1,285,002)
Depreciation	(203,326)	(108,528)	(408,374)	(217,918)
Other operating expenses	(215,349)	(205,793)	(500,619)	(492,308)
Profit (loss) from operating activities	(350,811)	(125,514)	193,630	421,253
Other income	3,709	6,750	3,709	6,750
Finance income	8,492	8,078	23,530	21,770
Finance cost	(37,178)	(895)	(73,931)	(895)
Provision for ECL (reversal)	512	(1,020)	354	(524)
Profit (loss) before income tax	(375,276)	(112,601)	147,292	448,354
Income tax and deferred tax	58,803	15,057	(21,338)	(69,166)
Net Profit (loss) for the period	(316,473)	(97,544)	125,954	379,188
Total comprehensive income (loss)	(316,473)	(97,544)	125,954	379,188
Basic earnings per share	(0.092)	(0.028)	0.037	0.111

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

	30th June 2026	30th June 2025	31st December 2025
Assets:			
Non-current assets:			
Property plant and Equipment	31,207,380	29,355,308	31,561,606
Current assets:			
Inventory	76,034	44,283	72,092
Trade and other receivables	248,859	495,925	678,500
Cash and bank balances	1,213,847	1,637,139	1,744,219
Total current assets	1,538,740	2,177,347	2,494,811
Total assets	32,746,120	31,532,655	34,056,417
Equity and liabilities			
Equity			
Share capital	3,428,322	3,428,322	3,428,322
Share premium	58,574	58,574	58,574
Statutory reserve	1,142,774	1,142,774	1,142,774
Other reserve	18,619,520	18,619,520	18,619,520
Retained earnings	1,387,913	1,915,731	1,947,623
	24,637,103	25,164,921	25,196,813
Liabilities			
Non-current provisions and borrowings:			
Borrowings non-current	2,032,000	857,648	2,332,000
Staff terminal benefits	596,867	445,795	551,622
Deferred tax liabilities	3,785,441	3,690,849	3,764,639
	6,414,308	4,994,292	6,648,261
Current provisions and borrowings:			
Borrowings current	600,000	163,488	450,000
Trade and other payables	1,094,173	1,141,182	1,761,343
Current tax liabilities	536	68,772	-
	1,694,709	1,373,442	2,211,343
Total Liabilities	8,109,017	6,367,734	8,859,604
Total Equity and liabilities	32,746,120	31,532,655	34,056,417
Net Assets per share (R. O.)	7.186	7.340	7.350

KHAREEF SEASON IN FULL SWING:

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The Khareef season is now in full swing, transforming Salalah into one of the most breathtaking natural destinations in the Middle East. From now until the end of September, visitors can experience a rare seasonal phenomenon as refreshing rains blanket the region, mountains turn lush green, waterfalls cascade through the valleys, natural springs and lakes flourish, and mist-covered landscapes create an unforgettable escape unlike anywhere else in the region.

During Khareef, Salalah becomes a destination where nature comes alive. Rolling green hills, cool temperatures, dramatic cliffs, flowing waterfalls, crystal-clear natural pools, and clouds drifting through the mountains offer visitors an experience that feels worlds away from the desert landscapes typically associated with the Middle East. It is a destination where guests can find themselves walking through the mist, surrounded by clouds and endless greenery at every turn.

Located along the Arabian Sea, Hawana Salalah is the ideal destination from which to discover the beauty of Khareef while enjoying world-class hospitality, dining, and leisure experiences. Home to four distinctive hotels, Hawana Salalah offers accommodation to suit every type of traveller.

Guests can choose from the luxurious Salalah Rotana Resort,

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Beyond exceptional accommodation, visitors can enjoy a diverse collection of restaurants and cafés serving international and regional cuisine, beautiful beaches, marina experiences, family-friendly attractions, the fun-filled attraction Hawana Aqua Park, and a welcoming atmosphere that complements the natural beauty of the season.

With Khareef continuing until the end of September, now is the perfect time to plan a visit and witness one of the world's most remarkable seasonal transformations. The unique combination of cool weather, spectacular greenery, waterfalls, mountain views, and mist-covered landscapes makes Salalah a must-visit destination during this limited-time season.

Guests are encouraged to book now and take advantage of exclusive Khareef stay offers available at Hawana Salalah Hotels.

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Zelenskyy outlines major foreign policy and defence initiatives

Zelenskyy revealed that Ukraine possesses the missiles and mobile launchers for the FREYJA framework but requires specific European components and joint financing to operationalise the shield

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday outlined major foreign policy and defence initiatives during a key address to Ukraine's ambassadors, placing the development of FREYJA, a joint European anti-ballistic missile defence system, at the centre of Kyiv's regional security vision.

Sharing excerpts from his remarks in a discussion with the Ukrainian Ambassadors on X, Zelenskyy underscored the expansion of the Anti-Ballistic Coalition to complete FREYJA, a Ukrainian-led project aimed at creating a joint European missile defence shield.

Highlighting air defence as Ukraine's vital operational priority, Zelenskyy revealed that Ukraine possesses the missiles and mobile launchers for the FREYJA framework but requires specific European components and joint financing to operationalise the shield.

Addressing the strategic dynamics of Europe's multibillion-dollar military technology market, Zelen-



sky urged international defence partners to collaborate rather than compete, warning that Moscow will attempt to disrupt continental defence consolidation.

"The first track within the Anti-Ballistic Coalition is FREYJA. It should be our anti-ballistic system, open to the European partners who have helped us throughout this war and through all the challenges we have faced.

"We have the missiles and the launcher, but we're missing some components. We have brought together partner countries that have the specific elements we need. We are open to partners.

"We will need both crucial components for this system and funding. Countries that do not have the relevant production capabilities but currently have Patriot missiles - and provide them, investing those missiles in our ability to defend our skies - are very welcome to join

this Anti-Ballistic Coalition," he wrote.

"We understand that we are creating not only protection for Europe, but also a competition. There is Saab in Sweden, German companies, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon in the United States, and Leonardo, a very strong Italian company.

"We do not need competitors; we need those who will strengthen us and bring us closer together. When we speak about "systemic steps," politics is extremely important here," he added.

In addition to military integration, Zelenskyy announced the upcoming autumn launch of the "Carpathian Initiative".

Diplomatic framework

This diplomatic framework is designed to engage neighbouring European nations that prefer non-military cooperation pathways,

focusing instead on logistics, regional security, culture, tourism, and post-war reconstruction.

He said that the initiative targets a coalition of eight interconnected nations, including Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Austria, Slovakia, Czechia, Hungary, and Serbia. Zelenskyy further confirmed that top leadership at the European Council and European Commission endorsed the framework, with dedicated EU funding programs expected to follow.

"Why did this idea emerge? Because not all countries are ready to strengthen us with weapons, but they do want to stand with us on the humanitarian and security tracks and in the economic sphere. They are thinking about Ukraine's recovery," he said.

"The Carpathian Initiative brings together countries connected not only geopolitically and as neighbors. These are coun-

Iran says it was ready to attack Ukraine over Caspian Sea strikes

TEHRAN: Senior military adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader, Mohsen Rezaee, said that Tehran was prepared to launch strikes on targets inside Ukraine following an attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea, but suspended the planned operation after Kyiv claimed the incident had been "a mistake."

Senior adviser Mohsen Rezaee, who is also a former commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), made the remarks on Monday during a televised interview, saying Tehran had readied retaliatory action on three targets in Ukraine before deciding to pause.

"We were ready to attack three areas in Ukraine,"

Rezaee said, as quoted by Iranian state media Press TV, in reference to the Ukrainian strike on an Iranian vessel.

Rezaee further stated that Tehran paused its planned retaliation to assess Kyiv's explanation but maintained that compensation for the incident remained necessary.

"But after they claimed it was a mistake, we halted our response to examine their claim. Even if it was a mistake, it still requires compensation," he added, as quoted by Press TV.

This comes after Ukraine struck an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea on July 25, which claimed the life of one crew member, with Kyiv clarifying that the strike was "unintentional". -ANI

CODE YELLOW WAS ACTIVATED

7 passengers injured after turbulence hits Phuket-Delhi Air India flight

NEW DELHI: Seven passengers from the Air India Phuket-Delhi flight that encountered turbulence have been admitted to Fortis Hospital in Vasant Kunj for medical evaluation and treatment, the hospital said on Tuesday.

According to the hospital, the passengers arrived at the Emergency Department (ER) following an alert received from Air India regarding the turbulence incident involving flight AI2379, which landed safely in the national capital.

The hospital said the patients were assessed immediately upon arrival and treatment was initiated without delay.

After initial stabilisation, a Code Yellow was activated to ensure a coordinated medical response and deployment of resources.

"Following the initial stabilisation of the patients, a Code Yellow was activated to ensure a coordinated hospital response and optimal deployment of resources," the hospital said in a statement.

It added that the passengers were shifted for necessary radiological investigations, including CT scans, MRIs and X-rays, as clinically indicated, and were being moved to inpatient rooms for further observation and



management.

"The medical teams are currently evaluating each patient. A clearer clinical picture, including the extent of injuries and the definitive line of treatment, will be available shortly upon completion of all investigations and specialist assessments," Fortis said.

The hospital said a dedicated Air India coordination team was present to assist with patient care, documentation, logistics and communication with the families of those affected.

This comes after the Air India flight operating from Phuket, Thailand, to New Delhi encountered turbulence earlier today, resulting in a brief change in altitude. The aircraft landed safely at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, and all passengers and crew members disembarked.

In a statement, Air India said

flight AI2379 experienced a "brief in-flight turbulence-related event" during the cruise, resulting in a momentary change in altitude.

"There have been no serious injuries as of now. A small number of passengers and crew members with minor injuries requiring medical assessment have been taken to a medical facility at the airport for precautionary examination and care by Air India's airport team and medical personnel," the airline said.

Visuals from the airport showed ambulances stationed outside the terminal, while some passengers were seen being assisted in wheelchairs and others with bandages before being taken for medical evaluation.

A passenger travelling on the flight told ANI that the turbulence was sudden and that several people were injured during the incident.

The passenger claimed that some travellers suffered injuries to their heads and backs, while others required medical attention. Air India said it was providing all necessary support to the affected passengers and was co-operating with relevant authorities as part of the investigation.

-ANI

McDonald's Oman Wins Best Brand in Customer Experience Award in Loyalty App - QSR Category



McDonald's Oman was felicitated with the Times of Oman Best Brand in Customer Experience (CX) Award in Loyalty App - QSR Category' at the Times of Oman CX Awards 2026. The awards presentation was co-located with Oman CX Forum 2026, held at Hotel Kempinski, Muscat. The premier event was attended by over 325 CX leaders across sectors in Oman.

McDonald's Oman has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to customer experience through its innovative loyalty app, delivering a seamless and rewarding digital journey for customers. By combining exclusive offers, personalised rewards, mobile ordering, and convenient payment options, the app enhances every interaction while making it easier for customers to enjoy their favourite McDonald's meals.

Designed around convenience and customer engagement, the McDonald's app enables users to earn and redeem rewards, access exclusive promotions,

locate nearby restaurants, and enjoy a fast, intuitive ordering experience. Its customer-first approach, supported by continuous digital innovation and user-friendly functionality, has strengthened customer loyalty and elevated the quick service restaurant (QSR) experience in Oman.

By continually investing in digital transformation, personalised customer engagement, and innovative loyalty programmes, McDonald's Oman continues to set benchmarks in customer experience within the QSR industry. The success of its loyalty app reflects the brand's commitment to delivering greater value, convenience, and memorable experiences both inside and outside its restaurants.

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 customer expectations. The winners are selected based on an extensive consumer survey conducted by the Times of Oman.

SPORTS

Shafique, Babar put Pakistan on top against West Indies

West Indies were dismissed for 344 before the duo closed day two with the visitors 78 behind

PORT OF SPAIN: Abdullah Shafique posted his sixth Test century in an unbroken 168-run third-wicket stand with Babar Azam to put Pakistan on top after Day 2 of the second Test against West Indies on Monday.

West Indies were bowled out for 344 in their first innings right at lunch after resuming on Monday at 239-5. Azan Awaish then put the Pakistan reply on a solid footing with a half-century before Shafique and Babar led the visitors to 266-2 at stumps.

Shafique was 107 not out and captain Babar was unbeaten on 86 after Pakistan's best day of the two-Test series. West Indies won the opener by 90 runs.



Batting was tricky on Day 1 when the pitch favoured the slow bowlers. Conditions improved considerably on Monday, and Pakistan cashed in and is now only 78 runs behind. Awaish (55) reached his maiden Test half-century, with nine boundaries, after putting on 34 for the first wicket with Imam-ul-Haq (14). He then added 64 for

the second wicket with Shafique before being trapped lbw by Jomel Warrican when he missed an attempted sweep.

The umpire rejected West Indies' appeal, but captain Roston Chase referred the decision to the television umpire, who ruled the ball was turning enough to hit leg stump. Babar joined Shafique and

showed his intention to play aggressively and keep Pakistan on the front foot, the pair added 100 runs from only 139 balls.

Shafique reached his half-century first, with four fours and two sixes. Babar followed soon after with his 33rd half-century, including eight fours. Shafique went on to his first Test century in almost two



years, from 173 balls. His last Test hundred was against England in October 2024.

He missed the first Test against West Indies and is back for the first time since featuring against South Africa last October.

Pakistan will need to avoid another of the second-innings collapses that have been a recent feature. Pakistan made 282 in the first innings of the first Test before being bowled out for 120 in the second.

Earlier on Monday, Justin Greaves top-scored with 73 and Chase made a defiant 70 as West Indies achieved a creditable total.

Off-break bowler Sajid Khan returned 4-85 while left-arm spinner Ali Usman (playing in his second Test), Mohammad Ali and Ubaid Shah claimed two wickets apiece.

Brief scores: Pakistan 266/2 (Shafique 107*, Babar 86*) trail West Indies 344 all out (Greaves 73, Chase 70, Sajid 4-85) by 78 runs.

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SEPTEMBER 4-13

Oman spikers set for Asian volleyball test in Japan

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Fresh from their historic West Asian Championship triumph, Oman spikers will take on the continent's heavyweights when they compete at the Asian Volleyball Championship Japan 2026 from September 4 to 13.

The championship will pit Oman against Asia's elite, including hosts Japan, Iran, China, South Korea, Australia, Qatar, Bahrain, Thailand, India, New Zealand and Chinese Taipei, providing the national team with its toughest test since lifting the West Asian title in Muscat.

The Oman Volleyball Association (OVA) said the team has completed its preparations and is ready to build on the momentum generated by its recent successes, which also include a commendable campaign at the Asian Championship in India.

Yousuf Mohammed Al Badwawi, Acting Secretary-General of the OVA, said the tournament marks another important step

in Oman's rise on the Asian volleyball stage. "Competing against the continent's strongest teams will provide invaluable experience for our players and expose them to different styles of play, helping them continue their development," he said.

Al Badwawi said the association is confident the team will produce a strong performance and continue climbing the international rankings after achieving a major breakthrough with its West Asian Championship victory.

He added that the technical staff, led by Tunisian head coach Nizar Chekili, has intensified preparations with the aim of delivering a competitive performance and securing positive results against Asia's top-ranked sides. The championship is expected to serve as another key benchmark for Oman's rapidly improving national team as it looks to cement its place among the continent's emerging volleyball powers.

OMAN HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

18 clubs to feature in Cubs League in new season

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Hockey Association (OHA) received a major boost to its grassroots development programme after 18 clubs signed up for the Cubs Hockey League, underlining growing interest in the sport ahead of the 2026/27 season.

Hockey Oman said it will stage three age-group competitions—Cubs, Juniors and Youth—as it plans to intensify efforts to build a stronger talent pipeline and prepare the next generation of players for national team duty.

The Cubs League, open to players born in 2010/11 and younger, has attracted entries from Seeb, Salalah, Al Ittihad, Al Amerat, Al Nahda, Quriyat, Al Khabourah, Mirbat, Nizwa, Fanja, Suwaiq, Al Musannah, Yanqul, Saham, Oman Club, Al Bashaer, Al Salam and Majees.

Eight clubs have confirmed participation in the Youth League—Saham, Seeb, Quriyat, Salalah, Al Ittihad, Suwaiq, Al Amerat and Al Bashaer—while nine teams will contest the Jun-

iors League: Saham, Seeb, Quriyat, Salalah, Al Ittihad, Suwaiq, Al Musannah, Al Bashaer and Al Amerat.

Thani Al Wahaibi, Acting Secretary-General of Oman Hockey Association, said the strong response from clubs reflects the association's commitment to developing hockey from the grassroots.

"Age-group competitions are a cornerstone of our development strategy. They help us build a strong foundation for the sport and prepare talented young players to represent Oman in the future," he said in remarks to Oman News Agency (ONA).

The season's matches will be hosted at the Hockey Oman Arena in Al Amerat, as well as sports complexes in Sohar and Salalah.

OMAN OIL PRICE RISES
The price of Oman crude oil has increased, with prices for delivery by October 2026 reaching \$83.51. The price of Oman crude oil rose by \$5.25 from the price of Monday, which was \$78.26. -ONA

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 7,334.80 points, down by -0.19% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.28% at 582.48 points. Al Omaniya Non Convertible Bonds 2022, up 17.65%, was the top gainer while, Construction Materials, down 5.56%, was the top loser.

Oman becoming increasingly attractive market for investors

The MSX has also structurally re-rated: market capitalisation has grown by more than 59% since 2020 to over OMR37 billion today, and MSX is actively working to meet MSCI and FTSE Russell criteria for emerging market inclusion, targeted for 2027-2028



nal shocks, said Shahneel Syed, Chief Operating and Transformation Officer, Graystone Capital. "On the capital markets side, this is being reinforced by the Oman Investment Authority's divestment programme, which has brought a wave of state-linked companies to market and raised close to \$4 billion since 2023," he said. The MSX has also structurally re-rated: market capitalisation has grown by more than 59% since 2020 to over OMR37 billion today, and MSX is actively working to meet MSCI and FTSE Russell criteria for emerging market inclusion, targeted for 2027-2028. "Perhaps most tellingly, foreign investors still account for less than 15% of MSX trading volume — which is less a weakness than a sign of substantial untapped headroom as international allocators take note of Oman's improving fundamentals and comparatively attractive valuations," Shahneel Syed said.

MSX index performance
Elaborating about Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) index performance in the first half of 2026 he said that the bourse has done exceptionally well, even after accounting for the volatility of recent



months. The MSX 30 index rose 28% in the first half of 2026, comfortably crossing 7,500 points and marking the best first-half performance of any GCC exchange. "The index achieved three consecutive record milestones during the period: it broke through 6,000 points on 5th January, then 7,000 points on 11th February, and 8,000 points on 29th March, a level not seen since 2008," Shahneel Syed said. The rally extended into April, with the index touching an intraday high of 8,397 points on 4th May, before easing back on profit-taking and regional headwinds to close the

half at around 7,507 points. The trading activity behind this move has been just as remarkable as the index level itself. Total trading value for H1 2026 reached nearly OMR7 billion, an increase of roughly 650% year-on-year, again, the fastest growth rate of any Gulf exchange. Market capitalisation rose to OMR36.72 billion by the end of June, an increase of OMR4.71 billion since December, while the number of executed transactions rose to 733,000, roughly five times the volume recorded in the same period last year. "This combination of price appreciation and genuine liquidity growth is what distinguishes this rally from previous, thinner rises in the MSX's history," he further added. Elaborating about MSX sectoral indices growth, Shahneel Syed

the subsequent pullback, suggesting the current cycle is being driven by broad market sentiment and macro factors as much as sector-specific stories," he further added. Asked whether the ongoing regional instability has affected sentiment on the MSX, he said "Yes, quite directly, though the effect has been more pronounced in trading patterns than in underlying fundamentals." Following the index's peak of 8,397 points on 4th May, escalating tensions linked to the wider Middle East conflict weighed heavily on Gulf markets generally, and the MSX was not immune, the index gave back its gains over successive weeks, falling to around 7,959 points in mid-May, then to roughly 7,634 points in mid-June, and trading in the 7,200-7,500-point range through July as investors booked profits and waited for greater clarity. "That said, two things are worth emphasising for investors weighing this volatility. First, even after the pullback, the MSX remains up meaningfully for the year and has consistently outperformed most GCC peers through the turbulence, this has been a market-wide, not Oman-specific, phenomenon." "Second, Oman's own risk profile has arguably been reinforced rather than undermined during this period: S&P's decision to reaffirm the country's investment-grade rating in March 2026, explicitly citing Oman's fiscal resilience amid regional tensions, sent a reassuring signal to institutional investors that the Sultanate's diplomatic positioning and prudent fiscal management provide a genuine buffer, even if share prices in the short term remain correlated with the broader region's risk sentiment," he added.

STATISTICS



Electricity generation in Oman increases by 5.7% in first half of 2026

MUSCAT: The total electricity generation in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 5.7% during the period from January to June 2026, reaching 26,075.3 GWh, compared with 24,676.6 GWh during the corresponding period in 2025, according to the latest preliminary data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The statistics showed that Muscat Governorate recorded the highest growth in total electricity generation, increasing by 170.2%, followed by Al Dakhiliyah Governorate at 39.5%, Dhofar Governorate at 8.5%, Al Wusta Governorate at 7.9%, and the governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, and Al Dhahirah, each recording a growth of 6.2%. Meanwhile, the total electricity generation declined by 12.1% in the governorates of North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah, while Musandam Governorate recorded a decline of 1.7%.

As for the net electricity generation, which includes purchases by the Oman Power and Water Procurement Company and the Rural Areas Electricity Company according to the respective regions, the data showed an increase of 5.9% during the period from January to June 2026, reaching 25,343.8 GWh, compared with 23,930.8 GWh during the same period in 2025. Muscat Governorate also re-

corded the highest growth in net electricity generation at 169.8%, followed by Al Dakhiliyah Governorate at 39.7%, Dhofar Governorate at 9.7%, Al Wusta Governorate at 8.7%, and the governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, and Al Dhahirah, each registering an increase of 6.4%. The net electricity generation declined by 12.3% in the governorates of North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah, while Musandam Governorate recorded a decline of 1.7%. On the water sector, total water production declined by 3.0% during the period from January to June 2026, reaching 244,489.8 cubic metres, compared with 252,020.4 cubic metres during the corresponding period in 2025. At the governorate level, water production in Muscat Governorate decreased by 6.1%, falling from 100,707.6 cubic metres during January-June 2025 to 94,593.5 cubic metres during the same period in 2026. Water production in the remaining governorates also declined by 2.3% to 111,180.5 cubic metres, compared with 113,795.7 cubic metres during the corresponding period of the previous year. In contrast, water production in Dhofar Governorate increased by 3.2%, reaching 38,715.8 cubic metres during the period from January to June 2026, compared with 37,517.1 cubic metres during the same period in 2025. -ONA

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Oman's central bank raises OMR20 million through treasury bills

MUSCAT: Oman's central bank raised OMR20 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Monday. The value of the allotted treasury bills include OMR19.5 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.034 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO 99.030 per RO 100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.87420% and 3.91199%, respectively. Additionally, treasury bills amounting to OMR0.5 million for a maturity period of 182 days was also allotted. The average accepted price reached OMR98.065 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.065 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.88063% and 3.95720%, respectively. Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through dis-



counting and repurchase facilities (Repo). It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 4.25% while the discount

rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 4.75%. Furthermore, Treasury Bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve

for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the Government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. -ONA

REPORT

Gold may slide 37% from January high

NEW DELHI: Gold could see a deeper correction if it breaks below \$3,857/oz, with the next major support at \$3,500/oz -- a level that would mark a decline of around 37 per cent from the January high, while stronger yen may provide some relief, according to a report by World Gold Council (WGC). "Should weakness extend below US\$3,857/oz we would see the next major support at the April/October range high at USD 3,500/oz. This would represent a decline of approximately 37

per cent from the January high which would be consistent with previous major downturns in Gold, and we would thus be alert to a more important floor being found here," it said. As per WGC, the Japanese yen's surge, supported by the first coordinated US-Japan intervention in the currency markets, could also lend support to gold. "A stronger yen and a weaker dollar could support gold if these trends persist," it said. At the time of reporting, the yellow metal was trading at around

USD 4,063.80/oz. According to the report, the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) Gold Price PM fell 1 per cent last week to USD 4,027 per ounce, taking its year-to-date decline to 7.8 per cent. Gold prices were influenced by changing interest rate expectations after the US Federal Reserve kept rates unchanged in a 9-3 vote, while developments in the US-Iran conflict kept oil prices and inflation concerns in focus. As investors reassessed the market outlook, inflows into gold ETFs moderated and net long positions

on COMEX declined. Meanwhile, options traders cut bearish positions, partly due to the expiry of contracts, it further noted. It further noted, while gold extended tight consolidation of the past month, it is still capped below its downtrend from early March. "Below US\$3,943/oz would be seen to resolve the range lower with the next key technical support at US\$3,857-3,887/oz," it said. According to World Gold Council, investor expectations for the Fed's policy path will remain a key driver of gold. -ANI



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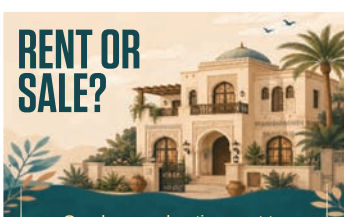
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Qatar, Egypt, Turkiye condemn Israeli strikes in Gaza Strip

The mediators urged Israel to comply with its obligations under international law and fully implement the ceasefire agreement, warning that continued violations undermine efforts to advance the second phase of the truce

GAZA: Qatar, Egypt and Turkiye on Tuesday condemned what they described as ongoing Israeli violations in the Gaza Strip, particularly attacks on healthcare facilities and medical infrastructure, as two people were killed following fresh Israeli strikes in the southwest of Gaza City and Israeli forces carried out a raid in the city of Nablus



in the West Bank. In a joint statement posted by Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on X, the three mediating countries said they “strongly condemn and denounce” the continuing Israeli actions in Gaza, saying attacks on civilians, including women and children, and healthcare infrastructure constitute a “flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law.” The mediators urged Israel to comply with its obligations under international law and fully implement the ceasefire agreement, warning that continued violations undermine efforts to advance the

second phase of the truce after Hamas and other Palestinian factions announced their acceptance of the agreed roadmap. They also called for the protection of civilians, medical personnel and healthcare facilities, while urging the international community to press Israel to fulfil its obligations and facilitate the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid and medical supplies across Gaza. According to Al Jazeera, at least two people were killed in an Israeli attack southwest of Gaza City on Monday. Meanwhile, Israeli forces

stormed the eastern area of the occupied West Bank city of Nablus amid heavy gunfire and the firing of tear gas, Al Jazeera reported. Israeli military vehicles, accompanied by a bulldozer, entered the area to facilitate the entry of Israeli settlers to Joseph's Tomb. Al Jazeera, quoting Amjad Ahmad, director of the Palestinian Red Crescent's emergency and ambulance centre in Nablus, reported that ambulance crews treated a 56-year-old woman who fell from a height during the raid. She was later shifted to a hospital. Earlier on Monday, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said it had

eliminated Adnan Taha Abu al-Tayf, identified as a Nukhba commander in Hamas's military wing who allegedly infiltrated Israel during the October 7 attack. In a separate strike in the Shati area, the IDF said it also killed Jalal Tsubeih, whom it identified as a commander in Hamas's Daraj Tuffah Battalion. According to the IDF, both individuals had recently attempted to advance attacks against Israeli troops and civilians.

1.4 million Palestinians face acute food insecurity Minister of Social Development and Acting Minister of State for Relief, Samah Hamad, affirmed on Monday that the relative improvement reflected in the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report does not indicate that the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip has ended. Rather, it reflects the direct impact of the continued flow of humanitarian assistance, warning that any reduction in aid deliveries would rapidly push conditions back to even more dangerous levels. Minister Hamad made the remarks during a joint press conference organized by the Ministry in partnership with Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Coordi-

nator for the Middle East Peace Process, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with the participation of Shaun Hughes, WFP Representative and Country Director in Palestine. The conference presented the findings of the latest IPC report and reviewed the humanitarian and living conditions in the Gaza Strip. She stressed that Gaza has long surpassed the threshold of a humanitarian catastrophe. She noted that civilians are no longer facing a temporary food shortage but rather a systematic deprivation of the basic means of survival due to the blockade and restrictions on the entry of food, water, and medicine. These measures have led to an unprecedented collapse in purchasing power, the closure of dozens of community and soup kitchens, and have turned access to a single daily meal into a struggle for survival. She outlined the catastrophic conditions faced by displaced families living in tents, the continued deterioration of essential services, the rise in malnutrition rates, and the disproportionate impact on children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, older persons, and persons with disabilities.. **ANI**

WEATHER

FUEGO VOLCANO ERUPTS

Heavy rains likely across Pakistan; PMD issues flood, landslide warnings

ISLAMABAD : Heavy rain accompanied by thunderstorms is expected to lash several parts of Pakistan on Tuesday, with the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) warning of possible urban flooding, flash floods and landslides in vulnerable regions, Geo News reported. According to Geo News, citing the PMD, rain with gusty winds and thunderstorms is forecast in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, upper and central Punjab, and northeastern Balochistan. The weather department warned that isolated areas could receive heavy to very heavy rainfall. The PMD cautioned that intense downpours may inundate low-lying areas in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Sheikhpura, Kasur, Faisalabad, Multan, Sahiwal, Okara, Bahawalnagar, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Lahore, the Potohar region, Peshawar and Nowshera, Geo News reported.



It also warned of flash floods in local streams and nullahs across Kashmir, Murree, Galiyat, northeastern Punjab, Islamabad, the Potohar region, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan. According to Geo News, the PMD said landslides could occur in hilly areas of Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Buner, Battagram,

Mansehra, Shangla and Abbotabad, as well as Murree, Galiyat and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir during the forecast period. Meanwhile, hot and humid weather is expected to persist in southern Pakistan, including most districts of Sindh and Balochistan. However, isolated rain and thunderstorms are likely in Zhob, Musa Khel, Barkhan, Kohlu, Dera Bugti and adjoining areas.

In Islamabad and surrounding areas, partly cloudy skies with rain, gusty winds and thunderstorms are forecast, with isolated heavy showers expected. Similar weather conditions are predicted across much of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, including major cities such as Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Sialkot, Geo News reported. During the past 24 hours, scattered rain and thunderstorms accompanied by isolated heavy falls were recorded in parts of Punjab, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir. Faisalabad received the highest rainfall at 77 millimetres, followed by Sialkot city with 73mm, Bahawalpur city with 64mm, Gujrat with 54mm and Mandi Bahauddin with 49mm, according to Geo News. The highest maximum temperature recorded in Pakistan on Monday was 45 degrees Celsius in Dalbandin, while Nokkundi and Sibbi registered 44 degrees Celsius, the report added. **ANI**

Guatemala officials declare orange alert

GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemalan authorities have raised the country's emergency warning to its second-highest level on Monday evening following a major eruption of Central America's most active volcano. The disaster coordination agency Conred announced on X declared a nationwide orange alert as Fuego volcano experienced a surge in activity, generating dangerous pyroclastic density currents that surged toward the Seca and Ceniza ravines on its southwest flank. Emergency officials immediately initiated evacuations for two villages located near the volcano, which sits approximately 35 kilometres from the capital, Guatemala City. Conred announced the escalation on social media, stating on X that “An orange (danger) alert has been declared nationwide due to the eruption of the Fuego volcano.” Additionally, as a precautionary measure, officials implemented a full closure of national highway

RN-14 giving access to Alotenango due to volcanic material descending through the Las Lajas ravine. In response to the growing hazard, the disaster management agency urged residents in affected areas to avoid ravines and stay clear of designated danger zones. Conred recommended that families prepare an emergency “72-hour backpack,” review and activate their Family Response Plans, and exercise self-evacuation if safety conditions deteriorate. Meanwhile, DW reported that mass evacuations have occurred repeatedly in recent years due to active eruptions at the 3,763-meter-high Fuego volcano. Positioned along the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” Guatemala experiences frequent volcanic and seismic activity. In response to the current eruption, government officials suspended local educational activities and closed a major roadway connecting the nation's southern region to the historic city of Antigua, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, DW reported. **ANI**

FIRST ROAD CONNECTION

Unravelling Russia’s bridge project with North Korea

SEOUL: For years, Khasan was little more than a very remote place on the edge of Russia. Less than 500 people live in the village in the country's far east, more than 5,600 miles (9,012 kilometres) from Moscow. But it's here that Russia shares a mere 10.5-mile border with North Korea — and Khasan is the only Russian settlement along that short stretch. Since 1959, the so-called Korean-Russian Friendship Railway Bridge has crossed the Tumen River here, serving as the only land connection between the two countries. But in recent years, Russia and North Korea have been building a parallel road bridge just a few hundred yards away. The bridge is now nearing completion ahead of schedule, raising concerns in Kyiv that Russia could use it to secretly bring North Korean troops to the front lines in Ukraine. Since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moscow and Pyongyang have improved their ties. Both countries face Western sanctions and are diplomatically largely isolated. In June 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a strategic partnership deal which in part focused on expanding military cooperation. That meant large-scale weapons shipments as well as the de-



ployment of North Korean soldiers to support Russia's war in Ukraine. At the same time, both governments agreed to build the new road bridge. “The opening of the new bridge will boost bilateral trade, optimize logistics, strengthen cultural ties and transform border regions into dynamically growing economic centers,” Russian Transport Minister Andrei Nikitin said at the time. The Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has also pointed to the bridge's economic significance,

noting that “the pace at which construction of the road bridge is progressing, and the continued high level of rail traffic at previously dormant rail yards, are clear indicators of the importance and expansion of trade between the two countries during Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine.” **A project for trade and tourism?** But according to British newspaper The Guardian, there are major doubts that civilian economic goals are the project's true primary purpose.

Official data shows that trade between Russia and North Korea amounted to just \$34 million in 2024. The bridge and its immediate infrastructure are thought to cost roughly \$100 million. Satellite pictures of the site show warehouses, customs facilities, truck areas and a helicopter pad being built. Ukrainian human rights organisation Truth Hounds, which has been monitoring the project, also doubts the bridge is for tourism. It is about 125 hours by car from Moscow and about four hours from Vladivostok.

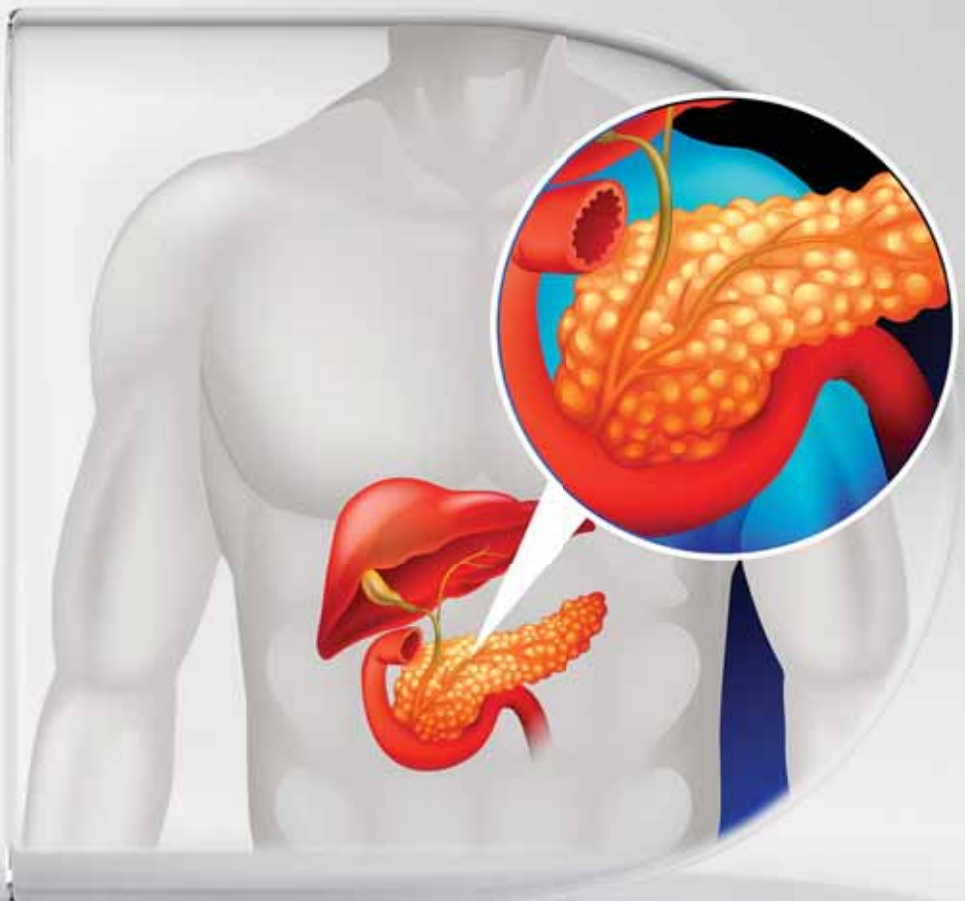
“Tourism in North Korea is heavily restricted and, given the country's isolation, cannot expand rapidly,” the organisation said. If anyone from Russia would visit North Korea, they probably would go to the capital, Pyongyang, rather than the country's remote northeastern region. But Pyongyang is hundreds of miles from the border, and “few people would want to make that journey by car,” the group argued. Russia has spent years trying to get tourists to take heavily subsidized flights to visit Pyongyang. However, not many have taken up the opportunity. In 2025, fewer than 10,000 Russian citizens are thought to have traveled to North Korea.

Or a cover for military transport? Truth Hounds instead concludes that the bridge's real purpose is to deepen military cooperation, particularly by facilitating the transfer of North Korean troops and weapons for the war in Ukraine. According to unofficial information reported by South Korean, Ukrainian and US sources in the middle of last year, North Korea sent between 14,000 and 15,000 personnel to support Russia's war, with many reportedly deployed in Russia's Kursk region while parts of it were under Ukrainian control. North Korea has also supplied

Russia with weapons. Road transport, Truth Hounds suggests, is harder to monitor by satellite than rail transport. Trains are confined to fixed tracks, and loading and unloading can take place only at designated rail hubs. Trucks however, can load and unload almost anywhere and satellite surveillance is virtually impossible. Just days ago, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned on X that Russia could deploy as many as 30,000 additional North Korean troops in the war against Ukraine. **Military know-how for North Korea** Zelenskyy also argued that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un from the improved military partnership. The new bridge could enable Russia to secretly move resources into North Korea. “Russia,” Zelenskyy wrote, “is helping North Korea learn how to wage modern war, improve its weapons and gain real combat experience in using them.” Observers also believe that North Korea might be receiving some Russian nuclear technology in exchange for helping Moscow in its war efforts. Taken together, Zelenskyy warned in his X post, these developments pose “a threat to everyone in Asia who lives within range of North Korean missiles.” **-w**



LIFESTYLE



PANCREATIC CANCER:
NEW DRUG
EXTENDS
LIVES
BUT ISN'T
A CURE

The newly developed treatment daraxonrasib can double the years left to live for patients with pancreatic cancer — but it doesn't cure the disease and only works if the cancer is treated early

Pancreatic cancer is notoriously difficult to treat — and in many cases leads to death just months after diagnosis. So it is no surprise that this headline created a stir: In a recent study, a new drug, daraxonrasib, was able to double the survival time of patients with pancreatic cancer.

Compared with patients who underwent chemotherapy, those treated with daraxonrasib not only lived longer, but also reported a better quality of life. The treatment also appeared to cause fewer severe side effects.

The study should be regarded as “a revolutionary breakthrough for patients with pancreatic cancer,” said Dietrich Ruess, Deputy Medical Director and Head of the certified Pancreatic Cancer Centre at the Department of General and Visceral Surgery at Freiburg University Medical Centre.

“In my view, this is one of the most important clinical developments in metastatic pancreatic cancer in many years,” said Dieter Saur, Professor of Translational Cancer Research

at the Technical University of Munich and the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg.

Daraxonrasib targets the RAS gene

Experts expressed enthusiasm that daraxonrasib could specifically target the so-called RAS gene. This gene encodes a protein that drives cell growth and division. About 90% of people with pancreatic cancer carry a mutation in this gene. As a result, it remains permanently ac-

tive, promoting tumor formation and growth.

Study participants who received daraxonrasib lived a median of 13.2 months from the start of treatment, compared with 6.6 months for patients in the chemotherapy control group.

Despite the excitement surrounding the study results, one important fact remains: Daraxonrasib does not cure pancreatic cancer. In most cases, the diagnosis still amounts to a death sentence.

“Promising’ is actually too strong a word,” said Susanne Weg-Remers, a physician and head of the Cancer Information Service at the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg.

Pancreatic cancer: Few warning signs, poor survival prospects

Pancreatic cancer develops largely unnoticed. Patients often experience no symptoms at first, or only vague, nonspecific ones. These may include upper abdominal pain, back pain, nausea, digestive problems, loss of appetite and weight loss.

According to the Robert Koch Institute, about 20,000 people in Germany were diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2023. Nearly as many died from the disease.

“In an ideal situation — although unfortunately this is very rare — pancreatic cancer is detected early enough that it can still be surgically removed,” Weg-Remers said. In such cases, surgeons remove a large portion of the pancreas and, depending on the location of the tumor, may also remove parts of the duode-

num and stomach.

Patients then receive chemotherapy and, in some cases, additional radiation therapy, Weg-Remers said. Researchers are also investigating using an mRNA vaccine designed to prevent the cancer from returning.

Even with surgery and chemotherapy, however, the outlook remains poor: Only 11% of patients are still alive five years after diagnosis.

Special screening measures for pancreatic cancer are not generally recommended. According to Weg-Remers, this is largely due to the pancreas’s difficult location deep within the body, between the abdominal cavity and the spine.

“With the diagnostic methods currently available that would be suitable for population-wide screening, it is very difficult to examine the pancreas effectively,” she explained.

Exceptions are made for people with a hereditary predisposition and families in which pancreatic cancer occurs more frequently than expected.

20,000

people in Germany were diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2023

No effective treatment despite years of research

If the tumour can no longer be surgically removed — because it has metastasized and spread to other parts of the body — patients typically die within a matter of months. Chemotherapy may extend survival somewhat, but often at the cost of severe side effects.

For patients with advanced disease, treatment decisions are therefore highly individual, Weg-Remers said. Purely palliative care — involving medications to manage pain and digestive symptoms — is also an option.

Targeted drugs that attack specific features of a tumor and inhibit its growth are only available to a very limited extent, Weg-Remers said.

“Despite a great deal of research in recent years, we are still relatively close to the beginning.”

Part of the excitement surrounding daraxonrasib stems from this reality: At present, doctors have very few viable options for patients beyond giving them a little more time and making that time as comfortable as possible. -bw

Eala creates history with first WTA Tour title in Washington



The 21-year-old is projected to move to world No. 20 in the latest WTA Rankings after she became the first-ever Filipino player to win a Tour event

WASHINGTON: Filipino sensation Alexandra Eala capped her giant-killing run at the Washington Open with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory over top-seeded Jessica Pegula on Monday to become the first player from the Philippines to win a WTA title.

Eala, ranked 28th, overpowered Pegula over the final two sets as play resumed in the final suspended after lengthy weather delays on

Sunday. "I feel so much love. My first chance at a title knowing it won't be the last and already having achieved this milestone for my career," Eala said on court.

"I knew whatever happened after this match would have already been a win for me."

Playing in her second final, after a runner-up finish at Eastbourne last year, the 21-year-old left-hander produced a rock-solid

service display and an impressive array of winners to deny third-ranked Pegula a 12th career title and a third this year.

"I want to congratulate Alex on an amazing tournament," world No.3 Pegula said.

"To see how far you've come over the last couple of years when we first played, to see the amazing fans that follow you every place you go, it's not fun to play against but I think it's amazing."

The scoreboard showed a match time of one hour and 45 minutes, but it took nearly 24 hours to complete.

Pegula had won the first set 6-4 and Eala was up 2-1 in the second on Sunday when officials postponed the finish until Monday after lengthy rain delays.

The pair had waited through a three-hour delay before starting, and once the match was halted it

was another five hours before officials called a halt for the day.

That also saw the ATP final between 10th-ranked American Taylor Fritz and 19-year-old Spaniard Rafael Jodar postponed.

Pegula opened the action on Monday with a nervy service hold for 2-2.

But she could make no inroads on Eala's serve and Eala broke Pegula in the 10th game to take the set and force a third.

The final set was all Eala, to the delight of a vocal contingent of supporters.

Eala had been enthusiastically cheered all week as she made her way to the final with wins over second-seeded Elina Svitolina, third-seeded former world No.1 Naomi Osaka and defending champion Leylah Fernandez.

Eala is now projected to rise to a career-high 20th in the world.

'An incredible milestone for me'



WASHINGTON: Few young players on the WTA Tour have experienced the level of expectation and support Alexandra Eala has received since she earned a place on the elite women's circuit, and on Monday the Filipina showed what all the fuss is about by winning the Washington Open.

"It's an incredible milestone for me," Eala told reporters.

"At the beginning of the week, there's no way I'd have thought that I'd be holding this trophy. These things creep up on you, and I hold these moments really close to me."

"It was a very steep hill. Coming into the tournament, I knew that the competition was super strong and my draw was quite tough. Every match was a different set of obstacles. I'm really proud."

"I ended the tournament in better shape than I started. Each match I kept improving and kept learning things about myself. So it definitely gives me a lot of confidence."

"It's really nice to see all the things I've been working on off court or during training being implemented in matches."

Eala's progress has been closely watched since her US Open junior triumph in 2022. Reaching the Eastbourne final last year and making the fourth round at Wimbledon last month signalled steady improvement.

As Eala's reputation grew, so too did her following, with large groups of Filipino fans packing the stands at tournaments around the world to back a player many see as a pioneer for tennis in their country. Her popularity was evident in the final of the WTA 500 event on Monday, with Eala's opponent Pegula impressed by the level of support on show.

"It's amazing that you guys showed up and again, to all the Filipino fans that came out, you are helping grow tennis around the world," she said.

"I appreciate that being a female athlete and being in tennis, we love to see that grow."

Eala can expect that support to continue at this week's Canadian Open in Toronto before she heads to New York for the US Open beginning on August 30. - Agencies

WASHINGTON OPEN



Fritz outlasts teenager Jodar to secure crown

WASHINGTON: World No. 10 Taylor Fritz held off 19-year-old Spaniard Rafael Jodar 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 on Monday to claim his first ATP title of 2026 in the rain-delayed final at Washington.

Fritz, seeded third in the 500-level hard court tournament, needed five match points to subdue the 24th-ranked teen and capture his 11th title, and his first since Eastbourne last year.

After seizing control in the first-set tie-breaker, Fritz roared to a 3-0 lead with a pair of service breaks in the second.

He gave back a break in the fourth game with a double fault on break point, and Jodar climbed out of a 0-30 hole to hold serve and narrow the gap to 3-2. But Jodar couldn't find another break.

He held for 5-4 to force Fritz to serve it out, the American's chance



delayed just slightly as Jodar had treatment on his left wrist after taking a tumble in the ninth game.

The final game was a slugfest. Fritz squandered a pair of match

points at 40-15 and gave himself another with a booming forehand.

Jodar fought off two more match points before earning a break point that Fritz saved with another forehand winner.

Fritz finally got the job done after one hour and 49 minutes, Jodar misfiring on a pair of forehands to bring it to a close.

Fritz, who was playing his third final of the season, collapsed to the court when it was done before rising to salute the crowd.

The contest was postponed from Sunday after heavy rain halted the WTA final between Jessica Pegula and Alexandra Eala.

Jodar missed out on a second ATP title after winning in Morocco in April. But by reaching the final, he's assured of reaching a career-high 15th in the rankings. - Agencies

MONTREAL OPEN

France's Monfils turns back the clock with late-night magic

MONTREAL: Gael Monfils put on a show like only he can Monday night at the National Bank Open presented by Rogers.

The 39-year-old Frenchman turned on the style to beat Polish No. 1 Kamil Majchrzak 6-4, 6-4 in an entertaining match that finished just before midnight in Montreal, earning his first tour-level win since Monte-Carlo in April.

Making his 15th and final appearance at the Canadian ATP Masters 1000, Monfils became the second-oldest man to win a match at the event. He turns 40 on Sept. 1.

Only John McEnroe and Mikhail Youzhny (both 16) have competed at the event more than the fan-favourite Frenchman.

Just the ninth man to record 25 wins at the event in the Open Era (25-13), Monfils has recorded 146 wins overall at the ATP Masters 1000 level — the most victories by any man without a Masters 1000 title.

The Montreal wild card thrilled the crowd throughout the match, including in the final game when he flirted with both sidelines on a crucial drop shot-passing shot



combo. Monfils served out the match on his second attempt and leaned on strong serving in both sets, posting an 84 per cent win rate (26/31) on first serve.

"Of course nerves came," Monfils said of the late drama.

"He played actually two good shots. I had to give him credit. To be honest, I played so many matches like this in my career. You just try to delete and just compete and try to be very focused on the first point."

"I made an incredible passing shot on the line and then the momentum shifted and I was there."

Next up for Monfils is a second-

round showdown with 12th-seeded American Learner Tien. Like Monday's match against Majchrzak, it will be the opponents' first Lexus ATP Head2Head meeting.

In the all-French match of the day, Titouan Droguet managed to eliminate Luca Van Assche, recent winner of Estoril, after a tough battle (6-4, 2-6, 7-6). The match, disrupted several times by rain, went down to a third-set tie-break (won 7-0 by Droguet). Thanks to this victory, Droguet (qualifier) reached the second round, where he will face Canadian Félix Auger-Aliassime, the tournament's No. 2 seed. - Agencies

WINNER OF 14 MAJOR TITLES

Williams sisters awarded doubles wild card for Cincinnati Open

TORONTO: Serena Williams and Venus Williams are set to make their Cincinnati Open doubles debut this month after being awarded a wildcard on Monday, marking their return to doubles action for the first time since 2022.

The Williams sisters have won 14 major doubles titles, including six at Wimbledon, plus three Olympic gold medals.

They last played doubles together at the 2022 US Open, where they lost to Czechs Lucie Hradecka and Linda Noskova. Last month, the sisters had to withdraw from the doubles draw at Wimbledon as Serena, 44, dealt



with a knee injury.

The American's highly-anticipated return to Grand Slam tennis after four years away was ended at Wimbledon in a first-round

loss to Australian youngster Maya Joint in the singles. Venus, 46, has received a singles wildcard for the August 11 to 23 tournament in Cincinnati. - Agencies

Wenger supports decision to drop World Cup sell-off plan

FIFA executive and Chief of Global Football Development distanced himself from Infantino’s plan and said that he first became aware of the project through media reports

GENEVA: FIFA executive Arsène Wenger on Tuesday distanced himself from Gianni Infantino’s failed plan to sell stakes in future World Cup profits to private investors and said it was “absolutely necessary” to drop the proposal. Wenger’s statement on the controversy came after a letter from UEFA’s lawyers to Infantino threatening legal action named the French coaching great among 18 executives whose data and communications should be retained as potential evidence. “I was not involved in this strategic plan and first became aware of the project through media reports,” said Wenger, who was

hired by Infantino in 2019 and is FIFA’s Chief of Global Football Development. The statement by the former Arsenal coach did not name Infantino and comes after a weeklong furor across world football. “The decision to withdraw the project was absolutely necessary and beyond question, because I firmly believe in an independent FIFA that serves our game with commitment, transparency, and integrity,” Wenger wrote. Infantino withdrew his \$20 billion proposal early Saturday after a furious backlash by global soccer officials, including European body UEFA warning of a boycott of all



FIFA games and events. The plan would have created a subsidiary — known as FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) — to run the money-making parts of the

not-for-profit soccer body’s work: Organising tournaments like the World Cup, selling broadcasting and sponsorship rights, tickets and hospitality. It proposed raising

\$4.2 billion from investors by selling stakes amounting to about 20% in FFE, based on an equity valuation of \$20 billion. The “anchor investor” would have been Thrive

Eternal, launched by Joshua Kushner, whose brother Jared Kushner is a son-in-law of US President Donald Trump. FIFA’s 211 member federations — already effective owners of the governing body as a nonprofit association under Swiss law — were offered \$20 million each. The deadline to accept was Sept. 19. They also were promised a doubling of their FIFA funding for the four years through 2030 to \$20 million instead of the previously announced \$10 million. Infantino shared details of the project to FIFA management just one week after the July 19 final of the financially successful World Cup in North America that drove FIFA’s revenues to \$15 billion for the 2023-26 commercial cycle — almost double the income tied to the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. Wenger said his FIFA duties were to “oversee the data analysis of the game, the FIFA online training centre, the development of youth education through 60 academies across 60 countries where they are most needed, and youth competitions around the world.” - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Coach Flick keen to add new forward to Barcelona ranks

LONDON: Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said on Monday that La Liga champions must reinforce its attack after the departures of Robert Lewandowski and Marcus Rashford, and with question marks over Ferran Torres’s future. The Catalan giants made a bid for Atletico Madrid and Argentina striker Julian Alvarez, which was rejected.

“I have total confidence in (sporting director) Deco, we know that we have to do something,” Flick told reporters after an intersquad match at St. George’s Park in England, where Barca has been training.

“It also depends (what happens) about Ferran (Torres).”

Spain international Torres, who scored the winning goal in its World Cup final triumph over Argentina, has one year left on his contract at Barcelona.

Torres has been linked with Champions League holders Paris Saint-Germain, coached by former Spain boss Luis Enrique.

Barcelona has signed Anthony Gordon and Karim Adeyemi this summer for the first team and Flick acknowledged both wingers could be used through the middle.



Ter Stegen joins Ajax on loan from Barcelona

Germany goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen joined Ajax on loan from Barcelona on Tuesday as he aims to revive his national-team career with new coach Jürgen Klopp. Ajax said the 34-year-old Ter Stegen signed a season-long deal that reunites him with the storied club’s new coach Michel Sanchez.

Ter Stegen had a complicated 12th season with Barcelona and moved to Catalanian neighbor Girona on loan in January.

After three straight World Cups as understudy to Manuel Neuer, including a title in 2014, Ter Stegen was not selected for a fourth



this summer. Germany went out in the round of 32 against Paraguay.

Ter Stegen played the last of his 44 games for Germany in June 2025 at the Nations League final four mini-tournament. “Marc has an outstanding track record, and his qualities are widely recognised,” Ajax technical director Jordi Crujeff said in a statement.

Ter Stegen is the second German international joining the Amsterdam club, which is seeking to rebound from a chaotic season that ended in fifth place in the Dutch Eredivisie. Julian Brandt last week signed a three-year deal as a free agent after his Borussia Dortmund contract expired. - Agencies

ITALIAN SERIE A

Amorim evokes spirit of Baresi as he begins AC Milan stint

PERTH: New AC Milan coach Ruben Amorim vowed on Tuesday to honour the legacy of club legend Franco Baresi, who died last week, as he sets about reviving the fortunes of the ailing Italian giants.

Portuguese Amorim has returned to coaching after being sacked in January by Manchester United and faces a Milan derby against bitter rivals Inter in the Western Australia city of Perth on Wednesday.

Amorim’s reign began with a 2-2 draw in a friendly against Celtic in Glasgow last month.

The 41-year-old’s immediate target will be a top-four finish in Serie A after AC Milan missed out on the Champions League on the final day of last season.

“I feel that the group is really together,” Amorim told reporters in Perth. “The important thing is to continue with this spirit when things become difficult.

“In this club you need to win every game, so we need to keep that spirit all season.”

AC Milan were boosted in the close season by veteran midfield maestro Luka Modric agreeing a one-year contract extension.

Emotional occasion Amorim said Modric would play against Inter, having just competed at his fifth World Cup where Croatia was knocked out in the last 32 by Portugal.

“We did a lot to get him back at



least for one more year,” Amorim said of the former Tottenham and Real Madrid star, who turns 41 in September.

“I’m really pleased with him and he is ready to play some minutes tomorrow.”

The match will be an emotional first match for AC Milan since the death of Baresi, who captained the club during a golden era in the 1980s and 1990s.

“When you talk with all the staff about Franco, you see the tears in

their eyes,” Amorim said. “Franco was all about the team. The team is the most important thing in our club.

“I will not promise results, but I can promise that I will continue the legacy of Franco.”

AC Milan will continue its pre-season against Chelsea in Jakarta on Saturday, while Inter Milan — which beat Manchester City on penalties in Hong Kong on Saturday — will remain in Perth to play Juventus on the same day.

PREMIER LEAGUE



Chelsea lands Henderson on 2-year deal

LONDON: Chelsea signed veteran England midfielder Jordan Henderson to a two-year contract on Monday following his departure from Brentford last week.

The 36-year-old Henderson is Chelsea’s oldest signing since BlueCo took over the club in 2022.

“The midfielder, who has won eight trophies in his career, including the Premier League and UEFA Champions League, has signed a two-year contract with the Blues and will join his new team-mates ahead of the 2026-27 campaign,” Chelsea said on its website. Henderson won the Champions League in 2019 and Premier League in 2020 with Liverpool.

“Given the size of the club, the manager (Xabi Alonso), who I have great admiration for, and the quality of the players, this was a huge opportunity I couldn’t turn down,” Henderson said. “I was also so impressed with how much

the ownership want Chelsea to be successful and move in the right direction.”

Henderson’s off-season signing follows that of Danny Welbeck, Morgan Rogers, Maxence Lacroix, Marco Palestra and Geovany Quenda by the Stamford Bridge club.

Fulham signs Garcia from Real Madrid

Spanish striker Gonzalo Garcia has joined Fulham from Real Madrid, reuniting with his former coach Alvaro Arbeloa, the Premier League club and the Spanish side announced on Monday.

The 22-year-old enjoyed his most productive season last term, scoring eight goals for Real, including six in La Liga. His tally featured a hat-trick against Real Betis in January.

Garcia has signed a contract with Fulham until 2031, with the

club holding an option to extend the deal by a further year.

Spanish media reported the transfer fee to be around 40 million euros (\$46 million), while Real is understood to have retained a 30% sell-on clause.

Fulham appointed Arbeloa as head coach earlier this summer. The Spaniard previously worked within Real’s youth set-up before taking over the top job after Xabi Alonso was sacked in January.

Garcia was not the only young Spaniard to make the move from Madrid to west London. Attacking midfielder Cesar Palacios, 21, also joined Fulham after b into the Real first team under Arbeloa in recent months.

Real, which hired Portuguese veteran Jose Mourinho as coach to replace Arbeloa, is overhauling its squad after going two consecutive seasons without a major trophy. - Agencies

BUNDESLIGA

Bosnia’s Džeko to stay at Schalke

GELSENKIRCHEN: Schalke have convinced Bosnia star Edin Džeko to stay another year for their return to the Bundesliga.

The veteran forward’s future was uncertain after he helped Schalke clinch promotion from Germany’s second division last season before he went to the World Cup, but the club said on Monday he had agreed to stay on for the upcoming season.

“After a successful second half to the season for the Royal Blues, the captain of the Bosnia and Herzegovina national team has signed a new one-year contract,” Schalke said in a statement.

Džeko, who turned 40 in March, joined Schalke on a short-term deal from Italian side Fiorentina in January. He scored six goals and set up three more in 11 second-division appearances.

Džeko made his return from a shoulder injury in a substitute appearance as Schalke clinched promotion with a 1-0 win over Fortuna Düsseldorf in May. He was cagey when asked if he would stay for its Bundesliga campaign, but now Schalke fans have the answer they were hoping for.

“Edin has given Schalke something special in his roughly four and a half months here so far,”



Schalke sporting director Youri Mulder said.

“He was a key player and a fan favourite, and he was always a role model with his personality on and off the field. In our discussions over the last few weeks, it became clear that Edin is still passionate about the game. That’s why we’re convinced he’ll help us in the Bundesliga as well.”

Džeko became a star at Wolfsburg where he helped the team win the Bundesliga title in 2009. He also won the Premier League title with Manchester City in 2012 and ‘14 and the Italian Cup with Inter Milan in 2022 and ‘23.

“Since winter at Schalke I’ve experienced a super team and fantastic fans,” Džeko was quoted as saying by the club. “The promotion to the Bundesliga is among the highlights of my career. It was unbelievable. Football has made me happy for my whole life and it drives me on. I still have hunger, and I also want to help our team in the Bundesliga.”

Schalke’s first game back after three seasons away is at Augsburg on Aug. 30. Džeko will continue to wear the No. 10 jersey, Schalke said. Džeko is Bosnia’s record goalscorer with 73 from a record 151 games. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat continues to support tourism and economic development as banking sponsor of Ashkharah Festival

Bank Muscat's sponsorship reflects its commitment to supporting national initiatives aligned with Oman Vision 2040 and advancing sustainable development through backing events that stimulate economic activity, empower SMEs and entrepreneurs, and create new opportunities for growth and investment across the Sultanate

MUSCAT: Reaffirming its long-standing commitment to supporting national initiatives that contribute to economic and tourism development, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced its participation as the Banking Sponsor of the fourth edition of the Ajwaa Al Ashkhara Festival 2026, organised by the South Al Sharqiyah Governorate in the Wilayat of Jalan Bani Bu Ali.

The festival aims to showcase the governorate's tourism, economic and cultural assets while strengthening its position as an attractive year-round tourism destination. It expands up to 15 August.

The festival seeks to highlight the unique natural attractions of Ashkharah, one of Oman's premier coastal destinations renowned for its pristine beaches and pleasant seasonal climate. It also promotes the tourism and heritage landmarks of South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, contributing to the diversification of Oman's tourism offerings and stimulating econom-



ic activity across the governorate.

Bank Muscat's sponsorship reflects its commitment to supporting national initiatives aligned with Oman Vision 2040 and advancing sustainable development through backing events that stimulate economic activity, empower SMEs and entrepreneurs, and create new opportunities for growth and investment across Oman.

As part of its participation, the Bank will provide a mobile ATM and cash deposit vehicle at the festival venue to ensure convenient access to banking services for customers and visitors. The Bank will also organise interactive activities

and offer promotional gifts to participants throughout the event.

The Ashkharah Festival aims to deliver a comprehensive tourism experience that combines entertainment, culture, heritage and sports, attracting visitors from within Oman and abroad while reinforcing South Al Sharqiyah Governorate's position as one of the Sultanate's leading seasonal tourism destinations. The festival also supports the commercial, tourism and service sectors, contributing to the growth of the local economy.

The event further focuses on empowering young people, entrepreneurs, artisans and low-

come families by providing dedicated platforms to showcase their products and services, while creating seasonal employment opportunities, training programmes and employment initiatives that promote sustainable community development. The previous edition attracted more than 430 thousand visitors, featured the participation of 27 SMEs and 51 artisans and low-income families, and generated 121 temporary employment opportunities for youth, highlighting the festival's significant economic and social impact on the local community.

These objectives are closely

aligned with Bank Muscat's sustainability and corporate social responsibility strategy, which focuses on supporting initiatives that empower local communities, foster entrepreneurship, create opportunities for economic growth, and preserve Oman's national identity while promoting its rich cultural heritage.

The festival will feature a diverse programme of activities catering to all segments of society, including cultural, heritage and artistic performances, sports and beach events, marketplaces for SMEs and productive families, as well as dedicated programmes for

children and families, offering visitors a comprehensive experience and enhancing the governorate's appeal during the event.

Through its sponsorship of national events and initiatives, Bank Muscat continues to play a leading role in supporting Oman's development journey by building strategic partnerships with public and private sector institutions to implement initiatives that deliver lasting economic and social impact, reflecting the Bank's national responsibility and commitment to contributing to comprehensive and sustainable development across all governorates of Oman.

EXCEPTIONAL SEDAN CHOICE

Chery Arrizo 5: Sophisticated sedan built for every journey

MUSCAT: The Chery Arrizo 5 continues to stand out as an exceptional sedan choice for automotive enthusiasts across the Sultanate. Built to elevate daily driving, the Arrizo 5 is a smart, modern companion packed with advanced features designed to make every journey smoother, safer and more enjoyable.

At the heart of the Arrizo 5, you will be welcomed by a spacious, well-crafted cabin that prioritizes passenger comfort. Premium materials, a premium steering wheel, and customizable ambient lighting enhance the interior ambience, giving the sedan a refined and personal feel.

Performance-wise, the Arrizo 5 is powered by a responsive 1.5L engine that delivers the ideal mix of power and fuel economy. Whether navigating busy urban streets or cruising along open highways, the engine responds effortlessly. Paired with an intelligent CVT (Continuously Variable Transmission), it ensures smooth acceleration and efficient gear transitions, resulting in a quieter, more comfortable drive.

As impressive as it is from the outside, the Arrizo 5 also possesses a range of impressive safety features, leaving no room for compromise. It is loaded with intelligent safety technologies, including an Electronic Stability Program (ESP) and Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), which provide greater control during sudden stops or sharp turns. A full array of airbags



ensures maximum protection for all occupants. Maneuvering in tight spots becomes stress-free with the parking sensors, while driver-assist systems act like an extra alerting and assisting drivers for a more confident driving experience.

With its blend of smart technology, refined comfort, responsive performance and comprehensive safety, the Arrizo 5 is designed to be a dependable, enjoyable companion for everyday driving in Oman – whether navigating the city or

heading out on the open road.

Chery's global reputation continues to grow, as reflected in recent accolades. Ranked as the best Chinese global brand builder in cars and 14th overall in the 2023 Kantar & Google Chinese Global

Brand Builders report. Secured first place among all Chinese automotive brands in the J.D. Power 2023 China Initial Quality StudySM (IQS). Ranked 233rd on the 2025 Fortune Global 500 list, demonstrating Chery's exceptional

global momentum, substantial year-on-year growth, and rapidly strengthening position among the world's largest and most influential companies.

In Oman, Chery vehicles are distributed by New World Autos.



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