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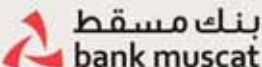
GOLDEN JUBILEE



51

YEARS OF LEGACY

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TO EASE TENSION

Foreign Minister holds regional talks on maritime security, trade flow through Strait of Hormuz



MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister held a series of telephone conversations with several regional counterparts to discuss the latest developments and ongoing efforts to ease tensions. The calls included Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, Dr. Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Egyptian Expatriates of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Dr. Abbas Araghchi, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The telephone discussions focused on reaching practical, fair and sustainable understandings on navigation and supply chain flows through political and diplomatic solutions, in the interest of regional countries and all parties benefiting from maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. The Foreign Minister and his regional counterparts underscored the imperative of safe navigation and the restoration of trade flows and supply chains linked to the regional and global economy. They also agreed to continue coordination and consultation to support regional security and stability. -**ONA**

OHRC WARNS AGAINST RISING EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Commission received and monitored 1,479 human rights-related cases during 2025

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has raised an alarm over the growing exploitation of children on social media. The Commission has called for dedicated legislation to criminalise digital exploitation of children while stepping up awareness campaigns and child protection initiatives across the Sultanate. The work of Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) witnessed remarkable development over the past year in the effectiveness of its monitoring and complaint-receiving system. This included expanding its reach to various segments of society and diversifying and developing the available reporting mechanisms. Additionally, the Commission intensified its field visits and continuous follow-ups with the relevant authorities, reflecting its ongoing efforts to enhance the necessary protection for individuals and activate its various roles in accordance with its legal mandates. In a statement, the Commission confirmed receiving and monitoring 1,479 human rights-related cases during 2025. The Commission addressed these cases by verifying the facts and tracing the legal and administrative pathways for each case. This was done to ensure the achievement of solutions that eliminate their root causes and contribute to resolving them in accordance with national laws and international covenants. The Commission worked on studying the incoming cases to analyse their dimensions and identify their direct foundations. **>A2**

CPI DATA

Al Dhahirah records highest inflation in Oman; North Al Sharqiyah sees lowest rise in prices

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Dhahirah Governorate recorded the highest inflation rate in Oman at 3.5 per cent in June 2026, while North Al Sharqiyah posted the lowest at 1.9 per cent, according to the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSD). Nationally, consumer prices increased by 2.8 per cent in June compared to the same month last year, marking a slowdown from 3.8 per cent recorded in May. Among the governorates, Al Dhahirah topped the inflation chart with 3.5 per cent, followed by Muscat (3.2 per cent), Al Dakhiliyah (3.1 per cent), Al Wusta (3.0 per cent) and Al Buraimi (2.9 per

cent). Inflation reached 2.4 per cent in both Musandam and South Al Batinah, while Dhofar recorded 2.2 per cent. North Al Batinah and South Al Sharqiyah each posted inflation of 2.1 per cent, with North Al Sharqiyah recording the lowest rate na-

tionwide at 1.9 per cent. The overall increase in prices was largely driven by higher food costs. The data showed that the food and non-alcoholic beverages group recorded the highest increase among the main groups at 6.1 per-

cent year-on-year, followed by the miscellaneous personal goods and services group at 5.7 percent, then the transport group at 5.5 percent, the restaurants and hotels group at 4.6 percent, and the furniture, furnishings, household equipment, and routine household maintenance group at 3.1 percent in June 2026. Prices in the education group rose by 2.2 percent, and in the health group by 1.8 percent. Prices for the culture and entertainment group rose by 0.3 percent, while prices for the communications, tobacco, and clothing and footwear groups remained unchanged compared to June of last year. Prices for the housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels group decreased by 0.6 percent.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN TRA unveils draft telecom permit rules

1 The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has published a public consultation on a draft regulation for regulating permits to provide services in the telecommunications sector. This aims to explore the views of relevant stakeholders and interested parties. **>A3**

SPORTS World Cup final referee Vinčić retires

2 Slovenian referee Slavko Vinčić has announced his retirement from officiating, just one week after taking charge of the 2026 FIFA World Cup final. **>A8**

MARKET Net profits of MSX-listed firms rise

3 Net profits of public joint-stock companies listed on the MSX rose by 12 percent reaching OMR866.98 million during the second quarter of 2026. In addition, 87 percent of the MSX-listed companies that disclosed their financial results generated profits. **>B1**

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OMAN

SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES

Royal Army of Oman marks passing out of new batch

MUSCAT: The Royal Army of Oman (RAO) on Monday celebrated the passing out of a new batch of recruits who took a course at the Training Battalion of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) in Muscat Governorate.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Maj. Gen. Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman.

Military salute

The ceremony began with a military salute to the chief guest, who later inspected the front row of the parade.

Then, the recruits performed a military march of slow motion, to the tune of the RAO band. Then, the columns made a forward march in parade formation.

Then, the chief guest handed over certificates to the graduates who topped the ranks of the recruits.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the graduates chanted the anthem of the Royal Army of Oman, performed the oath of allegiance and proclaimed thrice "Long live His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander—May the Almighty Allah protect him!"

Then, the RAO band played the



Salute of Honour, after which the commander of the parade stepped forward, asking the chief guest's permission to leave the celebration grounds.

The new recruits marched past the dais in a regular march, as the

RAO band presented various military martials and fanfare.

The ceremony was attended by senior officers of the Sultan's Armed Forces, non-commissioned officers, RAO personnel and parents of the graduates. -ONA

POOR SERVICE

Barka vehicle repair workshop fined

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A commercial vehicle repair workshop in Barka has been fined OMR500 after a court convicted its representative of failing to provide vehicle repair services in a proper and professional manner, the Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) announced.

According to the CPA, the case stemmed from a consumer complaint after the customer contracted the workshop to repair a vehicle

and replace its fuel filter, with the work scheduled to be completed within 10 days.

However, the workshop failed to carry out the repairs to the required standard, with the same fault recurring multiple times.

Repeated defects

The repeated defects left the vehicle out of service for extended periods, prompting the consumer to file a complaint.

Following legal proceedings, the

court found the establishment's representative guilty of failing to provide the agreed service in a proper and professional manner. The court imposed a fine of OMR 500 and ordered the representative to bear the costs of the public prosecution proceedings.

The CPA reiterated its commitment to protecting consumers' rights and urged businesses to comply with professional service standards and contractual obligations.

OHRC

2,115 citizens, foreigners received Royal Pardon in 2025

< FROM A1 This resulted in providing legal advice and consultations to the individuals involved, directing them to the available official mechanisms to pursue their cases before the competent authorities.

Further, the Commission also continued its role in monitoring, receiving, and following up on complaints and reports in coordination with the relevant authorities.

This involved making practical efforts to facilitate access to justice and litigation guarantees, as well as monitoring the rights of inmates and detainees, and health-care provisions within detention facilities.

Furthermore, it monitored issues related to the right to a decent living, social protection, labour, education, health, housing, and a healthy environment.

Harmful practices

The Commission paid particular attention to protecting children from harmful practices, especially concerning the exploitation of children on social media platforms.

It pushed toward enhancing awareness and developing reporting and prevention channels in a manner that safeguards the best interests of the child and protects their privacy and safety.

During 2025, the Commission followed up on the issuance of several Royal Decrees granting and restoring Omani citizenship to 329 applicants.

The Commission also monitored the issuance of Royal Orders for the release of a group of inmates from the Central Prison. The total number of inmates who were granted the Royal Pardon during 2025 reached approximately 2,115, comprising both citizens and foreigners convicted in various cases.

The Commission emphasized that these steps reflect a practical commitment to human rights principles, the preservation of the right to citizenship, and the enhancement of belonging, as well as family and societal stability.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Royal Pardon serves as a practical embodiment of the concept of "restorative justice," which opens the doors for rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Regarding labor rights, the statement mentioned that the Oman Human Rights Commission conducted field visits to labor gatherings and accommodations. These visits aimed to assess labor housing conditions based on safety standards, the availability of first aid, adequate space, fire-fighting requirements, health facilities, and cleanliness levels. This was in fulfillment of its mandates to monitor labor rights and ensure the provision of a decent residential environment for them. During the visits, the Commission also listened to the workers' remarks and inspected the facilities and services provided.

The statement reported that the Commission visited the inspection unit of the Security and Safety Services Establishment, where it reviewed the unit's mandates, work mechanisms, procedures followed, and the services it provides. It affirmed the level of quality and efficiency in the establishment's performance, reflecting its commitment to professional standards.

The Commission indicated that it received a number of complaints and reports that were resolved in coordination with the relevant authorities. Additionally, it facilitated the provision of designated areas enabling inmates to meet their families, as part of its efforts aimed at strengthening family ties and improving the psychological well-being of the inmates.

These initiatives included organising recreational and cultural events, and allowing private family meetings in a suitable environment that contributes to enhancing family cohesion. Furthermore, exhibitions of the inmates' products were held to display and highlight the skills and capabilities acquired by both male and female inmates through workshops and training programmes offered within the prison. The Commission clarified that these efforts fall within the framework of supporting inmates' families and contributing to their rehabilitation and preparation for positive reintegration into society upon their release.



tation and preparation for positive reintegration into society upon their release.

Social Protection Fund

The Commission mentioned receiving and monitoring several complaints via social media platforms regarding the attainment of the social protection benefit. For those classified as eligible categories, they were enabled to receive the benefit in accordance with the provisions of the Social Protection Law, in coordination with the Social Protection Fund.

The Commission reported receiving a complaint regarding the provision of a safe educational environment, due to the impact of maintenance and restoration works in some schools. The Commission followed up on the matter within its jurisdiction with the Ministry of Education.

Consequently, the Ministry issued a circular to the educational directorates emphasising the importance of managing these works in a manner that ensures the safety of school attendees and avoids disrupting the educational process.

The circular also stressed the necessity of monitoring the companies executing the maintenance works in the schools undergoing maintenance, according to the approved technical requirements and standards, while adhering to the applicable preventive measures to achieve the highest levels of safety in the school environment.

Oman Human Rights Commission affirmed that the opening of the Muscat Recovery Center for providing addiction treatment and

Al Zain Poultry Wins Best Brand in Customer Experience Award in Poultry Category



Al Zain Poultry was felicitated with the 'Times of Oman Best Brand in Customer Experience (CX) Award in Poultry 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.

Al Zain Poultry has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to customer experience by delivering fresh, high-quality poultry products that meet the highest standards of quality, safety, and freshness. With a focus on excellence across every stage of the production process—from poultry farming and processing to packaging and distribution—the company has earned the trust of consumers, retailers, and food service businesses across Oman.

With a customer-centric approach built around quality assurance, food safety, and operational excellence, Al Zain

Poultry continually invests in modern production facilities, advanced processing technologies, and stringent quality control systems. Its commitment to providing nutritious, hygienically processed, and consistently high-quality poultry products has strengthened customer confidence and reinforced its reputation as a trusted household brand.

By continuously investing in sustainable farming practices, innovation, efficient supply chain management, and customer-focused service, Al Zain Poultry continues to set benchmarks in customer experience within the poultry sector. Its dedication to quality, reliability, and customer satisfaction has positioned the company as one of Oman's leading poultry producers.

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.

The Commission drew attention to the progress made in reducing appointment waiting times for clinics and surgeries during the recent period, which is considered among the significant achievements in the health services provided by the Ministry of Health.

It emphasised that the announcement of the National Health Policy of the Sultanate of Oman is among the most important achievements on a strategic level in the health sector, representing a roadmap for achieving an integrated, equitable, and sustainable health system capable of providing its services to the entire population.

The Commission confirmed its monitoring of some families exploiting children on social media platforms for purposes related to fame or financial gain.

It pointed out that this constitutes a form of abuse and harmful practice, especially when repeated or employed to achieve specific goals at the expense of the child's best interests.

The Commission noted its keenness to enhance child protection through coordination with the competent authorities, contributing to helping parents mitigate the negative impacts associated with social media. The continuation of these practices threatens the psychological and social stability of the child and may expose them to bullying, abuse, or extortion by peers or followers.

The statement explained that the Commission has intensified awareness and educational campaigns on children's rights, in coordination with the Ministry of Education and relevant civil society organisations.

This is alongside the printing and publishing of numerous awareness booklets and intensifying digital campaigns to reduce the negative impacts of child exploitation on social media.

The Commission has submitted its views and proposals to the relevant authorities to establish legislative frameworks and specific legal provisions that criminalise the digital exploitation of children and ensure their comprehensive protection.

The Commission indicated that the implementation of the "Values and Belonging" program covered 16 wilayats across 9 governorates, with the participation of more than 2,000 direct beneficiaries, including children, students, parents, teachers, specialists, and other groups concerned with child protection.

The Commission also graduated the first batch of internationally certified trainers in the field of human rights and is preparing to graduate the second batch, thereby enhancing the sustainability of capacity building through a professional approach.

The Commission mentioned that the guide on the rights of the workforce in the private sector was provided in six languages: Arabic, English, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, and Filipino. This aims to enhance the reach of human rights messages to broader segments of the workforce.

Regarding international cooperation, the Commission strengthened its presence through multiple contributions of parallel reports, responses to thematic questionnaires, and professional participations, supporting the transfer of expertise, the improvement of measurement tools, and the development of evidence-based national methodologies.

Combating human trafficking

Additionally, it interacted with UN and regional mechanisms by submitting its parallel report for the Universal Periodic Review (Fourth Cycle) and providing contributions related to technical cooperation, capacity building, combating racism and discrimination, and combating human trafficking.

This is in addition to holding consultative and professional meetings with international entities and organisations, hosting UN delegations, and expanding partnerships in specialised topics such as labour rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, and business and human rights, which contributes to developing tools and methodologies and exchanging expertise and best practices. -ONA

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TRA unveils draft telecom permit rules for public consultation

It seeks to regulate the activities and services provided by companies and individuals working in the execution of telecommunication services

MUSCAT: The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has published a public consultation on a draft regulation for regulating permits to provide services in the telecommunications sector. This aims to explore the views of relevant stakeholders and interested parties, within the framework of its continuous efforts to develop the regulatory environment of the telecommunications sector, enhance the quality of services, and raise the efficiency of



business execution. The regulation seeks to regulate the activities and services provided by companies and individuals working in the execution of telecommunication services, establishing a clear regulatory framework that keeps pace with the sector's development and requirements. The draft includes regulating the issuance of permits for a wide range of services. Most notably, these include the installation and maintenance of telecommunication devices; the execution of excavation and construction works for the network projects of licensed companies; the supply and installation of equipment and devices; the development of systems and applications; the management of licensed or permitted telecommunication networks; last-mile services; consulting services; information security; the marketing of

licensees' services; and other services associated with the sector. Furthermore, the regulation categorises the permits into four main categories, which encompass manufacturers, systems integration and development, passive infrastructure services, and professional support services. The draft specifies the mechanism for applying for permits, the timeframes for deciding on applications, the validity period of the permit, and the mechanisms for its renewal. This is in addition to regulating the procedures for amending or canceling permits, in a manner that contributes to enhancing transparency and the ease of doing business. It also includes specific controls regarding the disclosure of changes in ownership, along with regulatory requirements that ensure the efficiency and sustainability of the services provided within the sector. Moreover, the regulation focuses on enhancing governance and compliance by obligating licensed and permitted entities to adhere to information security and cybersecurity controls, protect beneficiaries' data, and refrain from assigning works to anyone other than permitted entities. In addition, it aims to empower small and medium enterprises by allocating a minimum contract value to them, enhance local content, and raise the efficiency of national cadres through continuous training and qualification, alongside setting standards for institutional classification and performance measurement. The publication of the draft regulation stems from the Authority's approach based on partnership with various relevant parties. It provides an opportunity to receive feedback and views that contribute to achieving a balance between regulatory requirements and stimulating investment, while elevating the quality of services provided in the telecommunications sector in alignment with the targets of digital transformation in the Sultanate of Oman. The Authority has called upon all concerned entities and members of the community to participate in the questionnaire designated for the consultation and to submit their remarks and proposals. This aims to enhance the quality of legislative outputs and keep pace with the best international practices in this field. -OMA

SECOND EDITION

Salalah event showcases major housing and investment projects

Times News Service

SALALAH: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has launched the second edition of the Real Estate Exhibition 2026 at Al Hafa Waterfront in Dhofar Governorate, offering a platform to promote property ownership, real estate investment, and national urban development projects. The event runs until August 5.

Investment opportunities
The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, who said the event reflects coordinated national efforts to highlight investment opportunities and showcase urban development projects that contribute to economic growth and improve quality of life. He noted that hosting the event during the Dhofar Khareef season provides an ideal opportunity to introduce integrated urban developments that embody the concept of "Living in Oman", highlighting the Sultanate's social, economic and development advantages as an attractive destination for both residents and investors.

Ownership opportunities
Held under the slogan "Living in Oman is Something Else," this year's exhibition brings together residential and commercial projects in one location, enabling citizens, residents and visitors to explore ownership opportunities, financing options and investment prospects while engaging directly with developers and industry specialists. Among the flagship projects on display are Sultan Haitham City, Future Salalah City, the High Mountain Project, Surooh integrated residential neighbourhoods, and Najd Agricultural City. Financing institutions are also participating to provide a range of housing finance solutions for prospective buyers. The event features broad par-



ticipation from real estate developers and sector-related entities, creating a comprehensive platform that connects projects, services and financing providers to facilitate property transactions and investment decisions. During the opening ceremony, Oman Housing Bank unveiled the "Long Waiting List" digital platform, designed to streamline applications for subsidised housing finance. The platform enables beneficiaries to register electronically, monitor the progress of their applications and receive updates through a unified digital system, enhancing service efficiency and simplifying procedures. **Transactions worth more than OMR75 million**
The ministry said the second edition builds on the success of the inaugural event, which attracted more than 30,000 visitors and generated over 1,500 real estate transactions worth more than OMR75 million, reflecting growing interest in property ownership and investment opportunities across Oman.

WEATHER

Moderate to heavy rains fall in Rustaq



MUSCAT: Moderate to heavy rainfall lashed the Wilayat of Rustaq in South Al Batinah Governorate on Monday evening, affecting several villages and residential areas. The heaviest rainfall was recorded over the valleys of Bani Ghafir, Bani Hani, Al Sahtan, Bani Awf, as well as Rustaq city centre, leading to flash floods and the flow of several wadis. Authorities have urged residents and motorists to exercise caution, particularly near low-lying areas and wadi crossings, as runoff continues in parts of the wilayat. The rainfall is part of seasonal weather activity affecting several regions of the Sultanate of Oman, bringing much-needed precipitation while increasing the risk of flash flooding in mountainous and valley areas.

NORTH AL BATINAH

Two arrested in Sohar with drugs



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The North Al Batinah Governorate Police Command, in cooperation with the General Directorate for Combating Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, has arrested two Arab nationals in the Wilayat of Sohar for possessing a quantity of psychotropic tablets. The Royal Oman Police (ROP) said legal procedures against the suspects are currently being completed.

Omani Poem: A renewed language, vision towards the future

Currently, the classical poem is witnessing a tangible upward evolution regarding its linguistic context and artistic style, as it has become more conscious and capable of expressing human issues and intersecting with cultural transformations

MUSCAT: The essence of the classical Omani poem today is embodied as one of the most prominent features of the cultural landscape in the Sultanate of Oman, stemming from the aesthetic and linguistic legacy it has established, which reflects human experience and historical richness through the ages.

Currently, the classical poem is witnessing a tangible upward evolution regarding its linguistic context and artistic style, as it has become more conscious and capable of expressing human issues and intersecting with cultural transformations.

In this context, a detailed perspective emerges on the reality of the language of the classical poem, examining its Omani identity and its contexts of renewal.



Khamis bin Qalam Al Hinaï, a poet, pointed to what the “poem” has built regarding its own language in a way that reflects its cultural identity, establishing a distinctive presence in the Arab poetic scene while continuing renewal and preserving authenticity and beauty. He stated that poetry—as he sees it—is a delving into the interior and an exposure to the exterior, and that the Omani poet, like other poets, seeks in his poem to fuse time and space with the fire of his words, connecting with history and geography to the extent that he disconnects from them.

He added that the Omani poet contributes to extending human emotional experience through leveraging personal experiences and surroundings to evoke wonder at times and empathy at others when read by people wherever they may be, using a tongue saturated with the flavors of language without losing the unique accent acquired through upbringing and connection.

He emphasised that over the past year, he had the opportunity to examine young works by an elite group of male and female poets, finding in them a human extension evident in both form and content.

For his part, poet Younis Marhoon Al Busaidi discussed innovation, artistic aesthetics, and the

key features of renewal in the classical Omani poem today, touching upon the experiences that must craft the poem to make it more astonishing. He said: “I currently do not find in the Omani poetic text—or perhaps even the Arab text, speaking of metered poetry, whether classical vertical or free verse—any innovation or broader horizons, despite openness to new experiences. The reason is that even if a poet tries experimenting with dictionaries, they will face the obstacle of using a new image to which the recipient is unaccustomed, causing it to be perceived as insufficiently rhetorical. Moreover, changing the vocabulary is neither the crux nor the pillar of innovation.”

Al Busaidi added in his personal view that innovation lies in treatment, style, and diversifying methods. He noted that the Omani metered text has been unable to leave its own distinct fingerprint; when reading it, one cannot distinguish whether the poet is Omani or from outside the geographical area to which he originally belongs, making it similar to poetic texts from any other Arabic-speaking nation—or even non-Arabic speaking if the poet is there.

He concluded that regarding the innovation demanded of the poet, the poet must respond by asking:

What is the required innovation in a poem? Looking back at history, radical transformations in vertical text consisted of departing from the classical opening of weeping over ruins—the darkness of which Abu Nuwas broke—along with moving from the vertical structure to Muwashah poetry and changing rhymes, and finally to Taf’ilah (monometer) poetry. All these transformations in the body of the poem are essentially insufficient, as they did not lead to addressing the intended subject. Nevertheless, he noted that a poet should not be burdened beyond capacity, and the honor of trying is enough.

In the same context, poet Abdullah Ahmed Al Kaabi says: “To me, the features of renewal in the Omani poem seem to rest on two things: first, creative innovation stemming from the intermingling of literary arts, and second, nostalgia for the eloquence of the ancient past.”

Al Kaabi added: “Accordingly, features emerged in the Omani poem, including openness to the intermingling of literary arts among poets possessing full mastery of their poetic, expressive, and linguistic tools, alongside the adherence of vertical and Taf’ilah poets to ready-made, coined expressions without adding any-



thing new. These two features necessarily lead either to constructing a poetic language with high poetic density and rhythmic clamor that conceals the inability to innovate ideas or creative imagery, or to constructing a poetic language with subtle resonance and a flexible rhythm harmonizing with the language of daily life.”

He believes that the poem transcending literary genres and borders, which truly carries the concept of a creative text, is the one inspired by daily language and the language of literature aligning with human issues; such a modernist text explodes with numerous meanings and mountains of wonder.

He emphasised that this interactive text, which relies on the reader co-creating with the author, is the most important. Here arises the question: Can the Omani poem be unique in presence and innovation? The reader themselves answers this, as this textual uniqueness must be accompanied by a reader who is creative in reading and analysis, and indeed in constructing a new text shared with the original author.

Meanwhile, poet Dr. Aisha Abdullah Al Fazari touched upon the assets possessed by the Omani poem to enhance its presence on literary platforms, events, and Arab awards, while opening up

to broader segments of readers. She discussed mechanisms for leveraging the cultural and creative momentum in the Sultanate of Oman to build a new phase that makes the classical Omani poem more impactful, widespread, and capable of producing a poetic achievement keeping pace with the future.

She stated: “The Omani poem possesses solid assets qualifying it to enhance its presence in the Arab literary scene. It rests on an ancient poetic heritage and a cultural environment historically known for celebrating knowledge, language, and literature. Moreover, over recent decades, it has managed to move from narrow locality to broader horizons through poetic voices possessing artistic tools and intellectual vision.”

She pointed out that the first of these assets is Omani cultural identity, as it is unique in its ability to draw inspiration from history, the sea, the mountains, the desert, and the Omani individual without falling captive to rigid heritage discourse. Instead, it reformulates these elements within a contemporary vision that transforms the Omani location into an open human space capable of addressing the Arab reader wherever they are.

Full story at timesofoman.com



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the unaudited results of the Company for the six-month period ended on 30th June 2026.

The Company (ORC Group) reported a net profit after tax of **ﷵ 1.41 million** on a turnover of **ﷵ 37.67 million** for the six-month period ended on 30th June 2026, compared to a net profit after tax of **ﷵ 1.10 million** on a turnover of **ﷵ 32.96 million** for the corresponding period of previous year.

Revenue increased by 14.3% for the

six-month period ended on 30th June 2026, with net profit after tax rising by 27.6%. While these results reflect the company's resilience and disciplined execution, management remains cautiously optimistic regarding the coming period given the prevailing geopolitical situation in the region and the associated cost pressures. Accordingly, focus will remain on enhancing operational efficiency, maintaining cost discipline, and driving sustainable long-term growth.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I take this opportunity to extend our sincere appreciation to His Majesty

Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and his Government for their wise leadership, guidance and direction which continue to motivate and inspire us towards greater participation in the development and service of Sultanate of Oman.

We pray to the Almighty Allah to bestow His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq with the best of health and bless him with long life to lead the Sultanate of Oman on the path of prosperity.

Buti Obaid Al Mulla
(Chairman)

UNAUDITED SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SIX MONTH PERIOD ENDED 30TH JUNE 2026

	Parent		Group	
	H1 2026	H1 2025	H1 2026	H1 2025
Revenue	26,399,820	22,120,593	37,668,773	32,962,561
Cost of sales	(17,933,198)	(14,815,925)	(25,722,760)	(22,689,674)
Gross Profit	8,466,622	7,304,668	11,946,012	10,272,887
Selling and distribution expenses	(6,182,824)	(5,727,511)	(8,343,785)	(7,207,189)
General and administrative Expenses	(1,455,856)	(1,548,652)	(2,267,764)	(2,157,427)
Net profit/(loss) from operations	827,942	28,505	1,334,464	908,270
Other income	63,736	21,654	313,273	89,500
Finance income (net)	537,313	501,819	89,191	171,562
Profit / (Loss) before income tax	1,428,991	551,978	1,736,928	1,169,333
Income tax	(213,724)	-	(330,243)	(66,950)
Profit / (Loss) after tax	1,215,267	551,978	1,406,685	1,102,382
Other comprehensive income				
Items that will be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Foreign exchange difference on translation of goodwill			(26,580)	42,580
Foreign exchange differences on translation of foreign operations			(370,345)	534,633
Total comprehensive income for the year	1,215,267	551,978	1,009,760	1,679,595

UNAUDITED SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH JUNE 2026

	Parent		Group	
	H1 2026	H1 2025	H1 2026	H1 2025
Assets				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	23,907,468	25,729,395	57,258,714	56,014,980
Intangible assets	-	-	17,053	28,528
Goodwill	-	-	1,396,512	1,422,484
Right-of-use assets	-	-	208,109	229,374
Investment in subsidiaries	24,471,200	24,471,200	-	-
Other investments	-	-	6,806	6,720
Deferred tax asset (net)	-	412,852	972,448	1,393,255
Financial assets at amortised cost	2,648,895	2,841,645	2,648,895	2,841,645
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	882,061	712,315	882,061	712,315
Total non-current assets	51,909,624	54,167,407	63,390,598	62,649,301
Current assets				
Inventories	9,045,669	6,836,811	15,371,539	12,495,400
Trade and other receivables	9,797,122	9,244,550	14,543,081	11,931,614
Due from related parties	1,357,180	923,402	81,766	180,340
Term deposits	19,000,000	18,000,000	19,000,000	18,000,000
Cash and cash equivalents	8,103,776	4,223,723	12,642,421	7,379,211
Total current assets	47,303,747	39,228,486	61,638,807	49,986,565
Total assets	99,213,371	93,395,893	125,029,405	112,635,866
Equity and liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Legal reserve	1,666,667	1,666,667	1,696,167	1,696,167
Foreign currency translation reserve	-	-	326,628	1,241,294
Reserve of gains and losses on financial assets measured at fair value through other comprehensive income	(23,004)	-	(23,004)	-
General reserve	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
Retained earnings	70,238,534	68,003,420	72,329,468	68,855,896
Total equity	79,382,197	77,170,087	81,829,259	79,293,357
Liabilities				
Non-current liabilities				
Term loans	-	-	6,921,145	3,144,986
Lease liabilities	-	-	122,505	136,764
Other Provisions	-	-	9,853	8,305
Employees' benefit liabilities	1,291,947	1,329,811	1,307,540	1,345,883
Total non-current liabilities	1,291,947	1,329,811	8,361,043	4,635,938
Current liabilities				
Short-term loans	4,183,435	4,916,732	12,135,313	13,516,057
Lease liabilities	-	-	97,137	104,595
Due to related parties	167,449	232,654	67,449	127,166
Trade and other payables	13,974,317	9,723,209	22,319,824	14,925,332
Provision for income tax	214,026	23,400	219,380	33,421
Total current liabilities	18,539,227	14,895,995	34,839,103	28,706,571
Total liabilities	19,831,174	16,225,806	43,200,146	33,342,509
Total equity and liabilities	99,213,371	93,395,893	125,029,405	112,635,866

COMMENTARY

Are US Military Bases in West Asia Becoming a Strategic Liability?

The US military bases in West Asia are no longer simply installations established to protect Washington's strategic interests. Over time, they have become part of a far more complex political and security equation involving the future of American influence and the changing nature of the international order. After decades of extensive military deployment across the region, an important question has emerged: Do these bases continue to serve as instruments of American power, or are they gradually becoming a strategic burden because of their rising financial, political, and security costs for both Washington and the countries that host them?

History suggests that great powers do not always retreat because of direct military defeat. Decline can also occur when the very instruments that once projected strength evolve into liabilities that drain resources, constrain political flexibility, and reduce strategic effectiveness.

Viewed from this perspective, the US-Iran confrontation is not merely a limited military rivalry but a long-term contest over regional influence and the future balance of power in West Asia. Tehran and its allies argue that the United States has failed to achieve many of its strategic objectives toward Iran and that decades of sanctions, military deterrence, and political pressure have not fundamentally altered Iran's regional posture. Consequently, the competition has gradually shifted from seeking decisive military superiority to imposing long-term political, economic, and security costs on the opposing side.

Military power, however, cannot be sustained by force alone. It requires a political and social environment that accepts—or at least tolerates—its presence. When military bases evolve from instruments that protect national interests into facilities requiring increasingly costly security measures while simultaneously fueling domestic political debate in host countries, their strategic function begins to change.

Political scientist Joseph Nye argued that modern power rests not only on military superiority but also on the ability to generate attraction, legitimacy, and acceptance.

A state may possess overwhelming military capabilities, yet struggle to preserve its influence if it loses the capacity to convince others of the legitimacy of its presence and policies.

Similarly, sociologist Max Weber maintained that authority requires a degree of recognition



and acceptance. As legitimacy weakens, governments increasingly rely on coercive instruments to maintain influence, often at a higher political and financial cost.

Antonio Gramsci offered a related perspective, arguing that durable dominance depends not only on material capabilities but also on political and cultural consent. Once that consent begins to erode, power relies more heavily on coercion and security measures, making the system progressively more fragile.

Pierre Bourdieu likewise viewed influence as extending beyond military and economic strength to include symbolic power and international perception. American military bases were once widely presented as symbols of US leadership in shaping the regional order. In different political environments today, however, the same installations may increasingly be viewed as symbols of external intervention and regional tension, altering their strategic and political significance.

These perspectives also resonate with the writings of Egyptian scholar Abdulwahab Al-Messiri, who argued that excessive expansion of imperial instruments of control can eventually produce unintended consequences, transforming mechanisms of dominance into sources of strategic exhaustion.

Within this broader framework, the view expressed by Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, is that reducing American influence in West Asia does not necessarily require a decisive military confrontation.

Rather, it can be achieved through a prolonged process that steadily increases the political, economic, and security costs of maintaining the US military presence. According to this perspective, the strategic balance begins to shift when military bases themselves require ever greater protection and resources simply to sustain their operations.

One of the most significant challenges facing the US military presence may arise when

the costs of hosting foreign bases become a domestic political issue within host countries.

As military installations become associated with heightened security risks or regional instability, public pressure on governments may intensify, making long-term military partnerships increasingly difficult to sustain.

Political sociology suggests that transformative change often results from gradual accumulation rather than sudden shocks. Ted Robert Gurr emphasized how widening gaps between public expectations and political realities can generate sustained political tension. Alain Touraine similarly highlighted the role of social movements in reshaping public discourse and driving political transformation over time.

Meanwhile, the international system itself is undergoing profound change. Global politics is becoming increasingly multipolar, reducing the ability of any single power to shape regional dynamics unilaterally.

Against this backdrop, the future of US military bases in West Asia cannot be measured solely by troop numbers or military hardware. Their long-term viability will depend equally on Washington's ability to preserve political legitimacy, manage the financial and security costs of deployment, and persuade both host governments and local populations that such a presence continues to serve their interests.

Strategic transformations rarely begin with dramatic military collapse. More often, they emerge when the instruments of power themselves become subjects of political and strategic debate. If military bases gradually evolve from assets into sources of financial strain, political controversy, and security vulnerability, they enter a new phase in which their sustainability depends not only on military capability but also on the continued ability to justify their existence politically, both at home and abroad.

(The views expressed by the author are personal)

8 COMPETITIONS

29 clubs to compete in Oman handball's 2026/2027 season

MUSCAT: As many as 29 clubs have affirmed their keenness to participate in Oman Handball Association's 2026/2027 sports season, which includes 8 competitions.

Key clubs that will contest top titles include Al Ittihad, Oman Club, Muscat, Masirah, Al Tali'aa, Nizwa, Al Salam, Al Nasr, Al Amerat, Al Mussanaa, Qurayyat, Majees, A'Seeb, Al Suwaiq, A'Rustaq, Sohar, Mirbat, Ahli Sadab, Al Orouba, Al Khaboura, Al Shabab, Saham, Salalah, Al Nahda, Khasab, Taqah, Dhofar, Ibri and Al Bashay'ir.

Oman Handball Association has allowed each club to register two foreign players. The first reg-



istration period for first division clubs will run from 4 October to 5 November 2026, while the second period will run from January 3 to 14, 2027.

As for second division clubs, they will begin registering their

players on 4 October 2026. The registration of Omani players will continue until the end of the sports season, in accordance with regulations. The registration of foreign players will close on 19 November 2026. -OMA

Asset Management Bank Muscat Money Market Fund

(Daily subscription and redemption)

1 year*: 4.61%
*Annualized return

Unaudited Statement of Comprehensive Income for 6 months ended 30th June 2026	
	30-Jun-26 OMR'000
Interest Income	8,118
Net unrealised loss on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss (FVPL)	(5)
	8,118
Expenses:	
Management fees	(722)
General and administrative	(955)
	(1,677)
Net Profit for the period	6,441
Earnings per unit	0.030

Unaudited Statement of Financial Position as at 30th June 2026	
	30-Jun-26 OMR'000
Assets	
Investment at amortized cost	88,740
Investment assets at fair value through profit and loss (FVPL)	-
Investment in Deposits	276,730
Bank Balances	6,668
Interest Receivables	8,645
Total Assets	380,783
Liabilities:	
Short term loan	(56,563)
Accruals	(156)
	(56,719)
Net Assets Value (NAV)	324,064
Composition of net assets:	
Unit Capital	215,009
Retained Earnings	109,055
Net Assets Value (NAV)	324,064
Net Asset Value (NAV) per unit (Rial)	1.5072163

Note: Due to figures displayed in OMR's, immaterial variance is likely with actual numbers. The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any Unitholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of request.
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ON SAUDI ARABIA

Oman condemns UAV attacks

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has strongly condemned and denounced the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attacks targeting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), according to a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Monday.

Oman affirmed its full solidarity with Saudi Arabia in all measures it takes to protect its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity,



while stressing the need to halt such attacks and refrain from any

actions that threaten regional security and stability. -OMA

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

Oman's central bank raises OMR35.5mn via treasury bills

MUSCAT: Oman's central bank raised OMR35.5 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Monday.

The value of the allotted treasury bills include OMR34 million for a maturity period of for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.031 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.030 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.88830% and 3.92636%, respectively.

Additionally, treasury bills amounting to OMR1.5 million for a maturity period of 182 days was also allotted. The average accepted price reached OMR98.077 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.065 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the av-



erage yield reached 3.85723% and 3.93288%, 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 discounting 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%. -OMA

MUSCAT GOVERNORATE

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No.(24/2026)

Muscat Municipality invites Companies specialized in the field and registered with General Secretariat of Tender Board, to participate and obtain tender documents from the website via the following link: (https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
PRS-26-039	Supply of Solar Power Panel (Unit Rate)	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRE-26-111	Supply, Installation, and Commissioning of Flagpole Lighting at Al Khuwair Square	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRE-26-110	Supply, Installation, and Replacement of Tunnel Lighting in Al Hail, Wilayat Seeb	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRE-26-090	Consultancy services to Evaluate Rental Prices for Various Types of Units &Uses (Recall)	06/08/2026	16/08/2026
PRE-25-147	Road Paving Works in Hillat Al Fatah, Wilayat Seeb (Re-Tender)	06/08/2026	16/08/2026
PRE-26-109	Construction, Supply, and Installation of Elevators at Muscat Municipality Buildings in Seeb and Bausher	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRS-26-038	Supply of OIL PER UNIT RATE FOR MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRE-26-112	maintenance Works Sea front in Seeb (Dama Street-Phase Two)	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRS-26-040	Supply of Waste Bins for Beaches, Walkways, and Public Areas	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRE-26-087	Energy Storage Unit Maintenance Services (Re-Tender)	03/08/2026	11/08/2026
PRS-26-041	Supply of Insect Control Pesticides (Re-Tender)	03/08/2026	11/08/2026
PRE-24-315	Design and Implementation of Portable Toilets at Quriyat	11/08/2026	26/08/2026
PRE-25-167	Consultancy Services for Outdoor Advertising and Commercial Signboards in Muscat Governorate (Re-Tender)	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRE-26-114	Supply and Installation of Solar-Powered Lighting Carts for Al Amerat and Al Seeb Cemeteries	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
PRE-26-113	Contracting an Integrated Media Partner to Manage the Media	16/08/2026	06/09/2026
	Supply & Installation Waiting Shelter Area In Qurayyat	16/08/2026	06/09/2026

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.
- Clarification and Support:
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om) .
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).

Website: www.mm.gov.om

SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Two dead in shooting at Seattle food festival

SEATTLE: Two people were killed and several others were injured - including a child - in a shooting incident reported at the Seattle food festival on Sunday evening, according media report, citing fire officials.

Citing fire officials, CNN reported that the shooting took place just a block from the city's iconic Space Needle.

The Seattle Fire Department said that it responded to reports of a shooting at the Seattle Centre just after 6 pm.

The fire department, in a statement, said that two people were declared dead at the scene and four others, the youngest of which was 2-years-old, were transported to a hospital.

Harborview Medical Centre

said all patients suffered gunshot wounds and one woman is in critical condition.

The hospital added that the range of injuries for the four patients involved the arm, leg, abdomen and lower leg.

Fire officials also noted that one woman declined to go to the hospital.

As per the American broadcast-

er, authorities have not announced details on a suspect or whether anyone has been taken into custody.

The cause of the shooting is not known.

The shooting incident took place as the area was hosting its annual Bite of Seattle Festival, featuring hundreds of local vendors and live music performances.

— ANI



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AFTER DRONE INCURSIONS

Romania
expels Russian
diplomat

BUCHAREST: Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said Monday that an employee of the Russian Embassy had been declared persona non grata and ordered to leave the country within five days.

The ministry said the Russian ambassador to Romania had been summoned on the instructions of Romanian Foreign Minister Oana-Silvia Toiu.

The summons was a firm response to repeated violations of Romanian airspace in recent days, the ministry said on Facebook.

The Russian diplomat was shown fragments of a drone destroyed on Romanian territory that prosecutors had officially confirmed to be of Russian origin. According to Romania's Ministry of National Defense, the country shot down three drones that violated its airspace on three consecutive days between July 24 and 26.

The ministry also said Romania's ambassador to Moscow would be recalled for consultations. On May 29, a Russian drone entered Romanian airspace and crashed into a residential building, sparking a fire and injuring two people. In response, Romania announced the closure of the Russian Consulate General in Constanta and declared the Russian consul general persona non grata.

— Xinhua

Iran accuses US for the ‘current situation’ in West Asia conflict



During a press conference, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson criticised Washington's actions, while asserting that Tehran's focus remains on protecting its national interests



that of a "mafia gang" that does not follow rules or international laws.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said during a press conference that Iran considers the US responsible for the ongoing tensions in the region and criticised Washington's actions, while asserting that Tehran's focus remains on protecting its national interests.

"The only one to blame for the current situation is America," Baghaei said, as quoted by Iranian state media, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

He slammed the military aggression by the United States against Iran, referring to multiple attacks against the country, despite the signing of the 14-point

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at ending the hostilities in the region.

"Let's not forget that the United States and the Zionist regime committed military aggression against Iran last year in June, for the second time on March 29, and for the third time on the twenty-first or twenty-second day after the signing of a memorandum of understanding," the spokesperson said, as quoted by IRIB.

Baghaei further criticised US actions, saying, "America's behaviour has been like a mafia gang that does not adhere to any rules or laws, and we currently have no ceasefire."

Earlier, Axios reported that US President Donald Trump directed

the US military to withhold new strikes against Iran on Friday, breaking a 13-day streak of daily air operations.

According to Axios, Trump's order to hold fire came several hours after an Omani delegation arrived in Tehran for negotiations focused on reopening the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Citing two regional sources familiar with the discussions, Axios reported that progress has been made and an agreement between Oman and Iran could be finalised over the weekend.

Trump would then face the decision of whether to accept the proposed deal.

Every afternoon over the past two weeks, military officials presented strike plans that Trump approved for execution within hours. On Friday, despite receiving a similar plan, Trump withheld authorisation and instructed the military not to proceed, Axios reported.

The Iranian spokesperson also commented on tensions involving Ukraine following strikes by Kyiv on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea, accusing the Ukrainian government of taking what he described as an illegal and unjustified action.

"The Ukrainian government must be held accountable for its

illegal and unjustified action, and this behaviour on the part of Iran will not go unanswered," Baghaei said.

He also claimed that Iran's adversaries had become trapped by their own actions, stating that after five months, "the enemy is trapped in a self-made quagmire."

"After 5 months, the enemy is trapped in a self-made quagmire," Baghaei said.

Reiterating Tehran's position, Baghaei said Iran's approach was guided by national interests.

"We only think about national interests," he said.

This comes as tensions between Iran and the United States escalated after the collapse of the 14-point MoU, signed last month, aimed at ending the hostilities between the two sides and opening the pathway for further negotiations, particularly on Iran's nuclear programme and the Strait of Hormuz.

Its collapse renewed the conflict in West Asia, with the US striking Iranian military and civilian assets, and the Islamic Republic also targeting American bases across the Gulf in retaliatory strikes. However, the US paused its continued military action against the Islamic Republic by refraining from strikes on Friday.

— ANI



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US-Iran hostilities show signs of easing but risks still remain

The US military has paused strikes on Iran, local media reported, though explanations for the halt remain divergent

TEHRAN: Direct hostilities between the United States and Iran showed easing signs after both sides reportedly paused strikes on each other, and diplomatic efforts continued over the security of the Strait of Hormuz.

The US military has paused strikes on Iran, local media reported on Saturday, though explanations for the halt remain divergent. CBS News, citing two regional sources, said Washington had suspended attacks to avoid disrupting an Omani delegation's visit to Tehran for talks on reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

Separately, The New York Times



reported that US President Donald Trump had set aside plans for a sharp escalation after senior advisers warned of dwindling US air-defense stocks.

Iran, meanwhile, said on Sunday that it had halted retaliatory attacks after the United States stopped its strikes on the country for the past two nights.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said

mediation with Washington were continuing through mediators including Pakistan and Qatar, but stressed that direct dialogue could only occur on "proper ground," noting that the United States had destroyed such a ground.

Hormuz security

Baghaei said Sunday that Iran and Oman had held "fruitful" talks on managing safe shipping traffic

through the Strait of Hormuz, with some progress achieved.

During the talks in Tehran, the two sides discussed ensuring maritime safety while observing the sovereign rights of their countries as coastal states, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Baghaei added that there had been no change regarding maritime traffic in the strait.

The ongoing diplomatic efforts



for everlasting peace also involved other regional actors.

Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani held a phone call with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on Sunday to discuss regional developments and efforts to de-escalate tensions.

Sheikh Mohammed emphasised the importance of dialogue and diplomacy, the implementation of the US-Iran peace memorandum of understanding, and freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Emerging flashpoints

Meanwhile, regional security risks remained. Iran said a Ukrainian attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea killed one sailor and injured three others, as Ukraine said its forces had targeted Russian vessels linked to Iran-related military cargo.

In the Red Sea, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations reported a security incident near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait after a tanker observed a splash from an unknown projectile, adding to concerns over the safety of key maritime routes. — **Xinhua**

Maldives urges SAARC revival

MALE: Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu on Sunday called for the revival of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), urging member states to resolve differences via dialogue in the interest of the region.

He made the remarks while speaking at the Independence Day ceremony, celebrating 61 years of Maldives' Independence.

Muizzu referred to the current impasse within the SAARC grouping and reiterated that differences should be resolved through dialogue. He called on SAARC member states to return to the negotiating table in the interest of regional peace and cooperation. — **ANI**

DR Congo Ebola death toll surpasses 1,400

KINSHASA: The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo has continued to spread, with the number of confirmed infections rising to 3,200.

The country's health authorities say that 1,405 people have died from the virus since the outbreak began in late April, with the current fatality rate standing at 43.9%.

Almost 90% of cases have been detected in the northeastern province of Ituri, near the borders with Uganda and South Sudan, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Experts believe that the actual number of cases may be much higher, with a large number of



cases going undetected or unreported. However, authorities attributed part of the sharp increase to improved detection and

expanded testing.

The outbreak, declared on May 15, has spread to five provinces in the country's conflict-

scarred east.

Experts have warned that the epidemic could continue for several more months. Strikes by health workers over unpaid wages have also hampered the response in some hospitals.

It is the 17th Ebola outbreak recorded in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Can vaccination prevent the spread of the virus?

The epidemic has been caused by the rare Bundibugyo strain of the virus, for which there is currently no approved vaccine or specific treatment.

Scientists are developing several vaccines and medicines

targeting the strain.

UK's Oxford University

The UK's Oxford University says the first volunteer has received an experimental vaccine designed specifically to protect against Bundibugyo Ebola.

Other vaccine candidates are due to undergo accelerated clinical trials, while researchers are also developing two potential treatments.

Ebola spreads through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person and can cause severe hemorrhagic fever.

More than 15,000 people have died from the disease in Africa over the past 50 years. — **BW**

A MAJOR MILESTONE



Nepal's first road tunnel inaugurated

DHADING [Nepal]: Nepal's first road tunnel, the 2,688-kilometre Nagdhunga-Sisnekhola Tunnel, was officially inaugurated on Monday after completing construction over a period of 80 months, marking a major milestone in the country's transport infrastructure development.

The tunnel was jointly inaugurated by Nepal's Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Sunil Lamsal, Japanese Ambassador to Nepal Toru Maeda, and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Akihiko Tanaka.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, JICA President Akihiko Tanaka said the Nagdhunga Tunnel represents the aspirations of the Nepali people by improving connectivity, enhancing safety and strengthening resilience against natural disasters.

"In many ways, the Nagdhunga Tunnel embodies the aspirations of the Nepali people. It improves connectivity, enhances safety and strengthens resilience against natural disasters. In this respect, the project reflects the principles of human security to ensure safer mobility, maintain

connectivity during emergencies and expand access to economic opportunity and essential services," Tanaka said.

Highlighting the significance of the project, Tanaka said the tunnel fulfils a long-standing aspiration of Nepal and will serve as an important gateway connecting Kathmandu with western Nepal and India.

"The Nagdhunga tunnel is a project of historic significance. For many years, the construction of a road tunnel was a shared aspiration among the people of Nepal. Today that aspiration has been realised as Nepal's first roadway tunnel; it serves as a vital gateway connecting Kathmandu with Western Nepal and India," he said.

"Approximately 9000 vehicles pass through the Nagdhunga corridor each day. In the past, the journey could take more than an hour during peak congestion; with the opening of the tunnel, it will now only take five to seven minutes," Tanaka added.

The tunnel connects Sisnekhola of Dhading with Totipakha of Chandragiri Municipality-1 in Kathmandu. — **ANI**

ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT

India and China discuss ways to deepen bilateral ties, people-to-people exchanges

BEIJING: India and China on Monday discussed ways to deepen the implementation of the guidance provided by the leaders of the two countries to further strengthen bilateral relations during Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's official visit to China.

According to the Indian Embassy in China, Foreign Secretary Misri began his visit with a meeting with Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), during which both sides reviewed efforts to advance bilateral ties.

The discussions focused on taking forward the understanding reached by the leadership of the two countries through enhanced engagement across multiple sectors, including political dialogue, academic cooperation, think-tank interactions and people-to-people exchanges.

"Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri, commenced his official visit to China today with a meeting with H.E. Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. They discussed ways to deepen implementation of the guidance of the leaders for bilateral relations, including addressing issues of priority to both sides and by promoting political, people-to-people, academic and think-tank exchanges," the Indian Embassy in China said in a post on X.

India's Ambassador to China, Vikram Doraiswami, was also present at the meeting.

Later, the Foreign Secretary also met Hong Liang, Deputy Secretary General of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consulta-



tive Conference (CPPCC), where both sides discussed expanding bilateral exchanges.

"Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri met with H.E. Hong Liang, Deputy Secretary General of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). They discussed ways to enhance bilateral exchanges at the political and people-to-people levels," the Embassy said in another post on X.

The meetings are part of Foreign Secretary Misri's official visit to China and come as New Delhi and Beijing continue efforts to stabilise and improve bilateral relations through sustained diplomatic engagement.

Last week on Wednesday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar conveyed to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that ensuring stability along frontier regions remains a "pre-requisite" for restoring standard diplomatic engagements, emphasising that

bilateral relations ought to be anchored in mutual respect, interest and sensitivity.

Crucial economic concerns

During the talks, Jaishankar raised crucial economic concerns with his counterpart, drawing attention to market entry barriers, expanding trade deficits and unpredictable global supply networks.

Both diplomatic representatives gathered in the capital of the Philippines, Manila, to participate in key ministerial discussions hosted under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) umbrella.

Ties between the two Asian giants have witnessed progressive normalisation measures recently, following years of acute tension triggered by the long-drawn military standoff in eastern Ladakh that began four years ago.

Addressing the delegation, Jaishankar stressed that a stable and cooperative partnership requires a foundational framework governed

by shared principles.

"We believe that a stable and co-operative relationship can best be developed on the basis of mutual respect, mutual interest, and mutual sensitivity," he remarked during his opening statement.

"Such a relationship can make a valuable contribution to a multi-polar Asia and a multi-polar world," he further added.

Reiterating the absolute necessity of maintaining calm along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the minister noted that border stability is non-negotiable.

"Peace and tranquillity in the border areas is obviously the prerequisite for normal ties. Since October 2024, both sides have engaged to ensure that important objective," Jaishankar asserted.

"This will continue to need our constant attention. Relevant mechanisms in this domain must be given full support and strong encouragement," he added.

 — **ANI**

OMAN OIL PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman crude oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by September 2026 reaching \$82.41. The price of Oman crude oil fell by \$4.70 from the price of Friday, which was \$87.11. -ONA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 7,185.38 points, up by 0.28% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.65% at 569.28 points. Oman & Emirates Investment, up 5.69%, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 7.58%, was the top loser.

Net profits of MSX-listed firms rise by 12% to OMR866.98mn

The results showed profit growth across three main sectors, with the industrial sector recording the highest growth rate at 51 percent, followed by the financial sector at 13 percent, and investment and real estate funds at 11 percent, while the services sector declined by 4 percent.

MUSCAT: Net profits of public joint-stock companies listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose by 12 percent reaching OMR866.98 million during the second quarter of 2026. In addition, 87 percent of the MSX-listed companies that disclosed their financial results generated profits during the same period.

The results showed profit



growth across three main sectors, with the industrial sector recording the highest growth rate at 51 percent, followed by the financial sector at 13 percent, and investment and real estate funds at 11

percent, while the services sector declined by 4 percent.

Largest sector

The financial sector maintained its position as the largest sector

in terms of profit volume, recording OMR392 million compared to OMR346 million during the second quarter of 2025, representing an increase of OMR46 million.

The services sector recorded

profits of OMR297 million compared to OMR309 million in the same period last year, while profits of the industrial sector rose to OMR172 million compared to OMR114 million, marking the larg-

est increase in profit value among the sectors.

Profits of investment and real estate funds reached approximately OMR6 million compared to OMR5 million during the corresponding period last year.

At the company level, OQ Exploration and Production Company topped the list of most profitable companies with a net profit of OMR196.87 million, followed by Bank Muscat with a net profit OMR137.49 million, then Oman India Fertiliser Company (Omifco) with a net profit OMR80.22 million, while Sohar International Bank ranked fourth with profits of OMR53 million, and OQ Basic Industries came fifth with profits of OMR43.30 million.

The results showed the continued contribution of the financial and services sectors to the largest share of total profits, coinciding with the industrial sector recording the highest growth rate among the sectors, reflecting the diversity of profitability sources among listed companies and performance variation according to the nature of economic activities.

The second-quarter results reflect listed companies' continued achievement of high profitability levels, supported by the performance of key sectors and the expanding base of profitable companies, as the proportion of companies achieving profits reached 87 percent of total disclosing companies, marking one of the highest profitability rates recorded in recent periods. -ONA

MONETARY DEVELOPMENTS



European Central Bank report reveals slowing liquidity growth, rise in corporate deposits in June

BRUSSELS: The annual growth rate of the broad monetary aggregate M3 in the euro area increased to 3.3% in June 2026 from 3.0% in May, averaging 3.0% in the three months up to June, according to the European Central Bank's report on monetary developments in the euro area for June 2026.

The components of M3 showed the following developments. The annual growth rate of the narrower aggregate M1, which comprises currency in circulation and overnight deposits, decreased to 3.4% in June from 3.7% in May.

The annual growth rate of short-term deposits other than overnight deposits (M2-M1) increased to 2.8% in June from 1.4% in May. The annual growth rate of marketable instruments (M3-M2) increased to 4.5% in June from 3.2% in May.

Among the holding sectors of deposits in M3, the annual growth rate of deposits placed by households decreased to 2.6% in June from 2.8% in May, while the annual growth rate of deposits placed by non-financial corpora-

tions increased to 5.3% in June from 4.2% in May.

Finally, the annual growth rate of deposits placed by investment funds other than money market funds increased to 1.6% in June from -0.6% in May.

The annual growth rate of total claims on euro area residents stood at 2.4% in June 2026, unchanged from the previous month. The annual growth rate of claims on general government increased to 0.3% in June from 0.1% in May, while the annual growth rate of claims on the private sector stood at 3.3% in June, unchanged from the previous month.

The annual growth rate of adjusted loans to the private sector (i.e. adjusted for loan transfers and notional cash pooling) stood at 3.9% in June, unchanged from the previous month. Within the non-financial private sector, the annual growth rate of adjusted loans to households stood at 3.0% in June, and the annual growth rate of adjusted loans to non-financial corporations stood at 4.0% in June, both unchanged from the previous month. -WAM

DIGITAL WAITING LIST PLATFORM

Housing finance services receive digital boost with a new platform

MUSCAT: Oman Housing Bank on Monday inaugurated its first-ever Digital Waiting List Platform for housing finance during the opening of the Real Estate Exhibition. The exhibition is held as part of the Khareef Salalah (monsoon) 2026 activities.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar.

The launch marks a significant milestone in the Bank's efforts to modernise housing finance services by allowing citizens to begin their financing journey entirely online without the need to visit a branch during the initial application stages.

At the inauguration, the Bank also announced the acceleration of the housing finance waiting list, confirming that the Bank has now progressed to processing applications submitted during April and May 2026.

A total of 1,252 applications, with a combined financing value exceeding OMR63 million, are now being processed across the Bank's branches, reflecting Oman Housing Bank's continued commitment to reducing waiting times and delivering financing to eligible citizens more quickly.

The Digital Waiting List enables citizens to create an account electronically, complete their personal, employment and housing information, select their financing preferences, upload all required documents digitally and receive real-time updates throughout every



stage of the application process until their financing appointment is scheduled. Launched under the Bank's "Reserve Your Turn" campaign, the platform represents a major enhancement to customer experience by eliminating unnecessary branch visits, increasing transparency and making the housing finance journey faster, simpler and more convenient.

Commenting on the launch, Moosa Masoud Al Jadidi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Housing Bank, said the Digital Waiting List is another milestone in the Bank's comprehensive digital transformation strategy, supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 to deliver smarter, more efficient public services.

Al Jadidi noted that, "The Digital Waiting List is transforming the way citizens access housing finance by redesigning the customer journey from the very first step. Instead of multiple visits to our branches, applicants can now begin the process digitally from wherever they are, saving valuable time and making the experience significantly more efficient."

He added that the platform is not only simplifying procedures but is also playing a direct role in accelerating waiting times, enabling the Bank to process applications faster while supporting national housing objectives and improving overall service delivery. "The progres-

sion of the waiting list to include April and May applications demonstrates the Bank's commitment to accelerating access to housing finance. We will continue investing in innovative digital solutions that improve customer experience, increase operational efficiency and ensure citizens receive the services they need faster than ever before."

The launch forms part of Oman Housing Bank's broader digital transformation programme, through which the Bank continues to introduce innovative services and smart digital channels that enhance accessibility, improve efficiency and reinforce its role as Oman's leading housing finance institution. -ONA

IEA REPORT

Copper supply may face 25% deficit by 2035 despite record prices

NEW DELHI: Global primary copper supply could face a 25 per cent deficit by 2035 despite copper prices reaching record highs, as the pace of new project development remains inadequate, according to a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The report said copper is one of the most strategically important metals and is widely used across sectors such as energy, transport, construction, data centres and defence.

However, the IEA noted that bringing new mining projects online remains a major challenge despite strong demand prospects.

"Based on the project pipeline, global primary copper supply could face a 25 per cent deficit in 2035 under today's policy settings," it noted.

According to the report, declining copper ore grades are one of the key obstacles to expanding supply. The average grade of copper mines

worldwide has fallen by 40 per cent since 1991, increasing project complexity and capital costs.

"The average capital intensity for expanding existing projects (brownfield) has also increased by 65% since 2020, approaching levels typically associated with new greenfield projects," the report said.

The IEA added that new copper discoveries have slowed significantly. It said only 5 per cent of all copper deposits discovered over

the past 35 years were found in the last decade.

The report also highlighted delays and cost overruns in several major copper projects, leading to a tighter copper concentrate market and raising concerns over supply security. On the near-term outlook, the IEA said limited availability of sulphuric acid has emerged as a major risk to solvent extraction-electrowinning (SX-EW) copper production. -ANI

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Oman & Emirates Investment, up 5.69%, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 7.58%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,185.38 points, up by 0.28% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.65% at 569.28 points. Oman & Emirates Investment, up 5.69%, was the top gainer while, Takaful Oman, down 7.58%, was the top loser.

Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 9616 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 45.81 million, with more than 168.01 million shares changing hands.

Out of 75 traded securities, 20 advanced, 34 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for RO 1627K while domestic investors were net buyers for RO 906K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 722K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 12,778.92 points, up 0.18%. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Bank Muscat, Sohar International Bank, Oman Arab Bank, National Bank Oman were up by 5.69%,

2.60%, 2.25%, 2.05%, 1.11% respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, Global Financial Investments, Al Madina Investments, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Anwar Investment were down by 7.58%, 3.74%, 2.86%, 2.00%, 1.18% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,328.54 points, down -0.79%. Prices of Gulf International Chemicals, Jazeera Steel Products, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 1.47%, 1.09%, 0.48% respectively. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Al Anwar Ceramics, Galfar Engineering, Raysut Cement, Al Maha Ceramics were down by 3.07%, 2.99%, 2.38%, 1.71%, 0.41% respectively.

Services Index was down by -0.33% before closing at 2,844.85 points. Prices of OQ Gas Networks, Al Batinah Power, Al Maha Marketing, Al Maha Markting, Barka Water & Power Company were up by 3.59%, 2.35%, 0.87%, 0.87%, 0.63% respectively. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Sharqiyah Desalination, Oman Education & Training, OQ Exploration & Production, Dhofar Generating were down by 5.94%, 2.94%, 2.70%, 2.51%, 2.50% respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	7,191.91	7,144.58	7,185.38	7,165.03	20.35	0.28%
FINANCIAL INDEX	12,816.40	12,677.65	12,778.92	12,755.59	23.34	0.18%
Industry Index	9,398.96	9,306.62	9,328.54	9,402.90	-74.35	-0.79%
Services Index	2,858.96	2,838.63	2,844.85	2,854.39	-9.55	-0.33%
MSX Shariah Index	574.48	568.54	569.28	573.03	-3.75	-0.65%
MSX TR INDEX	11,126.72	11,053.50	11,116.62	11,085.13	31.49	0.28%
FINANCIAL TR IDX	15,577.09	15,586.51	15,711.02	15,682.33	28.69	0.18%
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,037.69	11,919.42	11,947.50	12,042.72	-95.23	-0.79%
SERVICES TR IDX	3,830.46	3,803.23	3,811.56	3,824.35	-12.79	-0.33%
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,253.83	1,253.83	1,253.83	1,253.83	0.00	0.00%

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
168,012,820	45,807,207	9,616	37,296,127,428	20	34	21	75

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JULY 27

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001881	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	145,840	18,686	19	0.131	0.131	0.124	0.130	0.123	0.007	5.691	0.130	0.125	0.130	0.100	16,635,938
OM0000000072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	28,972,860	5,783,890	1,637	0.195	0.203	0.194	0.202	0.195	0.007	3.590	0.202	0.176	0.202	0.100	874,786,032
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	23,256,272	8,967,213	1,524	0.385	0.385	0.384	0.385	0.385	0.010	2.597	0.395	0.395	0.395	0.100	2,965,026,839
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	25,650	4,288	8	0.167	0.174	0.167	0.174	0.170	0.004	2.353	0.174	0.160	0.173	0.100	117,430,413
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	36,661,671	6,557,124	1,527	0.177	0.182	0.177	0.182	0.178	0.004	2.247	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.100	1,397,033,032
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	7,711,206	3,470,115	18	0.450	0.455	0.450	0.455	0.450	0.005	1.111	0.455	0.495	0.455	0.100	739,895,592
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	5,000	4,158	3	0.830	0.834	0.830	0.834	0.825	0.009	1.091	0.834	0.813	0.832	0.100	104,164,899
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODS MKRTNG	700	812	1	1.160	1.160	1.160	1.150	0.010	0.870	1.160	1.160	1.125	1.200	0.100	80,040,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	6,490	1,061	3	0.158	0.165	0.158	0.160	0.159	0.001	0.629	0.165	0.174	0.165	0.100	25,600,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	163,997	63,081	27	0.383	0.386	0.383	0.385	0.383	0.002	0.522	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.100	432,298,757
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	80,890	33,979	12	0.420	0.422	0.419	0.422	0.420	0.002	0.476	0.422	0.422	0.422	0.100	21,244,483
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	22,632	7,220	9	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.318	0.001	0.314	0.319	0.318	0.319	0.100	207,651,209
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	190	830	1	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	0.000	0.000	3.300	3.300	3.300	0.100	677,875,073
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	25,000	3,775	2	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.100	47,627,967
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	55,086	4,958	4	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.093	0.100	32,051,457
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	4,090	4,908	1	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	0.000	0.000	1.200	1.186	1.200	0.100	73,530,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	103,170	11,877	18	0.115	0.117	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.000	0.000	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.100	19,950,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	2,786,757	682,863	73	0.248	0.249	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.000	0.000	0.245	0.244	0.245	0.100	358,337,358
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	2,835	890	4	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.315	-0.001	-0.317	0.314	0.312	0.314	0.100	32,970,000
OM0000001020	ASYAD SHIPPING	6,255,519	1,537,602	684	0.247	0.248	0.245	0.246	0.247	-0.001	-0.405	0.246	0.223	0.246	0.000	1,281,351,093
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	211,222	47,162	71	0.224	0.224	0.222	0.223	0.224	-0.001	-0.446	0.223	0.246	0.223	0.100	677,875,073
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	2,993,114	3,778,214	115	1.294	1.295	1.285	1.286	1.293	-0.007	-0.541	1.286	1.422	1.286	0.100	964,500,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	78,998	22,152	12	0.281	0.281	0.280	0.280	0.282	-0.002	-0.709	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.100	66,194,800
OM0000000420	BANK NIZWA	1,550,126	207,848	67	0.134	0.136	0.133	0.133	0.134	-0.001	-0.746	0.133	0.133	0.134	0.100	297,514,753
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INTL DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	8,328	2,159	9	0.262	0.262	0.258	0.259	0.261	-0.002	-0.766	0.258	0.259	0.258	0.100	128,478,541
OM0000004735	SEMOB CORP SALALAH	100,931	25,737	8	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.257	-0.002	-0.778	0.255	0.255	0.265	0.100	243,415,847
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	606,242	99,880	54	0.187	0.189	0.182	0.186	0.170	-0.002	-1.176	0.186	0.165	0.186	0.100	120,020,655
OM0000000781	MUSANDAM POWER	410	139	2	0.340	0.340	0.336	0.336	0.340	-0.004	-1.176	0.336	0.339	0.336	0.100	23,651,040
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	1,340	209	2	0.155	0.157	0.155	0.157	0.159	-0.002	-1.183	0.157	0.155	0.157	0.100	51,354,000
OM0000000908	QO BASE INDUSTRIES (SPZ)	33,563,030	7,918,472	1,277	0.237	0.238	0.234	0.235	0.238	-0.003	-1.261	0.235	0.215	0.235	0.100	812,980,350
OM0000000894	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	5,626,250	2,016,845	193	0.362	0.363	0.355	0.357	0.362	-0.005	-1.381	0.357	0.357	0.357	0.100	274,961,400
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	20,000	5,115	5	0.257	0.257	0.255	0.256	0.260	-0.004	-1.538	0.256	0.256	0.257	0.100	10,967,806
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	101,600	10,090	11	0.098	0.101	0.098	0.098	0.100	-0.002	-2.000	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	8,800,000
OM0000000759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	5,808,318	2,508,908	412	0.439	0.439	0.427	0.427	0.438	-0.011	-2.511	0.427	0.427	0.428	0.010	3,416,000,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	3,333,336	541,378	107	0.163	0.163	0.158	0.158	0.163	-0.005	-3.067	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.100	158,000,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	220,600	70,488	22	0.280	0.283	0.280	0.283	0.284	-0.011	-3.741	0.283	0.283	0.286	0.100	56,600,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	10,000	1,900	3	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.202	-0.012	-5.941	0.190	0.188	0.190	0.100	37,300,764
Total		37	160,466,210	44,415,541	8,795											
Parallel Market																
OM00000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	198	18	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.088	0.002	2.273	0.090	0.083	0.090	0.100	13,999,536
OM00000005290	OMAN ARAB BANK	323,849	79,922	153	0.245	0.249	0.245	0.249	0.244	0.005	2.049	0.249	0.248	0.249	0.100	498,683,090
OM00000030228	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	117,737	8,126	7	0.069	0.069	0.068	0.069	0.068	0.001	1.471	0.069	0.068	0.074	0.100	1,449,000
OM00000008868	THE PEARL REIF	225,742	40,182	8	0.178	0.178	0.178	0.177	0.180	-0.001	-0.565	0.178	0.178	0.180	0.100	105,275,765
OM00000010955	DHOFAR INSURANCE	25,907	8,808	5	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.306	0.340	0.100	39,559,336
OM0000001384	FINANCIAL SERVICES	1,000	243	1	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.000	0.000	0.243	0.243	0.243	0.100	4,860,000
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	1,000	1,200	1	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	0.000	0.000	1.200	1.200	0.000	0.100	60,000,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	13,600	2,984	4	0.221	0.221	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.000	0.000	0.219	0.219	0.231	0.100	4,052,561
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	29,800	4,738	4	0.159	0.159	0.159	0.159	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.159	0.160	0.165	0.100	11,369,906
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	1,169	114	3	0.097	0.100	0.097	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.097	0.100	0.100	7,002,996
OM0000000599	JARAL REIF	29,375	3,852	7	0.194	0.194	0.192	0.194	0.194	0.000	0.000	0.194	0.193	0.194	0.100	18,986,000
OM00000019823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	52,200	51,156	2	0.980	0.980	0.980	0.980	0.980	0.000	0.000	0.980	0.980	0.980	0.000	28,795,344
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	1,241	307	4	0.248	0.248	0.246	0.246	0.247	-0.001	-0.405	0.246	0.247	0.248	0.100	13,530,000
OM00000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	69,612	7,467	24	0.108	0.109	0.107	0.107	0.108	-0.001	-0.926	0.107	0.108	0.108	0.100	90,064,033



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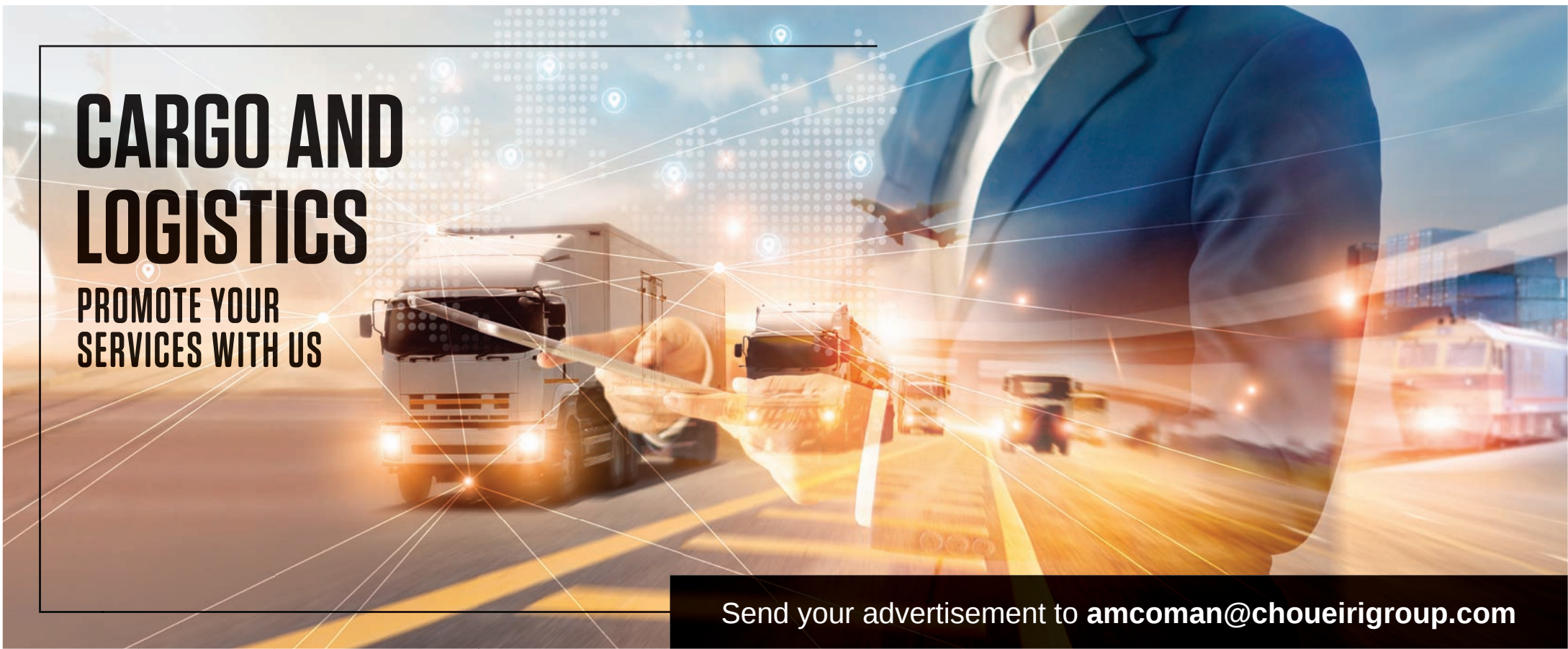
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Raging wildfires drive 300,000 from homes in France and Spain

According to France 24, authorities reported that roughly 220,000 people have been evacuated across France. In neighbouring Spain, over 75,000 residents have been forced to flee, while another 30,000 have been instructed to shelter in place

BORDEAUX: Uncontrolled wildfires advanced toward the outer edge of Bordeaux on Sunday, pushing into the heart of France's wine-making region as emergency crews across France and Spain struggled to contain blazes that have forced roughly 300,000 people to flee from their homes.

According to France 24, authorities reported that roughly 220,000 people have been evacuated across France. In neighbouring Spain, over 75,000 residents have been forced to flee, while another 30,000 have been instructed to shelter in place.

France 24 reported that French firefighters are working to prevent the flames from breaching Bordeaux's regional capital after blazes swept through the popular Atlantic coast tourist destination of the Cap Ferret peninsula and spread through the surrounding



countryside. Bordeaux Mayor Thomas Caze-nave noted that the main firefront was positioned approximately 15 kilometres (9 miles) from the city's primary entry points. While earlier stating there were no immediate plans to evacuate the city--whose broader metropolitan area holds a population of roughly 850,000, Caze-nave acknowledged the proximity of the threat.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez on Sunday underscored the severity of the crisis.

"We have a fire that is not under control and which is moving in the direction of the city area," Nunez stated, adding, "The overall situation is very unfavourable, we are

in a situation that is unprecedented," Nunez affirmed that officials would continue to monitor and evaluate the situation realistically.

As the firefront pressed closer, French authorities released footage showing police officers conducting door-to-door overnight evacuations in the municipalities of Marcheprime and Cestas, knocking on doors in the dark to urge families to evacuate immediately, France 24 reported.

Cross-border efforts are also intensifying in Spain, where Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez visited fire-ravaged areas in Avila, one of three central provinces, alongside Madrid and Toledo, confronting major blazes.



According to Spanish Environment Minister Sara Aagesen, flames have destroyed more than 50,000 hectares (123,500 acres) of land in Avila alone, marking it as the largest wildfire in Spain's recent history.

France 24 further reported on a separate, uncontained blaze in eastern Spain's Castellon province that has burned over 4,300 hectares and spread into the Sierra de Espadan natural park, threatening extensive pine and cork oak forests.

"The fire is out of control, it's very difficult to extinguish from a

technical standpoint, especially because of the adverse weather conditions that will continue throughout the day," Valencian regional leader Juanfran Perez told reporters near the scene.

International support is mobilising under the European Union's civil protection mechanism. Greece and Italy have each dispatched two Canadair firefighting aircraft to Spain, while Portugal has deployed over 100 military personnel alongside specialised equipment.

Spain's interior ministry announced on social media platform

X that two additional aircraft from Turkey are expected to arrive as soon as possible.

Prime Minister Sanchez announced that his government will officially declare a civil protection emergency on Tuesday for the impacted central provinces, releasing recovery funds to assist affected communities.

Sanchez revealed that more than 150,000 hectares have been destroyed across Spain since January, a figure six times higher than the total area burned during the same timeframe last year, according to France 24.— Agencies

IN THE CASPIAN SEA

Iraninan diplomat warns Ukraine after attack on vessel

TEHRAN: Head of the Iranian parliament's National Security Commission, Ebrahim Azizi, on Sunday issued a warning to Ukraine for its attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea that claimed the life of one sailor and injured another.

In a post on X, Azizi affirmed that the Ukrainian actions will "not go unanswered," reflecting Iran's resolve to respond to threats and attacks.

"Any attack on Iran always comes with a cost, and that remains true today; the US and Israel are well aware of this. Ukraine, too, may soon come to understand that Iran does not let actions go unanswered," he wrote, adding, "The list of those who have miscalculated continues to increase!"

His remarks come after Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Sunday condemned Ukraine's strike on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea, warning that the incident "cannot go unanswered," accusing Kyiv of violating the UN Charter.

In a post on X, Araghchi alleged that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had ordered the strike on the Iranian vessel, killing a sailor, and claimed it was carried out "at Israel's behest to drag Europe into its war."

"Zelenskyy has attacked an Iranian commercial vessel, killing a sailor. A blatant UN Charter violation done at Israel's behest to drag Europe into its war," Araghchi said. He added that in calls with European Union High Representative Kaja Kallas and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, he had made it clear that "what the freeloader in Kyiv did CANNOT GO UNANSWERED."

Araghchi's remarks came after Iran earlier summoned Ukraine's acting charge d'affaires in Tehran to lodge a formal protest over the incident. According to IRNA, Assistant Foreign Minister and Director General for Eurasia Manouchehr Moradi conveyed Tehran's strong protest, calling the



“

Any attack on Iran always comes with a cost, and that remains true today; the US and Israel are well aware of this. Ukraine, too, may soon come to understand that Iran does not let actions go unanswered

Ebrahim Azizi

Head of the Iranian parliament's National Security Commission

strike on the Iranian commercial vessel a "hostile and criminal act."

Moradi said the strike violated the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter, amounted to an act of aggression, and posed "a clear threat to the security of all littoral states." He said Ukraine must be held accountable for the incident and those responsible must be punished.— ANI

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

India summons Ukrainian envoy over death of an Indian seafarer

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Monday summoned Ukraine's Ambassador to India, Oleksandr Polishchuk, and conveyed India's "serious concern" over recent attacks on commercial vessels in the Black Sea that have claimed the lives of Indian seafarers, including the death of an Indian national in the attack on merchant vessel MV OMORFI.

The diplomatic demarche comes amid growing concern over the deteriorating security situation in the Black Sea, where repeated missile and drone strikes linked to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict have increasingly endangered civilian shipping and merchant crews.

In an official statement, the MEA said the Ukrainian envoy was called to South Block in connection with the attack on MV OMORFI, which resulted in the death of an Indian seafarer.

"Today, the Ambassador of Ukraine to India, H.E. Dr. Oleksandr Polishchuk, was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs in connection with the attack on the commercial vessel MV OMORFI, which resulted in the tragic death of an Indian national," the ministry said.

The MEA said India conveyed its "serious concern" over the



incident and unequivocally condemned attacks on commercial shipping.

"The Ministry conveyed its serious concern over the incident and condemned such attacks on commercial shipping in the strongest terms, underscoring their adverse impact on the safety of maritime navigation, freedom of navigation, and international commerce," the statement added.

It further said the Ambassador was requested to communicate India's concerns to the Ukrainian authorities.

"The Ambassador was requested to convey to the Ukrainian authorities India's strong concerns over the targeting of commercial vessels and reiterated that such

actions, which endanger the lives of innocent civilian seafarers, are unacceptable and must be avoided," the ministry added.

The diplomatic move follows the deadly attack on MV OMORFI in the Black Sea on July 18, in which an Indian seafarer lost his life. The Forward Seamen's Union of India (FSUI) identified the deceased as Chief Officer Sagar Gupta.

Responding to India's concerns, the Embassy of Ukraine in New Delhi issued a detailed statement expressing condolences over the deaths of Indian seafarers while maintaining that the threats to civilian navigation stem from Russia's military actions in the Black Sea.

The Ukrainian Embassy said it had taken note of India's concerns and extended "profound sympathy" to the families of the deceased Indian sailors.

"In addition to the letter of condolence addressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Andrii Sybiha, to the Minister of External Affairs of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar, the Embassy of Ukraine extends its profound sympathy to the families of the Indian seafarers who lost their lives as a result of the deteriorating security situation in the Black Sea," the statement from the Ukrainian Embassy read.

Ukraine asserted that throughout the war it had consistently warned international partners, including senior Indian officials, about growing threats to civilian navigation in the region.

According to the Embassy, Ukraine had also informed its partners about measures being undertaken to prevent the movement of military cargo and disrupt logistical routes supporting Russia's military campaign. It said these concerns had been formally communicated through the International Maritime Organization (IMO), including via circular letters issued on June 12 and June 26, 2026.

— ANI

INDEFINITE CURFEW IMPOSED

Clash in Nepal border district leaves one dead

KATHMANDU: One person has died while nearly two dozens injured in a clash in Sunsari District in Eastern Nepal after a violent clash broke out between two groups since early Monday morning.

Following the clash, the local administration has imposed an indefinite curfew in five market areas of southern Sunsari after a violent clash between two groups in Kaptanganj Bazaar, Dewanganj Rural Municipality-3.

Chief District Officer Basudev Ghimire issued the curfew order, which came into effect at 7:00 am on Monday and will remain in force until further notice. The order bans all public gatherings, processions, demonstrations and meetings in the affected areas.

Local authorities have identified the deceased as 24-year-old Om Prakash Mehta, who was fatally shot after police opened fire to bring the situation under control. Those injured include pro-

testers as well as security personnel, with some reported to be in critical condition.

According to police, the violence erupted late Sunday night over a dispute involving a DJ being played during a 'Bolbom' pilgrimage procession scheduled to head towards the Saptakoshi River on Monday. The confrontation began after one group objected to the loud music, citing noise pollution.

The dispute quickly escalated

into a clash, during which protesters allegedly vandalized and set fire to houses, medical facilities, vehicles and other public and private property in the Kaptanganj Bazaar area.

Police said they first used tear gas and fired warning shots into the air to disperse the crowd. However, they were forced to open fire after the mob continued the vandalism and arson despite repeated warnings.

— ANI



HOW VANILLA'S HISTORY IS NOT SO ...



Long before “vanilla” meant bland, the bean’s fandom spanned Mesoamerican elites to European courts. But it owes its ubiquity to a 12-year-old enslaved boy

Vanilla is almost everywhere — in ice creams, cough syrups, cleaning products and perfumes. Its ubiquity, thanks to the cheaper and widely available synthetic vanillin, has over time earned it synonymy with “ordinary” or “plain” in the English language. Yet natural vanilla is one of the most labor-intensive crops on Earth and one of the most chemically complex, containing more than 200 aromatic compounds. As the world’s second-most expensive spice after saffron, it sells between \$100 and \$600 (€90 to €550) per kilogram.

And its history is anything but “vanilla.” It involves, among others, a stingless bee and colonial machinations, as well as the ingenuity of a 12-year-old enslaved boy named Edmond Albius — whose discovery enriched colonial coffers and altered the bean’s global trajectory.

From Aztec tribute to colonial ‘discovery’ Vanilla’s origin story is generally situated in ancient Mesoamerica, where the creeping orchid vine — *Vanilla planifolia* — grew wild in tropical forests. Early written records show that different communities had their own names for it: the Mexica people called it “tlilxochitl,” the Totonacs “xanat,” and the Maya “sisbic.” Vanilla was a valuable commodity among these civilizations — used in medicine, in ritual, to perfume temples, in cacao drinks and as tribute. The Totonac people who lived in what is now Veracruz, Mexico, were the first to cultivate the vine, which

they prized for its scent. When the Aztecs conquered them, the Aztecs demanded vanilla as tribute and used it to flavor “xocolatl,” a cacao-based sacred beverage reserved for elites and warriors — and precursor to modern-day chocolate. In 1519, Aztec Emperor Moctezuma Xocoyotzin served this drink to Spanish forces led by Hernan Cortes, shortly before Spain established colonial rule in central Mexico. The Spanish later introduced vanilla to Europe, where it first circulated in the Spanish royal court through the chocolate preparation they had adopted in Mexico. Vanilla soon reached French and English court kitchens, where it began to serve as the sole flavor in certain sweets and pastries.

A bee stumps Europe The orchid was cultivated in botanical gardens in France and England, but try as they might, the Europeans could not get the flowers to produce fruit. Colonial administrators even shipped vines across their empires — to India, Java, the Philippines and the French colony island of Reunion. The vines climbed and the flowers opened, but produced no vanilla pods. The puzzle persisted for nearly three centuries. Growers were stumped as to why until 1836, when Belgian horticulturist Charles Morren identified the stingless *Melipona* bee as vanilla’s natural pollinator — an insect geographically native only to Mexico. Morren did manage to manually pollinate vanilla in a lab, but his method was time-consuming and non-scalable for colonial plantations. That is, until 12-year-old Edmond Albius, an enslaved boy on

Reunion Island, cracked the code. **Albius and his ‘uncannily simple’ invention**

In 1841, Albius discovered how to pollinate the vanilla flower by hand. Using his thumb and a small splinter to lift the tiny flap inside the flower that keeps the pollen and stigma apart, he pressed them together. And voila, the orchids produced vanilla pods soon after. Historian Eric T. Jennings, the author of “Vanilla: The History of an Extraordinary Bean” (2025), has attempted the technique himself. “Like many brilliant inventions, his seems uncannily simple after the fact. Putting the male and female parts of the vanilla into contact is easier said than done,” he told DW. After Albius’ discovery, Reunion Island briefly dominated the global vanilla market. But by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, French colonial administrators had spread the hand-pollination method to their other colony, Madagascar, which is still the world’s largest vanilla producer. The beans grown in these French colonies became known as Bourbon vanilla — named after Reunion’s former colonial name, Ile Bourbon. **A footnote in vanilla’s history?** Albius’ technique is the now the universal standard in the global multibillion-dollar vanilla industry. It remains a slow, delicate and intensely labor-driven endeavor, as each vanilla flower opens for a single day, and is quickly pollinated by hand. Yet, Albius never profited from the industry built on his ingenuity. He died in poverty in 1880, while



French colonial coffers swelled from the method he’d devised at the age of 12. Jennings, whose research took him to Reunion, told DW that there are two monuments in Albius’ honor — a plaque and a statue — in his native town of Sainte-Suzanne on Reunion Island, and a couple of schools are also named after him. “But his story is still relatively unknown, it seems to me,” said Jennings — this despite the discovery having reshaped

Reunion’s agricultural future. “He not only brought prosperity to Reunion Island by making it the world’s top vanilla producer within 30 years of his discovery, but he also helped rediversify the island’s crops, which up until his discovery was tracking toward the monoculture of sugar. That, in

After Albius’ discovery, Reunion Island briefly dominated the global vanilla market. But by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, French colonial administrators had spread the hand-pollination method to their other colony, Madagascar, which is still the world’s largest vanilla producer.



turn, was starting to drain and exhaust the island’s rich soils,” Jennings pointed out. While Jennings agrees that the lack of proper credit or monetary compensation for Albius’ discovery also lies in the fact that he was an enslaved teen, he pointed out that the boy was nevertheless recognised as the inventor of a new method, since a rival white botanist at the head of Reunion’s main garden tried to take credit for the discovery and failed. “Indeed, the reason we know the details we do about Edmond Albius stems from the rebuttal that his former owner and acquaintances launched against this rival claim,” Jennings explained. **Anything but plain** But vanilla’s story continued evolving after Edmond’s breakthrough. Chemists isolated vanillin — the compound behind much of its aroma — in 1858 and synthesised it in 1874. Cheap and easy to mass produce, synthetic vanillin quickly became standard in ice creams, soft drinks, perfumes, baked goods and processed foods, turning a once-coveted spice into a flavor few of us think twice about. Jennings said this substitution transformed the flavor’s meaning. As synthetic vanillin democratized vanilla’s consumption between 1880 and 1960, it became less exclusive, more widespread — even boring. Its “sheer evenness, the complete flatness of the synthetic produces a numbing effect,” Jennings said of its association with being “plain.” Yet the real bean, layered with more than 200 compounds, was never bland — and neither was its history. -dw

SPORTS

Dream come true moment, says Player of the Series Sooryavanshi

The 15-year-old opener smashed a scintillating 81 off 49 balls, laced with eight fours and four sixes

HARARE: Teenage batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi described winning both the Player of the Match and Player of the Series awards as a “dream come true” after powering India to a 3-0 T20I series sweep over Zimbabwe with another explosive innings at the Harare Sports Club on Sunday.

The 15-year-old opener smashed a scintillating 81 off 49 balls, laced with eight fours and four sixes, to lay the foundation for India’s 192/5 after captain Shreyas Iyer elected to bat first. India then restricted Zimbabwe to 157/7 to seal a 35-run victory and complete a clean sweep.

Reflecting on his performances throughout the series, Sooryavanshi credited the team’s preparation and the support he received from the dressing room.

“It felt really good. Our preparation was very good during the two or three days after we arrived in Harare. I also played the Under-19 World Cup here, so I really enjoy playing at this venue. Everyone backed me - the captain, the coaches, everyone - so I’m very happy,” said Sooryavanshi after receiving



his POTM and POTS awards during the post-match presentation.

The youngster said his approach remained unchanged despite making his first full T20I series appearance for India.

“My game is the same as what I play in T20 cricket. I was just trying to do that for the team. In all three matches, I tried to give the team a good start. If I got a good start, then I wanted to make the innings bigger. That was my only approach,” he said.

Sooryavanshi gave India a flying start once again, helping the visitors race to 64/1 by the end of the powerplay. He reached his second T20I half-century in just 31 deliveries before narrowly missing out on a century after being dismissed

by Wessly Madhevere in the 15th over. Asked about his free-flowing batting, the opener said his success came from executing the shots he practices every day.

“The shots that I play are the same ones I practice. I just try to replicate in the match whatever I do in the practice sessions,” said the destructive batter.

India’s total was further boosted by contributions from Ishan Kishan (29), captain Shreyas Iyer (27) and Rinku Singh, who struck 25 off just 14 balls.

Zimbabwe’s chase never recovered after Yash Thakur removed Brian Bennett with the first ball of the innings before dismissing Dion Myers and Sikandar Raza in the same spell. Mayank Yadav

finished with three wickets, while Ravi Bishnoi and Ashok Sharma chipped in with one apiece. Ryan Burl’s unbeaten 54 proved insufficient as the hosts finished on 157/7.

Receiving both individual honours after the match, Sooryavanshi admitted the achievement was one he had long dreamt of.

“Yes, it’s truly a dream come true moment. Getting my first Man of the Match and Man of the Series awards, I’m very happy,” he concluded.

The clean sweep marked India’s third consecutive T20I victory and capped a memorable breakthrough series for the teenage opener, who emerged as the standout performer with his fearless strokeplay at the top of the order. **-ANI**

Vaibhav career has been on expected lines: VVS Laxman

HARARE: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi showcased his immense potential with a brilliant 81 off 49 balls in India’s 35-run victory over Zimbabwe in Harare on Sunday in the 3rd T20. The knock capped an impressive series in which he amassed 151 runs across three matches, earning his maiden Player of the Series award, while India also sealed the series 3-0.

His exploits in Zimbabwe followed a stellar ICC Men’s Under-19 Cricket World Cup campaign earlier this year, where the 15-year-old underlined his extraordinary talent and amassed 439 runs to be adjudged Player of the Tournament.

The fearless left-hander has consistently offered glimpses of a promising future with his aggressive strokeplay and maturity beyond his years.

Although Sooryavanshi endured a modest start to his international career against England, registering scores of 14, 13 and 15 in a series dominated by the hosts, stand-in India head coach VVS Laxman believes the teenager’s development remains firmly on course and is in line with expectations.

“It (his career) has been on expected lines,” Laxman said as per the ICC website.

“Even last year, when he played for Rajasthan Royals for the first time, the way he handled pressure was impressive. I believe any IPL match is equivalent to an international match. At 14 or 15, when you’re playing in the IPL, either you can be overawed by the occasion or embrace the pressure. I think he chose the second option,” he added. Laxman also said he is not surprised by Sooryavanshi’s impressive series, expressing confidence that the teenage batter has the talent, attitude, and mindset to keep improving.

He believes Sooryavanshi has a long career ahead and the potential to break records at the international level.

“So I’m not surprised by the way this series has gone. He was disappointed not to get a hundred, but we told him it’s not going to be the first or the last opportunity he’ll get. He’s got a long career ahead, and he has the attitude and mindset to improve every day. I’m sure he will progress and break all the records at the international level,” Laxman said. **-ANI**

CYCLING

Pogacar wins record-equalling fifth Tour de France title

PARIS: Tadej Pogacar won a record-equalling fifth Tour de France title after finishing safely in Sunday’s 21st and final stage in Paris. Pogacar’s previous triumphs in cycling’s most prestigious road race came in 2020, 2021, 2024 and 2025. The 27-year-old Slovenian joined Belgium’s Eddy Merckx, Spain’s Miguel Indurain and Frenchmen Jacques Anquetil and Bernard Hinault as the only riders to win the Tour five times.

“I’m really incredibly proud to be a fifth time winner of the biggest race in the world,” Pogacar said. “It was a big goal to get five and, I’m not going to lie, it’s one goal achieved,” he added.

Pogacar completed the 3,197-kilometer race in 73 hours,



56 minutes and 26 seconds, finishing six minutes and 26 seconds ahead of Belgium’s Remco Evenepoel in the overall standings, with Mexico’s Isaac del Toro third. Pogacar won five stages in this year’s race to take his career tally to 26, placing him fourth on the all-time list behind only Mark Cavendish (35), Merckx (34) and Hinault (28).

INDIAN BOXER

Jadumani Singh beats Pakistan’s Rehman, advances to quarterfinals

GLASGOW: Indian boxer Jadumani Singh Mandengbam advanced to the men’s 55kg quarterfinals at the Commonwealth Games 2026 after defeating Pakistan’s Sumama Rehman by a dominant 5-0 unanimous decision in the Round of 16 here on Sunday night, according to ESPN.

Jadumani delivered a solid performance against Rehman to secure a convincing victory and keep India’s medal hopes alive in the category.

The India-Pakistan clash carried the intensity expected from the sporting rivalry, with Jadumani continuing his impressive run at the Games. The Manipur pugi-



list had earlier defeated Scotland’s Aaron Cullen in the Round of 32.

Rehman, who had received a bye in the opening round, entered the contest fresh but was unable

to stop Jadumani from securing a comprehensive victory. Jadumani will return to the ring on Tuesday for his quarterfinal bout.

Meanwhile, India enjoyed a

strong day at the Commonwealth Games 2026, with Mirabai Chanu winning gold in women’s 48kg weightlifting with a combined lift of 190kg. Rishikanta Singh added a silver in the men’s 60kg category.

In boxing, Preeti Pawar stormed into the women’s 54kg quarterfinals with a second-round RSC win.

India’s women’s 3x3 wheelchair basketball team suffered its second straight defeat, losing to Scotland, while Pinki Singh and Rupa Rani Turkey were eliminated from the women’s pairs bowls event after a tie-break loss to England. In men’s singles bowls, Putul Sonowal’s defeat to Malta’s Shaun James Parnis ended India’s semis hopes. **-ANI**

NEW HEAD COACH

Jürgen Klopp and Germany: A partnership long in the making

BERLIN: Jürgen Klopp has long been the overwhelming favorite to become the new head coach of Germany’s national football team. On Friday, the German Football Association (DFB) made his appointment official.

DFB President Bernd Neuen-dorf announced at a press conference in Frankfurt that Klopp had signed a contract that would see him remain Germany coach through the 2030 World Cup. He is to officially take up the post on August 15.

“It is a great honor to sit here,” Klopp said. “I had an idea how big the job is, but when you are directly involved, you feel the responsibility even more. It is a very special day for me.”

At the same time, the new Germany coach, who often appears light-hearted in public, appeared to issue a stern warning to the gathered reporters.

“On the day you don’t want me anymore, tell me and I’m gone,” he said. “If you misbehave and don’t leave my family alone, I’m gone.”

Rudi Völler stays on as sporting director, but there are changes to the coaching staff.

Two former Klopp colleagues in Peter Krawietz, who was Klopp’s assistant manager at Borussia Dortmund and Liverpool, and Pep Lijnders, who was with Klopp at Liverpool, have joined the 59-year-old head coach. Former Bundesliga player and Germany international Sven Bender is also part of the staff.

Unusual is that Klopp’s agent,

Marc Kossicke, has been handed a position in the new Germany set-up. The 55-year-old is to be responsible “for strategy, development and innovation.” Klopp said he needed his close confidant because although playing good football is the priority, “we must also change lots of other things. We need people who can do this alongside me.”

Technically, Kossicke will be an “an external consultant,” not a DFB employee.

Former Germany defender Per Mertesacker, who spent eight years running Arsenal’s youth academy, is to succeed Andreas Rettig as the DFB’s managing director for sport in January. Rettig had previously announced that he would be stepping down at the end of the year.

The obvious choice

For years, the charismatic Klopp had been seen as the ideal candidate. In recent weeks, he had been the boss-in-waiting, following Julian Nagelsmann’s departure after Germany’s disappointing performance at this summer’s World Cup in North America.

This was the third consecutive World Cup that has ended in disappointment for Germany, with two group-stage exits and the knockout defeat to Paraguay in the round of 32 on June 29.

Euro 2024 was more positive, but generally Germany have not enjoyed a successful tournament since Euro 2016. For a four-time World Cup winner and a three-time European champion, a dec-



ade-long span of disappointment sits far below expectation.

A candidate in waiting

Klopp’s approach to the Germany job has been a long time coming. Even as far back as late October 2024 when he took the job as “Head of Global Soccer” for Red Bull, there were reports that either his contract included a clause allowing him to become Germany head coach in the future or he had a gentleman’s agreement to do the same.

And during this summer’s World Cup, his role as a pundit for MagentaTV seems to have moved him ever closer to the job. His analysis was seen as on point, but Klopp caused a stir when he said, “Luckily, it’s Julian Nagelsmann who’s picking the team. For now.” Those two words hung over Nagelsmann, and even though Klopp apologized, it almost felt like he knew his time

was fast approaching.

After the loss to Paraguay, Klopp continued to distance himself from the job, saying it wasn’t time to talk about that.

“When the next tournament comes around and whoever is head coach is asked, what is your goal? If they don’t say ‘European champion,’ then people will say, ‘Have you got no ambition? We are Germany!’ No, we were football Germany. In order to become that force again, we’ve really got to give it our all,” Klopp said on MagentaTV.

Klopp had been providing “strategic vision and support” as well as helping “coaches develop” in his job at Red Bull. However, his role in the dismissal of RB Leipzig head coach Ole Werner after just one season has been seen critically in the media. Werner guided RB Leipzig to third place in the Bundesliga and returned the club to the Champions League.

A popular figure

His success in the dugout combined with his warm, funny character has made him a fan favorite in most places in Germany. After playing in Mainz, he guided the club to the Bundesliga for the first time. His departure was emotional, as both Klopp and many of the crowd shed tears.

At Borussia Dortmund, he won back-to-back Bundesliga titles, and took the club to the Champions League final in 2013. More recently, he spent nine years with Liverpool, where he delivered a first league title in more than a quarter of a century, as well as glory in the 2019 Champions League final.

He has a history of leading clubs with strong working-class roots to success, allowing him to maintain a bond to the core values of the clubs in question. In combination with his holistic style of coaching, Klopp is seen as one of the best coaches in the world.

During his break from coaching, Klopp was awarded the highest civic award in Germany as a result of his outstanding contribution to democracy and his impact on the football world.

He was credited with becoming a role model, a football ambassador and someone who has improved the image of Germany around the world, particularly in the United Kingdom.

Recently, his face has been hard to miss. Famous for being in a raft of adverts, Klopp has cemented his status as one of the most famous

Germans rather than just a great football coach from Germany.

Could Klopp lead Germany to Euro 2028 glory?

With Euro 2028 in the United Kingdom and Ireland, Klopp will be familiar with many of the stadiums and the way football works in the country. He will have a long run-up at the title, though.

His first game in charge of Germany will be in Amsterdam on September 24 against the Netherlands in the Nations League.

This will mark the start of a new format of international break. Unlike in previous years where there have been three two-week international breaks in September, October and November, the 2026-27 season will see September and October’s breaks merge into one. November’s will be the same.

This means Klopp’s first time in charge of the team would be for a three-week break in late September, which will see Germany play Greece in Augsburg three days after the Amsterdam game.

Four days after that, Germany will play Serbia in Munich before closing out the international break in Thessaloniki against Greece on October 4. This longer break will offer Klopp a chance to hit the ground running and generate a real clarity over his playing style and who the core of his Germany team will be. With Klopp in charge, there will be no stopping Germany fans daydreaming of what their team will look like in the not-too-distant future. **-DW**

IN PICTURES

Jember Fashion Carnival 2026 held in Indonesia: A performer participates in the Jember Fashion Carnival 2026 in Jember, East Java, Indonesia. Held under the theme of Humanity, Earth, and Life (HEAL), this year's carnival highlights humanity, environmental sustainability, and the relationship between people and nature. — Xinhua



Finland's Aalto Works inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List: This photo shows a view of Finlandia Hall, one of the Aalto Works, in Helsinki, Finland. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has inscribed the Aalto Works, a collection of 13 modern architectural sites across Finland, on the World Heritage List, Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture said in a press release. — Xinhua



Tsavo West National Park in Kenya: African elephants are seen at Tsavo West National Park in Taita-Taveta County, Kenya. Tsavo West National Park, featuring diverse landscapes, is home to a wide variety of wildlife. It is an important wildlife conservation area and a popular destination. — Xinhua

Miss Universe India 2026 finalists pose during the sash ceremony: Miss Universe India 2026 finalists pose for a group photograph during the sash ceremony at Grand Uniara Hotel, in Jaipur. ANI Photo



Montecasino Bird Gardens in Johannesburg, South Africa: Macaws are seen at the Montecasino Bird Gardens in Johannesburg, South Africa. — Xinhua



7th edition of Amman International Film Festival held in Jordan: Princess Rym Ali (front), president of the Amman International Film Festival, attends the opening of the festival in Amman, Jordan. — Xinhua



Sighisoara Medieval Festival celebrated in Romania: Local residents perform ribbon juggling in a parade during the Sighisoara Medieval Festival in Sighisoara, Romania. The festival is now a distinctive historical celebration in Europe, which revives medieval culture and traditions through various activities. — Xinhua



Tourists enjoy rafting at the grand canyon rafting: Tourists enjoy rafting at the grand canyon rafting scenic area in Pingshan County of Shijiazhuang, north China's Hebei Province. — Xinhua

ROUND-UP

Toyota Lite Ace: The compact solution for large cargo demands



This highly practical vehicle is purpose-built to cater to a wide range of modern transportation requirements, offering independent e-commerce delivery operations, small businesses and large corporate fleets a perfectly balanced solution for reliable performance and cost-effective operations on Omani roads

MUSCAT: Designed to empower local enterprises and streamline daily business logistics, the Toyota Lite Ace continues to serve as an

invaluable tool for the Sultanate's commercial sector. This highly practical vehicle is purpose-built to cater to a wide

range of modern transportation requirements, offering independent e-commerce delivery operations, small businesses and large corporate fleets a perfectly balanced solution for reliable performance and cost-effective operations on Omani roads.

Optimised for seamless loading and cargo management
The Toyota Lite Ace is specifically designed to maximise cargo volume within a compact, highly maneuverable frame. Featuring a remarkably low floor height of 620 mm and a spacious rear hatch entrance, the vehicle ensures effortless loading and unloading. Businesses benefit from a square-shaped cargo hold designed right to the corners—measuring 2,075 mm in length, 1,495 mm in width,

and 1,305 mm in height—making it highly adaptable for cardboard boxes, tall objects, and large items. Furthermore, large 815-mm sliding doors on both sides allow users to access cargo securely even in tight city alleys or crowded loading zones.

Driver-centric comfort and advanced cockpit design
Recognising that driver comfort directly impacts business efficiency, the Lite Ace features a thoughtfully designed cabin aimed at reducing daily fatigue. Low steps at a height of just 425 mm allow for smooth entry into a roomy foot area, while the ergonomic placement of the gear shift lever next to the steering wheel facilitates easy cross-cabin access to the front passenger seat. The cockpit delivers excellent road visibility, reclining and slid-

ing seats, electric power steering as standard, and intuitive switch layouts. Large LED rear combination lamps ensure the vehicle remains highly visible to trailing traffic during heavy rain or fog.

Proven dynamic performance and high efficiency
Delivering the ideal balance of daily performance and low operational costs, the Toyota Lite Ace is powered by a reliable 1.5-litre four-cylinder engine. Generating 96.5 hp and 134 Nm of torque, the engine incorporates Dual VVT-i (Variable Valve Timing-intelligent) technology to continuously optimize timing based on driving conditions. Mated to either a precise five-speed manual or a smooth four-speed automatic transmission, the powertrain is engineered

to withstand daily heavy-load duties while maintaining superior fuel efficiency. Safety remains a foundational priority for Toyota commercial vehicles. The Lite Ace utilizes high-tensile strength steel to optimize body rigidity and structural protection. Riding on robust 14-inch steel wheels, the vehicle comes equipped with a dependable array of standard safety technologies to protect occupants and assets. These include dual front SRS airbags, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), an Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Traction Control (TRC), and a Tyre Pressure Warning System (TPWS). Saud Bahwan Automotive invites corporate fleet managers and logistics business owners to experience the unmatched utility of the Lite Ace firsthand.

PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

BankDhofar celebrates Dhofar Khareef with prize-packed 'Discover and Win' campaign

MUSCAT: BankDhofar has launched a promotional campaign titled 'Discover and Win with BankDhofar' in celebration of the Dhofar Khareef as part of its efforts to enhance customer engagement and connect its brand with one of Oman's most prominent tourism seasons through interactive competitions and valuable prizes on Instagram. The campaign aims to strengthen the bank's presence during the Khareef season while raising awareness of its branch network and ATM locations across Dhofar Governorate, helping visitors and tourists conveniently access banking services throughout the season. The competitions, which commenced yesterday, will be held every Monday and Friday exclusively on BankDhofar's Instagram account and will continue until 28 August, comprising a total of 10 competitions. Each competition offers participants the chance to win exciting prizes, with two winners selected per competition, each receiving a gift voucher worth OMR 50, bringing the total number of winners throughout the campaign to 20. In addition, participants in all 10 competitions will automatically qualify for the grand prize draw, where five winners will each receive an iPhone 17. The final draw will take place on 17 September 2026. To maximize reach and engagement, the campaign will be promoted through an integrated mix



of the bank's digital and advertising channels, including its social media platforms, a dedicated campaign landing page on the BankDhofar website, ATM and Cash Deposit Machine (CDM) screens, branch screens, and other advertising platforms. This initiative reflects BankD-

hofar's commitment to leveraging modern digital platforms to engage with the public and deliver innovative, interactive experiences, further strengthening its corporate presence and deepening its relationship with customers and the wider community, particularly during major seasonal events that

attract large numbers of visitors and tourists. Through such initiatives, BankDhofar continues to reinforce its position as one of Oman's leading financial institutions by delivering advanced banking services and innovative customer experiences that meet evolving customer

expectations while supporting the country's accelerating digital transformation. BankDhofar also continues to expand its reach through its extensive network of more than 145 branches across all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, ensuring its services remain accessible to

all segments of society, including small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the bank operates an integrated network of more than 400 ATMs, Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs), and multi-service machines, providing customers with convenient access to banking services anytime, anywhere.



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