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51

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UPCOMING MATCHES



PORTUGAL
6 July VS 11:00pm

SPAIN

USA
7 July VS 4:00am

BELGIUM

ARGENTINA
7 July VS 8:00pm

EGYPT



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Over 274,000 seedlings distributed

A6

WEATHER

Mahout records 50.4°C,
Jabal Shams registers 11°C

Times News Service

TIMES OF OMAN EXCLUSIVE

MUSCAT: Oman recorded a scorching high of 50.4°C in Mahout during June 2026, while Jabal Shams registered the country's lowest temperature at 11.1°C, according to monthly weather statistics released by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

The CAA's data highlighted the five highest and lowest temperatures recorded across the Sultanate during the month. After Mahout's 50.4°C, the next highest temperature of 49.4°C was recorded in Barka, Dima W'attayeen, and Fahud, while Qarn Al Alam registered 48.4°C.

On the cooler end of the scale, Jabal Shams topped the list with 11.1°C, followed by Saiq at 16.8°C, Al Ashkharah at 18.0°C, Jabal Harem at 18.2°C, and Dhalkut at 20.4°C. Dhalkut in Dhofar recorded the highest rainfall during June, receiving 55 mm of rain, the CAA said. **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Dark window shades protect drivers from heat

1 Oman's revised traffic law allowing vehicle window tinting of up to 50% is being welcomed by motorists and auto workshop managers, who say the move will help keep vehicles cooler. **>A3**

OMAN

Shura panel reviews transport plans

2 The Shura Council discussed the proposal on traffic congestion. **>A4**

MARKET

Oman to participate in global AI dialogue

3 Oman will take part in the first round of the UN Global Dialogue on AI. **>B1**

OMAN'S GDP TOPS OMR9.6BN
IN FIRST QUARTER OF 2026



Service activities posted a 3.7% rise, reaching OMR4,721.8 million, compared to OMR4,554.2 million in Q1 2025

MUSCAT: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Sultanate of Oman at constant prices recorded a 2.6% increase during the first quarter of 2026, reaching OMR9,685.4 million, compared to OMR 9,442.1 million in the corresponding quarter of 2025.

Preliminary data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicate that petroleum-related activities achieved a 4.6% growth in Q1 2026, totalling OMR3,035.3 million, against OMR2,902.1 million recorded during the same period in 2025.

This growth is attributed to the robust performance of oil and gas activities. The value added from crude oil activities rose by 4.3%, reaching OMR2,554.1 million, compared to OMR2,448.2 million in Q1 2025.

Meanwhile, natural gas activities recorded a 6.0% increase, with their value-added climbing to OMR481.2 million, up from OMR453.9 million in the corresponding period of 2025.

As for non-petroleum activities, they registered a 2.4% increase during Q1 2026, reaching OMR7,039.4 million, compared to OMR6,877.0 million in the same period of 2025.

The data further revealed that agriculture and fishing activities grew by 6.1%, amounting to OMR337.8 million, versus OMR318.3 million in Q1 2025.

In contrast, industrial activities declined by 1.2%, totalling OMR1,979.7 million, compared to OMR2,004.5 million in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Service activities, however, posted a 3.7% rise, reaching OMR4,721.8 million, compared to OMR4,554.2 million in Q1 2025.

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DIRECT GDP CONTRIBUTION

88%

MCKINSEY & COMPANY ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH INDEX

880 Mn Riyal

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

167

SMES SUPPORTED

19 Mn Riyal

TAXES PAID

5

WORLD CLASS HOTELS

385 K Riyal

DAILY COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

90

NATIONALITIES LIVE IN OUR COMMUNITY

337%

SHAREHOLDER RETURN

70

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL AWARDS WON

RESIDENTIAL UNITS HANDOVER

2006



Shareholder and Development Agreement signed

2008



First Unit Handover

2010



625

2014



1,257

2018



2,154

2022



2,538

2026



3,272



CEPA opens new trade chapter, says Indian Ambassador Pise

The Indian envoy expressed optimism that the India-Oman CEPA will further deepen trade, investment, and economic cooperation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: India's newly appointed Ambassador to Oman, Prashant Pise, expressed confidence that the India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) will open a new chapter in bilateral trade and investment. The landmark pact is already showing early signs of success through the first-ever export of Indian biscuits to Oman announced separately by India's Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.



Speaking during his first interaction with the media since assuming office in Muscat, Pise said the CEPA, which came into effect on June 1, is expected to improve market access, facilitate investment and deepen commercial cooperation between the two countries. He said the business communities in both India and Oman are optimistic about the opportunities created by the agreement, which is

expected to unlock new avenues for businesses, entrepreneurs and investors while further strengthening the long-standing economic partnership between the two countries. The ambassador's remarks came as Goyal announced the first-ever shipment of 40 metric tonnes of biscuits manufactured in Varanasi to Oman under the CEPA framework, describing it as an important milestone in India's export journey.

According to the minister, an MoU has also been signed to export nearly 700 metric tonnes of biscuits to Oman and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries during FY2026-27. He said preferential tariff benefits under the India-Oman CEPA have enabled duty-free access for Indian biscuits, making them more competitive in the Omani market and boosting Indian manufacturers.

Although Ambassador Pise did not specifically refer to the shipment during his interaction, Goyal's announcement represents one of the earliest tangible outcomes of the trade agreement, lending momentum to expectations that CEPA will accelerate bilateral commerce and create fresh opportunities for exporters from both countries. Pise said India and Oman share a deep-rooted strategic partnership that continues to expand across trade, investment, culture, education and people-to-people exchanges. He reaffirmed India's commitment to working closely with Oman to maximise the benefits of CEPA and further strengthen economic engagement. Beyond trade, the ambassador highlighted measures aimed at improving services for the nearly 700,000-strong Indian community in Oman. He said that visa and consular services are now available across all 11 governorates of the Sultanate through SGIVS Global, enabling Indian nationals to access passport renewals, attestations and other consular services closer to where they live instead of travel-

ling to Muscat. "Now the workers can avail of the consular services from the convenience of the centres near their homes. Therefore, they don't have to come to Muscat for the renewal of passports or any other needs," Pise said. He added that while routine services have been decentralised, the Embassy of India remains available to assist members of the Indian community facing other difficulties. "However, the door of the embassy is open for them if they face any other difficulty," he said. Responding to queries on passport renewal fees, particularly for Indian domestic workers whose passports are generally renewed for two years, Pise explained that the policy is linked to the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category and is intended to safeguard vulnerable workers. The ambassador said strengthening economic cooperation through CEPA while enhancing citizen-centric services for the Indian diaspora would remain among the embassy's priorities as India and Oman continue to build on their comprehensive strategic partnership.

IN AL BURAIMI

EA records first-ever nesting of Shikra



AL BURAIMI: The Environment Authority in Al Buraimi Governorate has, for the first time in the governorate, documented the nesting of the Shikra (known locally as Al-Baydaq), scientifically designated as *Accipiter badius*. This milestone represents a significant addition to the biodiversity records and reflects the health of the natural habitats within the governorate's environmental sector. The Shikra is a resident bird of prey in the Sultanate of Oman, and the documentation of its nests is considered a rare occurrence, owing to its preference for building nests in densely branched trees.

The female typically lays two eggs, though in some instances the clutch may number up to six eggs. The bird measures between 26 and 30 centimeters in length, with a wingspan ranging from 60 to 70 centimeters, and bears a close resemblance to the Eurasian Sparrowhawk. The male is distinguished by a dark blue-grey upper body with black-tipped wings, while the female exhibits a less white underbelly and less pronounced black wing tips. The cheeks are characterised by a reddish tinge. This species is renowned for its remarkable speed in flight, with the female being larger than the male. -ONA

ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

Ras Al Hadd continues its efforts to protect sea turtles

RAS AL HADD: Specialists at the Environment Centre within the Turtle Reserve in Ras Al Hadd have successfully managed 56 stranded turtles and recorded over 12,000 turtle tracks along the reserve's beaches during the first half of this year. These figures underscore the significant ecological importance of the Turtle Reserve as one of the premier nesting sites for sea turtles in the Sultanate of Oman. The daily and periodic patrol operations carried out by the Environment Centre's specialists constitute one of the most critical field programmes aimed at monitoring sea turtles, responding swiftly to emergency situations, and eliminating potential threats to these marine creatures. These efforts contribute directly to enhancing turtle protection rates and preserving their natural habitats. Nizar Salim Al Fannah Al Arami, Director of the Environment Department in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, stated that these indicators affirm the success of the Environment Authority's initiatives in implementing the "Environment Guardians" programme. This programme is designed to intensify field efforts for the protection of sea turtles, encompassing both hatchlings during the hatching season and adult turtles throughout the nesting period.



He further noted that the number of nesting turtles recorded during the first half of the year exceeded 10,000, while the count of non-nesting turtles surpassed 2,000. **Natural habitats** He elaborated that the programme also prioritises strengthening partnerships with local communities and visitors, while raising public awareness regarding the importance of conserving sea turtles and their natural habitats. He emphasised that these creatures represent a unique and irreplaceable natural and ecological asset, necessitating coordinated efforts from all stakeholders and

community members to ensure their sustainability for future generations. In a related context, the Turtle Reserve Centre — operating under the Environment Department of South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, in coordination with a number of fishermen and researchers from the Research Centre — successfully rescued a sea turtle that had become trapped between rocks along the Turtle Reserve's shores. This rescue was carried out as part of the daily field monitoring and patrol operations conducted by specialists to track turtle conditions throughout the nesting and hatching season. -ONA

SECOND EDITION

Zakat-Eligible Treatment Initiative with private sector launched

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health, represented by the Waqf Health Foundation "Athar," on Sunday launched the second edition of the Zakat-Eligible Treatment Initiative within the private healthcare sector. As of today, the initiative begins accepting treatment applications from zakat-eligible individuals registered with the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, with the application window remaining open until Thursday, 20 August 2026. Applications are to be submitted via the dedicated registration link on the electronic platform of the Ministry of Health's health portal, designed to enable zakat beneficiaries to enroll in the initiative and access the therapeutic services provided through it. Alternatively, applications may be filed through the Zakat Committees operating in the wilayats under the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. All registration applications will be cross-checked against the



official lists of zakat-eligible individuals maintained by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. Approved applications will then be forwarded to the Ministry of Health to be matched against surgical waiting lists and diagnostic imaging backlogs. The Ministry will subsequently designate the private healthcare facility responsible for performing the required surgical procedure, diagnostic ex-

amination, or therapeutic intervention for each individual case. Applicants will be notified of their assigned healthcare facility and the scheduled appointment for treatment. The Ministry of Health and the Waqf Health Foundation "Athar" will follow up on all cases until the required therapeutic procedure has been completed. The initiative comes within the context of the Royal direc-

tives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to allocate funds for the treatment of zakat-eligible individuals. This reaffirms the visionary approach of the wise leadership, reinforces the values of social solidarity and embodies the principles of compassion and giving. The initiative aims to provide healthcare access to zakat-eligible groups, thereby strengthening the spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility that constitutes a deeply rooted value in Omani society. It further contributes to enhancing the quality of life, narrowing health disparities and accelerating beneficiaries' access to medical services. The initiative encompasses the performance of surgical operations and diagnostic imaging procedures in private hospitals across the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, thereby helping to expedite the delivery of treatment and reduce waiting lists at referral hospitals. -ONA

OLYMPIC HALL, PARIS

Omani military band participates in Albertville Music Festival

PARIS: The joint Omani military band recently held high-level performances at the Olympic Hall, Paris, as part of its participation in the 46th Albertville International Military Music Festival, which marks the 400th anniversary of foundation of the French National Navy. The Omani band's outstanding performances constituted a model of advanced discipline and professionalism that inspired great enthusiasm in the audience. -ONA



COMMENTARY

When your back is pinned on the wall

I woke up in the morning with one word hanging over my head. Deadline. I stuffed the breakfast in my mouth with one hand and furiously type on the keyboard with the other.

Just ten minutes later, my head began to hurt and my eyes watered. I was pushing myself to the limit. It wasn't doing my blood pressure any good. What if I collapsed suddenly? I just lost a friend last week and I did not want my family to go back to the cemetery in just less than two weeks.

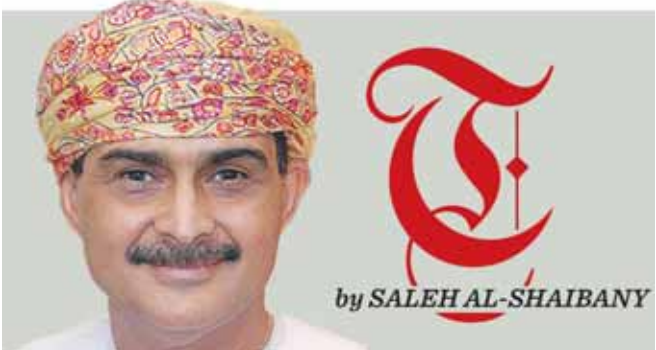
I needed to take the time off. My editors would understand. It took me another five minutes to get up, fighting off years of habit of making the deadline, no matter what was the circumstance.

I walked out into the sun-shine. It was cool and the break took the wind off the deadline pressure. As I sat under the shade of a tree, I began to wonder of all other deadlines that I pushed into the background while giving a priority to just one.

Why do deadlines push us to the edge of panic and near insanity? I have tried everything to overcome the problem but nothing really has worked so far. Even some of my own advices have never really worked that well either.

"If you constantly go beyond deadlines then it's time you decide whether you lack focus or you are just careless," I once told my students about their projects.

Disciplined and meticulous people have no problems in



that area but the like of us who turn up at the airport a few minutes before departure are the most vulnerable. The wall of a deadline, therefore, attracts the spontaneous who get their drive when their backs are pinned on the wall. Mind you, there's always the fear that the wall may buckle under pressure to expose your failings.

Deadlines, strictly speaking, are harmless and they are a joy to meet if no pressure is involved. We unconsciously impose many deadlines all the time and sometimes we really look forward to it when they come.

Work deadlines mean anxiety and a fear of losing one's job. How do you save yourself a headache and happily meet them?

I don't know but to stop worrying over something you have got to do is a good start. Perhaps, by giving a priority to what we dread most and pushing our favourite tasks behind may solve the problem.

There's one clerk who used to do the filing of papers first thing in the morning before he

even made himself a cup of tea. To make it work, he needed to do the important task first and treat himself later.

Perhaps deadlines are best met as early as possible when you are at your peak. Perhaps there are too many of them around and the reason they are, because we want to accomplish so many tasks in just ten or twelve hours. When I was a schoolboy, I used watched a "mooring man" at the marina holding half a dozen ropes attached to small fiber boats at the same time.

He would then tie them on wooden poles to stop them from drifting. He would do that all over again in the next six-seven hours.

He had to moor over a hundred boats a day before sunset. That was his deadline but he never saw it that way. It was just a job that he loved doing. Perhaps there is something to learn. He accepted what he had to do and pushed everything away. In other words, deadlines are just a series of tasks that need a little attention to get you through the day.

New traffic law on vehicle window tinting welcomed

Oman's new 50% car window tint rule offers cooler rides in summer, say motorists and experts

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's revised traffic law allowing vehicle window tinting of up to 50 per cent is being welcomed by motorists and auto workshop managers, who say the move will help keep vehicles cooler during the country's intense summer.

With temperatures climbing to nearly 46 degrees Celsius in many parts of the Sultanate, darker window tints can significantly reduce heat inside vehicles, making driving more comfortable while also offering protection from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays.

To enhance convenience for road users and respond to public feedback, the Royal Oman Police (ROP) on Saturday clarified the regulations governing vehicle window tinting through a public advisory, reaffirming the permitted tint limits while ensuring compliance with road safety requirements.

According to the advisory, all vehicle windows except the front windshield may be tinted.

The maximum allowable tint level for side and rear windows is



now 50 per cent, an increase from the previous limit of 30 per cent.

The ROP also confirmed that vehicles fitted with factory-installed tinted side windows are permitted, provided the glass maintains a minimum light transmission of 30 per cent.

In addition, motorists are allowed to use matte (non-gloss) vehicle wraps or paint finishes, provided they retain some degree of shine or reflective appearance.

Suresh Kumar, manager of an auto workshop in Wadi Kabir, said the revised rule is particularly beneficial given Oman's extreme summer climate.

"Car tint films are made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET), a thermoplastic polymer that helps absorb heat, provides thermal insulation and filters

harmful ultraviolet rays. In a region where summer temperatures can approach 50 degrees Celsius, quality window tinting is essential. It not only offers greater privacy but also helps protect occupants from excessive heat and UV exposure," he said.

Kumar added that demand for window tinting has increased, with his workshop receiving two to three tinting orders daily.

He also advised motorists not to compromise on quality. "Low-quality tint films can bubble within months, change colour, reduce visibility and even damage the glass surface. A good-quality film should block up to 99 per cent of UV rays, significantly reduce heat and glare, and remain durable without fading over time," he said.

A motorist, Mohammed Aslam, who plans to get his car windows tinted said: "I will like to go for premium tinting material as it ensures better heat rejection, improved visibility and longer-lasting performance despite exposure to the region's harsh climate."

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Over 72mn trees, 32 nature reserves lead Oman towards net-zero targets

IBRA: The Environment Authority reviewed the outcomes of its work and achievements during the 2020-2025 period at a joint meeting held on Sunday in the Wilayat of Ibra, North Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

The Authority affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman continues to implement its national and international commitments in environmental protection and natural resource conservation, within the framework of Oman Environment Strategy and the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Attended by Mahmoud Yahya Al Dhuhli, Governor of North Al Sharqiyah, and Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, the meeting reviewed the institutional and legislative framework of the Authority.

The Authority is responsible for proposing policies and strategic plans, ensuring environmental safety, preserving ecosystems, conserving nature, protecting wildlife, assessing and monitoring climate change, as well as representing the Sultanate of Oman in international and regional forums and implementing the conventions it has joined.

The Authority confirmed that the Sultanate of Oman has joined 22 international conventions and protocols during the past phase, reflecting its commitment to international environmental action.

These agreements included the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Basel, Stockholm, and Rotterdam conventions on chemicals and waste.

The Authority pointed out the digital achievements it made across several strategic pillars, most notably the natural resources and biodiversity pillar, which saw a strategic expansion of the national network of nature reserves to reach 32 nature reserves with a total area of 17,827 square kilometers to support wildlife protection.

It also indicated that the Sultanate of Oman achieved spatial coverage indicators of 4.85 percent for terrestrial areas and 0.51 percent for marine areas, thereby exceeding national and international targets to ensure the sustainability of ecosystems.

On the investment front, the Authority confirmed that the value of investment contracts in nature reserves reached OMR44 million, achieving a financial return rate of 143 percent, reflecting the feasibility of the circular economy in protected areas.



In the vegetation cover and desertification control pillar, the Authority explained that it succeeded in implementing the initiative to plant 10 million trees for the 2020-2025 period, achieving a qualitative leap by recording 72,071,551 trees planted and cultivated across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, exceeding the initial goals of the initiative.

The flora planted by the Authority included approximately 11,386,391 mangrove seedlings and 856,142 wild trees, along with the execution of 1,325 field campaigns, the distribution of more than 652,000 seedlings, and the establishment of 47 nurseries to support the protection of biodiversity.

This was reflected environmentally and climatically by reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 108,520 tonnes annually, thereby supporting efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change and reach the 2050 net-zero targets.

In the air quality, environmental media, and environmental compliance pillar, the Authority recorded a remarkable increase in environmental monitoring and compliance, executing 53,144 inspection visits with a compliance rate of 91.3 percent, compared to 18,564 visits in 2021.

The air quality rate at monitoring stations reached 98 percent, while achieving a 100 percent rate in safe waste disposal.

In the field of waste management and recycling, 1.77 million tons of waste were collected, with a recycling rate of 39 percent, by utilising more than 85 resources through converting waste into valuable resources.

Regarding the climate change pillar, the Authority confirmed that the Sultanate of Oman continued its national efforts to reduce emissions and support the green economy.

Within the framework of the "Blue Carbon" project, 100 mil-

lion mangrove trees were cultivated to enhance natural carbon sinks, and the amount of carbon absorbed reached 14 million tons of CO2. This is in addition to the decline of current emissions to 94.7 million tons, while the proportion of green investment rose to 27 percent compared to 3 percent previously. Furthermore, the National Climate Platform, the National Net-Zero Program, and the Net-Zero Lab were launched to manage and enable comprehensive climate action, paving the way to achieve net-zero by 2050.

The Environment Authority mentioned in the international leadership and governance pillar that the Sultanate of Oman obtained several advanced international rankings, including first place Arab-wide and second globally in the Numbeo 2025 Global Pollution Index, 55th globally in the Environmental Performance Index (ranking second in the Middle East), and sixth globally in the National Cybersecurity Index.

The Authority also obtained the ISO 9001:2015 certification for its quality management system and achieved 91 percent in the digital readiness assessment.

The Authority reviewed its future targets for 2026-2040, outlining quantitative indicators for the 11th Five-Year Plan 2026-2040 that aim to reach 90 percent in the quality levels of air, soil, and the marine environment, as well as the environmental compliance rate. It also targets an annual growth of 5 percent in nature reserve revenues and a 3 percent growth in private environmental investment.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Authority emphasised that achieving the national vision is based on the principles of integration, sustainability, and shared responsibility, which require active and continuous partnerships between the government and private sectors and civil society to arrive at a sustainable environment protected by all. -ONA

IN AL DAKHILIYAH

Completion rate in Izki-Nizwa dual carriageway project is 31%

NIZWA: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology continues its implementation of Izki-Nizwa dual carriageway project in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, with the completion rate currently standing at approximately 31%.

The project is part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to develop the road network and enhance connectivity efficiency among the wilayats and governorates of

the Sultanate of Oman.

The project is being executed at a total cost of OMR47 million, spanning 30.4 kilometers. It extends from the existing roundabout near South Qarut in the Wilayat of Izki, passing through Birkat Al Mouz and Hayy Al Turath, to the entrance of the Wilayat of Nizwa at the Farq area. The primary objective is to improve traffic flow and elevate safety standards on this vital road. -ONA



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Shura Committee reviews urban transport plans to ease Muscat traffic

Discussions covered the current expansion of commercial infrastructure, the distribution of shopping centres and commercial complexes, and the implications of such expansion for the road network and traffic volumes

MUSCAT: The Services and Public Utilities Committee of the Shura Council hosted on Sunday Nasra Al Habsi, Director General of Commerce at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, together with a number of specialists from the Ministry, as part of the study of the proposal submitted on addressing traffic congestion in Muscat Governorate through the development of the urban transport system.

The meeting forms part of the Committee's efforts to examine the various factors affecting traffic flow and explore practical solutions and policy options aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the transport system and improving traffic mobility in line with the Governorate's urban and economic growth.

During the meeting, the Committee discussed with the Ministry's specialists a number of issues concerning the relationship between the expansion of commercial activities and traffic congestion.

Discussions covered the current expansion of commercial infrastructure, the distribution of shopping centres and commercial complexes, and the implications of such expansion for the road network and traffic volumes.

The meeting also examined planning and regulatory considerations relating to the selection of sites for commercial activities and the extent to which they are compatible with the capacity of surrounding roads and public infrastructure.

Participants further highlighted the importance of coordination among the relevant authorities in preparing commercial and urban development plans to ensure that investment projects are aligned with transport infrastructure requirements and to mitigate the traffic impacts associated with urban expansion.

Committee members emphasised that commercial growth is a key driver of economic development, but requires the adoption of sustainable planning solutions that preserve the smooth flow of traffic.

They stressed the importance of incorporating traffic impact considerations into the licensing of major commercial developments, promoting integrated land-use planning, upgrading road networks serving commercial areas, expanding the urban transport system, and encouraging greater use of public transport to ease pressure on major roads, reduce



travel times, and enhance the quality of life in Muscat Governorate.

As part of the meeting's agenda, the Committee also hosted a number of owners of private land transport enterprises operating in the Sultanate of Oman as part of its study of the challenges facing the land transport and logistics sector.

The Committee heard their views on the current state of the

sector, the operational and regulatory challenges affecting freight transport and logistics service providers, and the implications of these challenges for business sustainability and service efficiency.

The meeting also discussed a number of proposals aimed at improving the legislative and regulatory environment governing the sector, strengthening its competitiveness, and enabling it to keep pace with the rapid economic growth witnessed in the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting further discussed the importance of the logistics sector as one of the Sultanate's priority economic sectors, a key driver of trade and investment, and a fundamental enabler for achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, through enhancing supply chain efficiency, improving logistics services, attracting investment, and maximising the Sultanate of Oman's strategic location as a regional logistics hub.

The meeting was chaired by Dr.Hamood Al Yahyai, Chairman of the Services and Public Utilities Committee, and attended by the Committee Members.

PDO

Nine pacts worth OMR3.5mn signed to expand access to education and healthcare services

MUSCAT: Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) has signed nine agreements worth OMR3.5 million (more than USD 9 million) to expand access to education, strengthen healthcare services, protect the environment and create new opportunities for young Omanis.

Signed at PDO's Mina Al Fahal headquarters, the agreements support Oman Vision 2040 through targeted investments in people, essential services and environmental sustainability. They also reflect PDO's commitment to creating value beyond its core operations.

Dr. Aflah Said Al Hadhrami, PDO Managing Director, said: "At PDO, we believe our success should be reflected not only in what we achieve as a company, but also in the opportunities we help create for people and communities across Oman.

These partnerships reflect our long-standing commitment to investing in national priorities and to working alongside our partners to help build a stronger, more resilient future for Oman."

In education, PDO will continue supporting the Community Scholarship Programme, implemented with the Ministry of Education, enabling 150 students from the Company's concession areas to pursue university education.

More than 1,400 students across seven government schools in Hai-ma and Al Jazir will also benefit from high-speed internet connectivity to support digital learning.

In addition, PDO launched the first Tamayuz cohort, recognising 20 outstanding scholarship students through an international enrichment programme focused on leadership, innovation and career readiness.

PDO also established a training partnership with the Ministry to provide practical training opportunities within the Company for 250 university students specialising in electrical engineering.

Commenting on the agreements, Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Shibli, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Higher Education, said: "These agreements reflect the strategic partnership between the Ministry of Education and PDO and support the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which places



education among the nation's highest priorities.

Three of the agreements focus on higher education students through scholarships for students from concession areas, a training partnership programme, and an integrated cultural and knowledge enrichment programme.

The fourth agreement supports the completion of internet connectivity infrastructure for a number of schools located in PDO's concession area, as part of the Ministry's strategic digital transformation initiatives."

PDO will continue supporting the Musta'ed Youth Skills Development Programme, implemented by Outward Bound Oman in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

The fifth edition of the programme will equip 500 young Omanis aged 15 to 18 with leadership, entrepreneurship, and future-ready skills, enhancing their employability and preparing them for future careers.

Basil Ahmed Al Rowas, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth, said: "The signing of the agreement with PDO to support the fifth edition of Musta'ed reflects the programme's national importance and the confidence placed in the positive outcomes achieved by participants in previous editions.

Over the past four years, the programme has attracted around 2,700 participants from across the Sultanate of Oman, demonstrat-

ing its broad reach and inclusive nature, while reinforcing its role in developing youth capabilities nationwide. We highly value PDO's continued support for the programme and are confident that this partnership will further strengthen its impact and expand the number of beneficiaries."

As part of its environmental sustainability efforts, PDO signed an agreement with the Environment Authority to support the National Marine Early Detection System. The initiative will deploy advanced floating monitoring stations and smart sensors to monitor seawater quality in real time, providing early warning of pollution risks while helping protect marine ecosystems, biodiversity and coastal economic activities.

In healthcare, PDO will fund a national capacity-building programme at the Excellence Centre for Developmental Paediatrics at the University Medical City, supporting the training and employment of specialised professionals to enhance services for children with developmental conditions at the centre that will be launched soon.

The programme is expected to create 74 jobs initially, increasing to 129 within three years, while reducing patient waiting times and strengthening the centre as a regional hub for paediatrics.

Sayyid Dr Mujahid Rafi' Al Busaidi, Director General of Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, University Medical City, said: "This agreement reflects the effective

partnership between University Medical City and the private sector, and underscores PDO's long-standing commitment to social responsibility and its continued contribution to supporting national efforts to enhance the quality of healthcare services. We are confident that this agreement will deliver a sustainable positive impact on the health and quality of life of beneficiaries, while further strengthening the position of University Medical City as a leading centre for medical education and advanced healthcare in the Sultanate of Oman."

Patients requiring specialised orthopaedic care will also benefit from a new clinic at Khoula Hospital, supported by PDO, which will replace the existing facility, improve patient safety and increase annual treatment capacity by more than 40%.

In Al Wusta Governorate, PDO will co-fund the construction of a new Accident and Emergency Unit at Al Jazir Hospital, improving access to life-saving emergency care and strengthening healthcare services for local communities. Once completed, the new unit will have the capacity to treat more than 1,000 emergency cases each year.

Dr. Rashid Mohammed Al Alawi, Director General of Khoula Hospital, said: "The signing of the agreement with PDO to fund the construction of a new specialist orthopaedic clinic represents a leading example of partnership between the healthcare sector and private sector institutions, reflecting a shared commitment to supporting initiatives that enhance healthcare services for the community. The new clinic will strengthen orthopaedic and trauma services through modern facilities and equipment aligned with the latest medical practices, improving treatment outcomes, patient experience and the quality of care."

Together, these initiatives will expand educational opportunities, strengthen healthcare services, protect Oman's natural environment and equip young people with the skills needed for the future. They reflect PDO's commitment to creating lasting value for the nation and contributing to a more resilient and sustainable Oman.

TWO-WEEK PROGRAMME

Summer programme launched in South Al Sharqiyah, Al Buraimi



SUR: The activities of the summer programme "My Summer: Learn and Innovate 2026" were launched on Sunday in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, organised by the Directorate General of Education in the governorate.

The opening of the two-week programme was held under the patronage of Dr. Intisar Abdullah Ambusaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Supportive Educational Programmes.

The programme targets 500 students from grades five through eleven, distributed across five summer centres in the governorate.

The programme encompasses a range of cultural, scientific and sporting activities and events, in addition to workshops and diversified training programmes.

Al Buraimi

The activities of the student summer programme commenced yesterday in Al Buraimi Governorate under the theme "My Summer: Learn and Innovate," with the participation of 250 students distributed across four summer centres in the wilayats of Al Buraimi and Mahdah — comprising one male and one female centre per wilayat.

The two-week programme, which is overseen by the Directorate General of Scouts, Guides and Student Activities, is designed to provide an integrated educational environment that capitalizes on leisure time to develop life and technical skills, reinforce values of national belonging and identity, and cultivate students' personalities to emerge as future leaders and drivers of positive change within their communities. -ONA

CABLES

HM greets presidents of Malawi and Comoros

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika of Malawi on his country's Independence Anniversary.

In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his best wishes to the President in achieving the

aspirations of his country's people toward further achievements and developments on all spheres.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Azali Assoumani of the Union of the Comoros on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty the

Sultan expressed his best wishes to the President for success in leading his country's people and achieving further stability and progress. His Majesty also wished the relations of cooperation and partnership between the two countries further growth and prosperity. -ONA

RIYADA

Future Pioneers programme begins in South Al Batinah

A'RUSTAQ: The activities of the fourth edition of the "Future Pioneers 2026" programme launched today at the Directorate General of Education in South Al Batinah Governorate.

The programme is organised by the Center for Career Guidance and Student Counseling at the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the SMEs Development Authority "Riyada", and will run for one week.

A total of 90 outstanding students from grades 7 to 9 in the fields of entrepreneurship and innovation from various schools across the governorate are participating in the programme, which is being held at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Musannah.

The programme includes a variety of training workshops, practical exercises, and interactive activities designed to enhance creative and entrepreneurial thinking, and introduce participants to the principles of establishing startups, in addition to developing planning, communication, teamwork, and decision-making skills.

The programme consists of five integrated training pillars, starting with the stage of understanding problems and generating ideas,



followed by developing the idea and designing solutions, building a prototype using artificial intelligence applications, preparing the pitch presentation, and presenting it before the evaluation panel.

The programme is delivered by specialists and experts in the field of entrepreneurship and startup creation.

Its implementation comes with-

in the framework of efforts aimed at developing students' skills, honing their capabilities in the fields of entrepreneurship and innovation, and enhancing their awareness of modern entrepreneurial concepts, thereby contributing to preparing a generation of youth capable of meeting future requirements and contributing effectively to sustainable economic development. -ONA

Investments worth OMR158mn to boost Al Dakhiliyah food security

The governorate is witnessing the implementation of a number of qualitative projects aimed at raising the efficiency of farm production and enhancing its sustainability



NIZWA: Al Dakhiliyah Governorate has enhanced its position as one of the leading governorates in attracting food security-related investments, following the awarding of investment projects worth approximately OMR158 million until the end of May 2026.

This coincided with the offering of 45 investment opportunities, achieving a completion rate of 113 percent of the annual target, which reflects the growing attractiveness of the investment environment in the governorate and the accelerating pace of executing productive projects in the agricultural, livestock, fisheries, and food sectors.

Eng. Omar Ahmed Al Busaidi, Head of the Marketing Department at the Directorate General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, stated to Oman News Agency (ONA) that indicators demonstrate the governorate's success in utilising its agricultural and natural potentials, transforming them into qualitative investment opportunities that contribute to enhancing food security, raising added value, and increasing the contribution of the agricultural and food sector to the national economy.

He added that Al Dakhiliyah Governorate possesses a broad

production base that qualifies it to attract more investments, as it includes more than 61,000 farmers and over 1.17 million date palm trees, alongside a diverse production of fruits, vegetables, fodder crops, livestock, and poultry.

This is in addition to the specialised agricultural environments in Jabal Akhdar and Jabal Shams, which have created investment opportunities extending across various links of the food value chain, starting from production, passing through processing, and ending with marketing.

He mentioned that during the current year, the governorate continued to expand the base of investment opportunities, offering 45 investment opportunities until the end of May, distributed as 17 opportunities in the agricultural sector, 22 opportunities in the livestock sector, three opportunities in the fisheries sector, and 3 opportunities in the water sector, alongside awarding 6 investment projects through the "Propose Your Project" window, reflecting the diversity of investment opportunities and the broadening fields of partnership with the private sector.

Al Busaidi confirmed that this performance comes as an extension of what was achieved during 2025, which witnessed the offer-



ing and approval of 41 investment opportunities with a completion rate of 137 percent of the target, the re-offering of 12 investment opportunities, alongside the offering of 3 new opportunities via the "Tatweer" platform, and the approval of 10 projects through the "Propose Your Project" window, confirming the sustainability of growth in the governorate's investment environment and its transformation into an attractive environment for productive projects.

He explained that, in parallel

Ghalia Wins Best Brand in Customer Experience Award in Food Category



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

Ghalia has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to customer experience by delivering high-quality food products that combine authentic taste, consistent quality, and nutritional value. Through its diverse portfolio of trusted food products, the brand has earned the confidence of consumers by focusing on excellence, reliability, and meeting the evolving preferences of families across Oman.

With a customer-centric approach built around quality assurance, innovation, and food safety, Ghalia continues to invest in modern production processes and stringent quality standards to ensure every product meets the highest expectations. Its dedication to offering convenient, wholesome, and flavourful food solutions has strengthened customer loyalty and established the brand as a household name in the Sultanate.

By continuously expanding its product range and maintaining an unwavering focus on quality and customer satisfaction, Ghalia continues to set benchmarks in customer experience within the food sector. Its commitment to excellence, innovation, and consumer trust reinforces its position as one of Oman's most respected food brands.

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

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productive projects.

He stated that the governorate is witnessing the implementation of a number of qualitative projects aimed at raising the efficiency of agricultural production and enhancing its sustainability, most notably the tissue culture project in the Wilayat of Nizwa with an investment of nearly OMR4 million to produce date palm offshoots and improved seedlings, alongside projects for the production of saffron, olives, figs, and agricultural seedlings, contributing to diversifying agricultural production, raising its efficiency, and enhancing the sustainability of agricultural resources.

Eng. Omar Al Busaidi stressed that Al Dakhiliyah Governorate is paying increasing attention to food industries as the main link in maximising added value.

A number of projects aimed at converting agricultural products into food industries are being implemented, led by the Nizwa Food Industries Factory with an investment exceeding OMR3 million, in addition to projects for the production, drying, and processing of figs, the production and refining of olive oil, and food packaging and storage projects, bringing the total value of investments in these projects to over OMR8 million, which enhances the competitiveness of national products and raises the efficiency of food supply chains.

He explained that agricultural investment is notably concentrated in the wilayats that possess comparative advantages, foremost of which are the Wilayats of Al Hamra and Jabal Akhdar, where investment opportunities were awarded via the "Tatweer" platform for projects to produce pomegranates, olives, figs, saffron, and roses, alongside a processing industry project for onion crops in the Wilayat of Samail, thereby enhancing the utilization of the competitive advantages of each wilayat and raising the economic value of agricultural products.

In the livestock sector, he explained that the governorate is implementing strategic projects to develop veterinary services and animal production, most notably the Al Bashair Veterinary Hospital in the Wilayat of Adam with an investment of about OMR1.7 million, which is the first integrated specialised veterinary hospital in the Wilayat of Oman through a public-private partnership, alongside a project for rearing and producing broilers, supporting livestock productivity and enhancing food security.

He pointed out that the fisheries sector is also witnessing an expansion in investments through the signing of a partnership agreement with the private sector to develop, manage, and operate the fish market in the Wilayat of Izki, alongside offering four investment opportunities to manage and operate fish markets in the governorate, contributing to developing the infrastructure of the sector, improving the quality of services, and enhancing the efficiency of marketing and distribution.

He noted that the performance indicators recorded until the end of May 2026 reflect the governorate's success in implementing its investment programs according to the targets, supported by the partnership with the private sector, the development of investment platforms, and the preparation of sites designated for productive projects, thereby enhancing its ability to attract more qualitative investments during the next phase.

He stated that what has been achieved represents a transition from investing in agricultural potentials to building an integrated production system based on expanding investment, maximising added value, developing food industries, and empowering the private sector, thereby enhancing Al Dakhiliyah Governorate's position as a national pillar in the food security system, and supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 in economic diversification and achieving sustainable development. -ONA

More than 274,000 plants of fruit, wild trees distributed

The initiative led to expansion of green areas, increasing local production, preserving natural resources, and supporting efforts to reduce carbon emissions



SOHAR: More than 274,000 seedlings of fruit and wild trees were produced and distributed across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, contributing to expanding green areas, increasing local production, preserving natural resources, and supporting efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

The “OQ Green Initiative,” implemented by OQ Group in 2021 in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources and the Agricultural and Fisheries Development Fund during the period (2022–2025), has achieved qualitative results that contributed to supporting food security and enhancing agricultural and environmental sustainability in the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Ali Ubaid Al Adawi, Director of the Department of Agricultural Research in North Al Batinah Governorate, confirmed that the initiative represents a successful national model of partnership between the public and private sectors.

He noted that it contributed to producing high-quality and highly productive seedlings of various economic varieties, including mango, Omani lemon, fig, grape, guava, pomegranate, banana, and Sidr, thereby supporting the development of the agricultural sector, raising production efficiency, and contributing to achieving food security targets.

He explained that the initiative aimed to support farmers, investors, commercial fields, government institutions, and civil associations. More than 169,000 seedlings were distributed to commercial fields, and over 16,000 seedlings



were given to farmers, alongside thousands of seedlings distributed to investors and government institutions, contributing to the expansion of fruit tree cultivation, enhancing agricultural production, and increasing the sector's contribution to the national economy.

He pointed out that the initiative also supported scientific research and agricultural development efforts by expanding genetic banks for fruit crops, developing laboratory and diagnostic tests, and executing applied studies aimed at improving propagation and production techniques, raising the quality of seedlings, and preserving plant genetic resources.

He indicated that the expected economic return of the initiative exceeds 10,000 tonnes of fruit over

supporting sustainability through national partnerships that contribute to achieving a tangible environmental, economic, and societal impact.

He added that the results of the initiative confirm the importance of cooperation between the public and private sectors in supporting environmental and agricultural projects, given their role in enhancing food security, protecting biodiversity, rationalizing the use of natural resources, and reducing carbon emissions, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and national ambitions toward achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

He pointed out that the impact achieved by the initiative in local communities, the agricultural sector, and the environment reflects OQ's direction toward qualitative initiatives that contribute to supporting economic, social, and environmental development in the Sultanate of Oman.

The initiative also contributed to enhancing in-country value by awarding more than 60 operational and executive contracts to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and individuals, with a total value exceeding OMR346,000, alongside providing thousands of working hours for citizens, reflecting its economic and social impact alongside its environmental impact.

The “OQ Green Initiative” continues to consolidate an integrated national model that supports agricultural development, enhances food security, and contributes to achieving a balance between economic growth and the preservation of natural resources. -**ONA**



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ASTRONOMY AND SPACE

Oman skies to witness solar aphelion today



MUSCAT: The Earth will reach its aphelion — the farthest point from the Sun in its annual orbit — tomorrow at 9:30 PM Oman time, when the distance between the two centres will be approximately 152.1 million kilometres, equivalent to about 1.0167 astronomical units.

Wisal Salim Al Hinai, Head of the Community Communication Committee at Oman Society of Astronomy and Space, said the solar aphelion is an annual astronomical event occurring in early July.

It results from the Earth's elliptical orbit around the Sun, with a slight eccentricity of about 0.0167, in line with Kepler's laws of planetary motion.

She noted that the Earth reaches its perihelion — the closest point to the Sun — in early January, when the distance between them is about 147 million kilometres, a difference of only about five million kilometres.

She stressed that a common misconception is the belief that seasonal temperature changes are linked to the Earth's distance from the Sun. The true cause, she

explained, is the 23.5-degree tilt of the Earth's rotational axis relative to its orbital plane — the flat geometric plane containing its orbit around the Sun.

The axial tilt causes variations in the angle of solar radiation and daylight hours throughout the year.

In summer, the Sun's rays strike more directly and remain above the horizon longer, increasing solar energy and raising temperatures. The opposite occurs in winter.

The effect of the varying distance between the Earth and the Sun is only about 3 percent compared to the average distance of 149.6 million kilometres, making its impact minimal compared to the axial tilt, which is the primary driver of seasonal change, she added.

The solar aphelion offers an opportunity to promote accurate astronomical understanding and correct common misconceptions, she said, adding that scientific literacy helps deepen public awareness of cosmic phenomena through observation and scientific calculation. -**ONA**

URBAN LANDSCAPE

Renovation work in Ruwi continues

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality has announced significant progress on the Ruwi Development Project, reaffirming its commitment to improving public infrastructure and enhancing the capital's urban landscape.

The project is part of the municipality's broader strategy to upgrade public facilities, improve the quality of urban spaces, and create a more attractive and functional environment for residents, visitors, and businesses.

According to the municipality, the ongoing works focus on modernising the Ruwi Financial Market area through infrastructure upgrades and urban improvements designed to support the district's growing commercial



activity, enhance accessibility, and improve the overall public experience. The initiative reflects Muscat Municipality's continued efforts to implement sustainable urban development projects that contribute to Muscat's long-term growth, align with modern planning standards, and strengthen the city's visual identity.

The municipality reaffirmed its commitment to delivering projects that enhance quality of life, improve public services, and support Muscat's vision of becoming a more vibrant and sustainable city.

MINISTER OF ECONOMY

Over OMR114mn worth tenders awarded

MUSCAT: The Tender Board, chaired by Dr. Khamis bin Saif Al Jabri, Minister of Economy and Chairman of the Board, awarded a number of tenders and supplementary works for development projects across various sectors at its second meeting of 2026, with a total value exceeding OMR114 million.

The projects approved and awarded included the construction of the Mahout Fishing Port at a value of OMR 36,995,421; the provision of catering, food, cleaning, laundry, and pest control services for hospitals, complexes and health centres under the Ministry of Health, valued at OMR 24,506,609; the completion of the third package of the Sultan Taimur bin Faisal Road, valued at OMR 21,737,296; the design and construction of the Al Jabal Al Abyad Road in North A'Sharqiyah Governorate, valued at OMR 13,500,143; and the design and construction of the dual car-



riageway linking Sultan Taimur bin Faisal Road and Sultan Qaboos Road in the Wilayat of Sohar, North Al Batinah Governorate, valued at OMR 8,249,537.

The works also included a promotional campaign to showcase the Sultanate of Oman during the 2026 World Cup, valued at OMR 355,500; advanced support from Microsoft, valued at OMR 282,973; the purchase of intellectual property rights for a language and skills development programme, valued at OMR 127,500; and supplementary works on road

projects in Dhofar Governorate, valued at OMR 3,517,213.

The Board approved additional works for the tender to supply, implement and operate the national infrastructure for authentication systems and electronic signature solutions, valued at OMR 2,104,009; completion of supplementary works for the Taimur bin Faisal Road – Package Five (Sohar Gateway Road), valued at OMR 596,961; supplementary consultancy services for the logistics market study and competitiveness enhancement project, val-

ued at OMR 588,000; additional consultancy services for the national project management and government procurement system – Takamul, valued at OMR 501,799; and additional cleaning services for administrative and school buildings under the Directorates General of Education in Dhofar Governorate, valued at OMR 443,251.

The Board also approved additional works for leasing a warehouse for the reserve stock of the Directorate General of Medical Supply, valued at OMR 341,061; providing operators and maintenance technicians for equipment at Al Massara Hospital in Muscat Governorate, valued at OMR 162,255; leasing examination monitoring devices for two academic years, valued at OMR 117,600; and consultancy services for the design of the dual carriageway of Al Ansab Road from Falaj Al Sham Roundabout to Nizwa Road, valued at OMR 36,357. -**ONA**

WEATHER REPORT

Intense summer heat prevailing over much of the Sultanate

< FROM A1 According to the authority's monthly weather report, Jabal Shams recorded the second-highest rainfall at 18.4 mm, followed by Saiq with 16.6 mm, Ibra with 12.2 mm, and Qayroun Hairiti in Dhofar with 11.2 mm.

The figures highlight the wide variation in weather conditions across Oman during June, with intense summer heat prevailing over much of the country while rainfall remained concentrated in parts of Dhofar and the moun-

tainous regions.

The monthly statistics form part of the CAA's regular weather reports, which track temperatures, rainfall and other climatic conditions across the Sultanate.

Health warning
As summer continue across the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Health has intensified public awareness efforts, urging people to take preventive measures against heat stress and sunstroke, particularly among vulnerable groups who face a higher risk of serious

health complications.

Dr. Shamsa Al Harthy, Head section of school and university health programmes at Ministry of Health, said that elderly aged 65 and above, infants and children under four years old, outdoor workers exposed to direct sunlight, employees working in enclosed spaces without air conditioning, and pilgrims are most susceptible to heat stress and sunstroke.

She explained that heat-related illnesses can develop rapidly and may become life-threatening if not recognised and treated promptly.

Among the symptoms that require immediate medical attention are excessive sweating, severe fatigue, headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, extreme thirst, muscle cramps, rapid heartbeat, and elevated body temperatures ranging between 38 and 39.5 degrees Celsius.

Warning signs
Changes in skin condition, including redness and excessive warmth or cold, clammy skin accompanied by paleness, should also be regarded as warning signs.

The ministry stressed that proper hydration remains the most effective defense against heat-related illnesses. Dr. Al Harthy advised people exposed to hot weather to drink water regularly throughout the day, recommending between two and four cups of water every hour when outdoors in high temperatures.

Individuals undertaking physical activity under the sun should also replenish lost salts and minerals and avoid beverages containing high levels of caffeine or sugar, which can contribute to

dehydration.

Those working or exercising outdoors are advised to drink one to two cups of water every 15 to 20 minutes.

The ministry also urged the public to avoid strenuous outdoor activities between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Workers in hot environments should take frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas and wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothing. The use of hats, sunglasses and sunscreen is also recommended to reduce the effects of prolonged sun exposure.

Massive fireworks show caps off US Independence Day festivities

Amid weather woes and periodic lightning, organisers of the July Fourth celebration in Washington, DC put on a 40-minute firework show - notably much larger than past Independence Day displays



WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump has praised the fireworks show during the celebrations of 250th anniversary of US Independence Day.

In a post on Truth Social on Saturday, he said, “Best fireworks show, EVER! President DJT.”

Amid weather woes and periodic lightning, organisers of the July Fourth celebration in Washington, DC put on a 40-minute firework show - notably much larger than past Independence Day displays, as per CNN.

The event was expected to set off about 850,000 firework shells from 10 different sites, including Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, Potomac River barges and West Potomac Park.

The fireworks show was previously estimated to cost \$850,000, CNN reported.

The celebrations come during a complicated backdrop. Despite the fact that Trump outdid himself in the celebrations, Americans are

facing high cost-of-living issues, the war with Iran and a polarising presidency.

The newly renovated Air Force One led a massive military flyover above the National Mall in Washington, DC, at 7:03 pm on July 4, 2026. The aircraft proceeded with the scheduled flight despite earlier evacuations triggered by severe thunderstorms.

Participating in the 4th of July event at the National Mall celebrating the 250th Independence Day, revellers expressed their excitement at being present at the historic occasion.

A US National, Janice, told ANI, “America 250 means patriotism. It means a return to the values that most Americans hold dear. We are really excited to see where this country goes in the future.”

On July 4, America is celebrating 250 years of independence.

The White House on its official website noted that under President Trump, the United States is

executing a full year of festivities, which began on Memorial Day, 2025, and will continue through the end of 2026.

The White House is engaging all levels of government, the private sector, non-profit and educational institutions, and every citizen across the country to celebrate this historic milestone.

Trump hails ‘incredible’ crowds

In a post shared by the Rapid Response 47 on X, Trump said, “Despite the heat, which isn’t as bad as predicted, the crowds in D.C. are INCREDIBLE! The love of our Country has never been stronger!”

Praising the Independence Day celebrations, he added, “The Air Shows are at a level never seen before - What great pilots, what great equipment!!!”

Trump also announced his public address, saying, “See you all later! Speaking at around 10:00 P.M. at The Lincoln Memorial.”

“The Reflecting Pool looks great, despite all it went through with the Vandal Thugs. Will quickly drain and fix the damage done right after this big weekend,” he added.

Concluding his message, Trump wrote, “Happy Independence Day. Our Country is Stronger than EVER!!!”

Meanwhile, US Vice President JD Vance, speaking in New York Harbor during the commemorative events, reflected on the nation’s founding and the enduring significance of the Declaration of Independence.

Recalling the days following the adoption of the Declaration in 1776, Vance said, “George Washington read aloud the words of the incredible Declaration: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.’”

“Even today, 250 years later,

these words command a tremendous power over us as Americans. For 250 years, they have stirred our hearts, and they’ve reminded us of who we are as a people,” he added.

Vance said the American Revolution was rooted in a deeper civilisational tradition, stating, “1776 was not an accident. The patriots of that era understood themselves to be heirs to an older civilisation who would carry it forward.”

He further said that when George Washington’s soldiers first heard the Declaration, “they understood precisely what it meant,” adding that while the words were new, they “expressed a feeling... that already lived in the heart of every single American patriot.”

The Vice President also criticised those who focus only on the country’s shortcomings.

“You will hear a couple of small but loud voices today speak obsessively not of our national greatness, but of our national imperfections... They’re wrong,” Vance said.

Urging Americans to embrace a broader understanding of the nation’s history, he said, “Reject the two-dimensional view of your fellow citizens, and reject the two-dimensional view of your country. Reject that America is a place for zero-sum thinking, because it is not.”

“Our history is one of people carving a great civilisation out of the wilderness. Reject the view of your nation that sees only its sins, but not its grace and its greatness,” he added.

Vance also reflected on the Declaration’s intended audience, saying it “wasn’t written for historians... It was written for the people of this fledgling country. It was written for the soldiers who would fight to turn those words into a new system of government.”

He said the document “simply declares these truths to be self-evident” and added that 250 years later, Americans should continue reflecting on those principles and the nation’s founding ideals.

CHARGE D’AFFAIRES OF INDONESIA IN DELHI

‘India can play bigger role in its defence modernisation drive’

NEW DELHI: India is well positioned to play a larger role in Indonesia’s defence modernisation, the Charge d’Affaires of the world’s largest archipelagic state said here, stressing that Jakarta is looking for long-term partnerships based on technology transfer, co-production, and joint capability development rather than simple procurement.

In an interview with ANI ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Indonesia, Yudho Sasongko, Charge d’Affaires of Indonesia in Delhi, said India’s growing defence-industrial base makes it a natural partner, as Indonesia is modernising its armed forces.

He also said that Indonesia sees India not merely as a partner to ASEAN, but as a partner in “shaping the wider Indo-Pacific.”

“Indonesia is modernising its armed forces, and we welcome partners who can contribute through genuine cooperation, technology transfer, and co-production rather than transactions alone. India, with its growing and capable defence-industrial base, is well placed to be such a partner across a range of domains,” Sasongko said.

He added, “Both sides have committed to expanding defence-industrial collaboration and joint capability development, and we see room to broaden that cooperation over time. The specifics, of course, will be determined by our respective defence establishments.”

On reports that the proposed BrahMos missile deal could be a key agenda item during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit, Sasongko declined to comment on specific procurement discussions but highlighted the broader trajectory of bilateral defence ties.

“Defence is one of the strongest and fastest-maturing pillars of our partnership, spanning naval exercises, staff talks, training,



joint research, and co-production of defence technologies,” he said.

“On the specific procurement matters you mention, I would note that the relevant defence authorities are best placed to address them through their own channels. What I can say clearly is that the overall direction of our defence relationship is toward deeper industrial and technological cooperation,” he added.

On the broader strategic relationship, Sasongko reaffirmed Indonesia’s support for ASEAN centrality and said India has an important role to play in the Indo-Pacific.

“Indonesia deeply appreciates India’s consistent support for ASEAN unity and ASEAN centrality, which we consider indispensable to regional stability. We want to see the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership deepened through concrete initiatives and greater synergy between the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative,” he said.

He added, “As two of the region’s largest democracies, Indonesia sees India not merely as a partner to ASEAN, but as a partner in shaping the wider Indo-Pacific. The guiding principle for us is that any regional architecture must reinforce, not dilute, ASEAN’s central role.”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on the Indonesia visit from July 6 to 8. — **ANI**

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

As heat waves loom, scientists are wondering how humans will adapt

PARIS: Late June brought record-breaking temperatures to France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany. The national weather service, DWD, reported that Germany had never experienced such intense heat for such a long stretch so early in the year.

Now, large parts of the central and eastern United States are also living under heat warnings heading into the July 4 holiday weekend, with extreme heat expected to push temperatures as high as 100 to 115 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8-46.1 C) across much of the region.

A heat wave like this, with daytime temperatures well above 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) and nights when the thermometer doesn’t drop below 20 C, places enormous strain on the human body. That is especially true for young children, pregnant women, older adults, people with underlying health conditions and those who perform physically demanding work or work outdoors.



Are people from hotter regions better able to cope with heat?

“The human body can adapt, and those adaptations are more developed in people who are continuously exposed to heat,” said Claudia Traidl-Hoffmann, a physician and university professor. She is director of the Institute of Environmental Medicine at the University of Augsburg, where she treats patients with environmentally related illnesses.

Traidl-Hoffmann is also director of the Institute of Environmental Medicine at Helmholtz Munich, where she researches environmental diseases. As a member of the German government’s scientific advisory council, she advises policymakers.

Adaptation to changing environmental conditions takes time, Traidl-Hoffmann writes in her book “Medicine of the Future — Healing in a Changing World” (original German title: “Die Medizin der Zukunft — Heilen in einer

veränderten Welt”). But it’s not a matter of years — rather, it will take centuries.

What happens to the human body in the heat?

“Once outdoor temperatures reach 23 C (73.4 F), the body begins activating mechanisms to regulate its temperature,” Traidl-Hoffmann explained. Blood vessels widen, allowing the body to release heat. Sweating provides additional cooling. Together, these processes help keep the body’s core temperature stable. If these mechanisms don’t work properly or fail altogether, the consequences can range from cardiovascular disease and stroke to multiple organ failure. The latter happens when the body can no longer maintain a stable core temperature.

“When our body temperature rises too much, metabolic processes initially accelerate further — until the body loses control — across all levels from the immune system to the nervous system. At around 42 degrees Celsius (107.6 F), the body experiences severe cell damage, multiple organ failure and, without immediate treatment, death can occur,” said Traidl-Hoffmann.

The lungs also suffer in extreme heat. At the molecular level, the

underlying processes are not yet fully understood, Traidl-Hoffmann said, but there are several hypotheses. Breathing in hot air appears to accelerate inflammatory processes.

“The lungs become inflamed more easily and more vulnerable to infections,” she said.

What should we do — and avoid — during a heat wave?

Traidl-Hoffmann said people tend to think about heat and its effects only after temperatures have already soared — when railroad tracks begin to buckle, roads crack and emergency services are stretched to their limits.

She advises her patients to prepare for hot weather as early as January. That includes discussing possible medication adjustments with their doctor. Because heat can accelerate inflammatory processes, conditions such as allergies should be treated in advance with specific immunotherapy whenever appropriate.

Heat can also worsen eczema, making early treatment important. “Every chronic condition should be stable before the heat season begins,” the physician said.

Once the thermometer starts to

climb, Traidl-Hoffmann recommends drinking plenty of water, eating light plant-based meals and avoiding cigarettes and alcohol whenever possible. Getting enough sleep also gives the body a chance to recover from at least some of the day’s heat stress.

Can our bodies adapt to a warming climate?

Heat keeps many people from getting enough sleep, and the body is more likely to reach what doctors call decompensation, the point when it can no longer compensate for physiological dysfunction.

How well the body can cope with heat and adapt to it all depends on how vulnerable a person is. Traidl-Hoffmann compares the body’s capacity to adapt to a barrel: For older people, those with chronic illnesses or those taking medication, the barrel fills up much more quickly during a heat wave.

Young, physically fit people who are accustomed to hot weather generally have a greater tolerance, she said. But still, this also has its limits.

“This exponential increase in the number of hot days, this rapid pace of change, is beyond what ecosystems and humans can adapt to,” she said. — **mw**

SPORTS

FRENCH OPEN CHAMPION



Zverev through to last 16 at Wimbledon

WIMBLEDON: Fresh from finally winning his maiden Grand Slam title on clay at Roland Garros in June, Alexander Zverev is looking more comfortable than ever on the grass courts of south-west London. The German moved a step closer to reaching the Wimbledon quarter-finals for the first time as the French Open champion beat Marcos Giron in the third round on Saturday. Zverev, seeded second, has failed to go beyond the fourth round in his past nine visits to the All England Club. But the 29-year-old is on course to end that frustrating streak this year.

He dispatched 92-ranked Giron 6-2, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 on Court One and will face Czech 13th seed Jiri Lehecka in the last 16. "He plays fantastic on grass. I knew I had to be 100 percent ready from the first point and I'm very happy to be through in straight sets," Zverev said. "Winning in Paris, coming here with a title, it helps. It was my first one and I want to keep going. Next up for the world No.3 is Czech 13th seed Jiri Lehecka, who came through against Spain's Jaume Munar in four sets. Earlier, fifth seed Alex de Minaur dropped his first set of the

tournament but came through against American Zachary Svajda 6-2, 5-7, 6-2, 6-4. Australia's De Minaur will face a fourth-round match against Italy's Flavio Cobolli, seeded ninth, who earned a dramatic five-set win over Russia's Karen Khachanov. Cobolli, who lost in last month's French Open final, was bagelled in the opening set but recovered to win 0-6, 7-6 (7-4), 6-7 (5-7), 6-2, 6-2 on court two. American sixth seed Taylor Fritz, who reached the semi-finals last year, also came from a set down to beat Italy's Lorenzo Son-

ego 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5). Kazakhstan's 10th seed Alexander Bublik is next up for Fritz in round four after he beat American Frances Tiafoe 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (13-11), 4-6, 6-3. Also, an emotional Grigor Dimitrov said he wants to rewrite his Wimbledon story after reaching the fourth round with a five-set victory over Matteo Berrettini. The Bulgarian looked to be on course for a routine straight-set victory over Berrettini after taking the first two sets, but was pegged back and had to come through a decider 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-3. - Agencies

Leclerc wins chaotic British Grand Prix

The Ferrari driver emerged victor with Russell and Hamilton behind in a hugely eventful race, while Antonelli suffered car issue

LONDON: Charles Leclerc claimed victory in a dramatic British Grand Prix at Silverstone on Sunday, with Kimi Antonelli dropping backwards due to a car issue in the latter stages while a crash for Max Verstappen triggered a late-race Safety Car. Leclerc made a lightning start, the Monegasque and team-mate Lewis Hamilton getting ahead of Antonelli off the line. While Antonelli eventually caught Hamilton for P2, Leclerc remained steady ahead, only losing the lead when he made his pit stop. That handed P1 to Antonelli, who stretched out his stint before eventually pitting on Lap 36. The Italian promptly went on the chase of Leclerc – but this came undone when he experienced an issue with his car on Lap 41, which the team suggested was a left front wheel shield failure. After two further pit stops, Antonelli managed to continue on but had dropped to P10, as well as receiving a five-second time penalty for track limits. Further drama then followed



when Verstappen spun off into the gravel trap on Lap 48, resulting in the Safety Car being deployed. With the race then ending under the Safety Car, Leclerc crossed the line to claim his ninth career win ahead of Mercedes' George Russell – who, in staying out on

track while others pitted during the Safety Car phase, managed to leapfrog Hamilton. The final spot on the podium went to Hamilton – though it was confirmed that the seven-time world champion will be investigated after the race for a yellow

flag infringement – while fellow home favourite Lando Norris was fourth for McLaren. Isack Hadjar took fifth for Red Bull, ahead of the Racing Bulls duo of Liam Lawson and Arvid Lindblad. Gabriel Bortoleto scored valuable points for Audi in P8, and the Alpines of Franco Colapinto and Pierre Gasly rounded out the top 10. Oscar Piastri missed out in P11, the McLaren driver's day having unravelled early on after making a pit stop for damage at the end of Lap 1. Carlos Sainz also left without points in 12th, despite enjoying a good start in the Williams, while Haas' Ollie Bearman and Esteban Ocon were 13th and 14th respectively. Sergio Perez took P15 for Cadillac, and Antonelli was classified down in P16 after his five-second penalty was applied. Championship leader's position at the chequered flag meant he doesn't even pick up a point in round nine. Cadillac's Valtteri Bottas and the Aston Martins of Fernando Alonso and Lance Stroll completed the order. Three drivers did not see the finish, with Verstappen out following his late crash while Williams' Alex Albon retired the car – having ran in the race to collect data after an early clash with Bearman dropped him backwards – and Audi's Nico Hulkenberg pulled off track with an issue. The result has a major impact on the championship, narrowing Antonelli's lead over Russell to 25 points. Hamilton is seven points further adrift, pending that investigation. It is a two-week break before the next race, the Belgian GP at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit, from July 17-19. - Agencies

SECOND TEST: WEST INDIES VS SRI LANKA



Kusal and Dinusha put Sri Lanka in command

NORTH SOUND: Sonal Dinusha and Kusal Mendis put on 143 runs for the sixth wicket on Saturday as Sri Lanka ground down the West Indies pacers to declare its first innings at 549-9 on the second day of the second Test. West Indies lost the wicket of Brandon King (17) in 24 overs before stumps and finished 58-1, still 491 runs behind. John Campbell was 31 and Kavem Hodge 6 not out. West Indies lead the two-match series after winning the first Test by an innings and 217 runs. Dinusha and Mendis built on the foundation laid by Lahiru Udara and Kamindu Mendis whose record 215-run partnership had Sri Lanka 338-5 at stumps on the first day. Udara made 188 and Kamindu 84. After taking two wickets late on day one and operating with the second new ball which was only two overs old, the West Indies wanted an early breakthrough on day two. They were denied by Dinusha who made 92 and Mendis who made 69 and batted through all of the first and much of the second session. Mendis was first to fall, to a relatively unthreatening delivery from Anderson Phillip which he tried to

sweep and managed only to deflect onto his stumps. Sri Lanka was 476-6. Dinusha was out eight runs short of a maiden century, caught by King at cover off Hodge. The tail then waggled. Prabath Jayasuriya made an unbeaten 17, Milan Rathnayake made 15 and Isitha Wijesundara 14 as Sri Lanka added 73 for the seventh, eighth and ninth wickets before declaring. The West Indies pacers toiled hard and were sometimes let down by their fielders with John Campbell dropping a regulation catch of Mendis at first slip from the bowling of Shamar Joseph. The four West Indies fast bowlers were largely disciplined as Mendis and Dinusha ground out 64 runs in the first session. Mendis showed occasional aggression against Joseph when he smashed the pace bowler over backward point for a six and then followed it with back-to-back boundaries before Campbell spilled a chance in the slips cordon. **Brief scores:** West Indies 58 for 1 (Campbell 31*, King 17, Asitha 1-11) trail Sri Lanka 549 for 9 dec (Udara 188, Dinusha 92, Kamindu 84, Shamar 2-98). - Agencies

NETHERLANDS FOOTBALLER



Real Madrid sign defender Dumfries from Inter Milan

MADRID: Real Madrid have signed Netherlands full-back Denzel Dumfries from Inter Milan on a four-year deal. While the transfer fee has not been confirmed, the Spanish side have reportedly activated the 30-year-old's release clause, which was 20m euros (£17.1m). The right-sided player is Real's fourth summer signing after Marc Cucurella, Bernardo Silva and Ibrahima Konate, and is set to provide competition to England international Trent Alexander-Arnold. Dumfries helped Inter win the

Serie A title twice and the Coppa Italia three times after joining the Italian club from PSV in 2021. He made 207 appearances for the Nerazzurri, claiming 27 goals and 28 assists, and helped the Netherlands reach the last 32 at this summer's World Cup. Real failed to win a trophy last season and president Florentino Perez promised to strengthen the club's defensive options during his successful re-election campaign, having also brought in Jose Mourinho as manager for a second spell. - Agencies

MASOOD REPLACED

Babar Azam takes charge as Pakistan Test captain

LAHORE: Shan Masood was on Sunday removed as Pakistan's Test captain, with Babar Azam taking over the reins for the second time in his career. The decision came as part of Pakistan's squad announcement ahead of their upcoming two-match Test series in the West Indies, starting later this month. The end of Masood's tenure brings down the curtain on a historically poor stint. Appointed nearly three years ago, Masood captained Pakistan in 16 Tests and lost 12 of them. No captain in Test history has ever lost 12 of their first 16 Tests, and despite ten men having captained Pakistan in more Tests, only Misbah-ul-Haq, who lost 19 of his 56 Tests, has overseen more defeats than Masood. They have also lost their last seven Tests, the joint-highest across Pakistan's history. Masood's tenure began with what has always proved Pakistan's biggest challenge: an away series in Australia, which they lost 3-0. It was a bad start from which Pakistan never really recovered, going on to lose 2-0 at home to Bangladesh; the first time they lost even a Test to them. A come-from-behind win over England later that year was the high point of his time; notably, however, it was the only high point. It was the only one of seven series under his leadership Pakistan won as they lost four, leaving them at the bottom of the World Test Championship 2023-25 table. Pakistan's decision to return to Babar, the man from whom Masood took over, perhaps reflects the dearth of attractive candidates the PCB had available. In the years



since he was last captain in 2023, Babar has struggled with his form across formats, but especially in Test cricket, where he has averaged just over 27 under Masood. His time as captain of Pakistan, however, was a markedly happier stint – Pakistan won ten of the 20 Tests Babar led in, starting off with a 2-0 home win over South Africa, and included clean sweeps away from home in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It was also when Babar's form with the bat was close to its best; as captain, he averaged over 50 in Test cricket. However, there was still plenty of disappointment, too, most notably a crushing 3-0 home series whitewash at England's hands, the only such defeat in Pakistan's Test history. Babar takes over at a busy time in Test cricket. The series against

the West Indies is immediately followed by a three-match series in England, Pakistan's first to the country in six years. A busy home winter season comes soon after, and includes Tests against New Zealand and Sri Lanka. **Afridi, Noman dropped** There have been more notable changes to the squad that lost 2-0 in Bangladesh in May, with the senior trio of Shaheen Shah Afridi, Hasan Ali, and Noman Ali all dropped. Saud Shakeel will not travel to West Indies due to fitness concerns but he has been included in the squad for the England Tests, subject to recovery. Mohammad Ali and Aamir Jamal have been recalled to the 16-player squad, while fast bowler Ubaid Shah – the youngest of the Shah brothers (Naseem and Hu-

nain being the others) – left-arm spinner Ali Usman and Awaiz Zafar have earned maiden call-ups. Pakistan's first Test against the West Indies will begin on July 25 at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, while the second will be played at Queen's Park Oval from August 2 to 6. Their three Tests in England are scheduled for Headingley (August 19-23), Lord's (August 27-31), and Edgbaston (September 9-13). **Squad for Tests in the West Indies and England:** Babar Azam (capt), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Fazel, Ali Usman, Awan Awaiz, Imam ul Haq, Khurram Shahzad, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Mohammad Awaiz Zafar, Mohammad Ghazi Ghouri, Sajid Khan, Salman Ali Agha, Shan Masood, Ubaid Shah. - Agencies

FSA DEREGISTERS FIRM

Financial Services Authority, has issued Decision No. 2/2026 to deregister “Global Financial Solutions” from the register of licensed practitioners.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 7,564.22 points, down by -0.15% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.28% at 603.43 points. Al Hassan Engineering, up 50.00%, was the top gainer while, Sohar Power, down 10.00%, was the top loser.

Event to exchange best practices in developing AI methodologies



The WSIS Forum, organised by the United Nations’ International Telecommunication Union, will showcase the latest developments in artificial intelligence, networking, public digital infrastructure, cybersecurity

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will take part in the first round of the United Nations Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance, which will begin on Monday, in Geneva on the sidelines of the World Summit on the Information

Society (WSIS) Forum.

Oman’s delegation will be led by Dr. Ali Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology. The

delegation will include Idris Abdulrahman Al Khanjari, the Sultanate of Oman’s Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation and its Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva.

Global dialogue

The global dialogue on Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance will see the participation of representatives of the United Nation’s 193 member states, in addition to representatives of private sector establishments, civil society institutions, the academic sector and the technical community.

The event will be the first international platform of its kind to be organised by the United Nations General Assembly to exchange the best practices in developing AI

methodologies. It also seeks to ensure that governance reflects the priorities of all countries—not just the most technologically advanced ones—and that all countries merit an opportunity to share the benefits of AI.

The WSIS Forum, organised by the United Nations’ International Telecommunication Union, will showcase the latest developments in artificial intelligence, networking, public digital infrastructure, cybersecurity and multilingual digital systems.

The forum will also explore ways to furnish a structured environment for studying emerging risks, including online safety challenges, misinformation, data management hurdles and the widening digital divide. -**ONA**

OMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

OCCI wins Government Corporate Leadership Award on commercial franchising

CAIRO: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), represented by the Commercial Franchise Centre, has won the Government Corporate Leadership Award in supporting and enabling business franchising.

Strategic partnerships

The OCCI received the award during its participation in the Egyptian-Saudi International Franchise Exhibition, which concluded recently in Cairo, in appreciation for

the chamber’s outstanding efforts in developing the franchise system in Oman, enhancing the competitiveness of national brands and enabling firms to expand locally and regionally through an integrated system of quality programmes and strategic partnerships.

Beekkeeping

During the event, two memoranda of cooperation and understanding were signed by Omani companies and their Egyptian

counterparts. The memorandum provided for cooperation in the fields of beekeeping, honey production and silverware.

The OCCI’s participation in the exhibition was in pursuance of its efforts to support the franchise system, enhance the presence of Omani brands in regional markets and to foster economic partnerships aimed to open up vistas for the Omani private sector in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 to diversify the economy. -**ONA**



DATA

UK economy contracts in June amid services sector slowdown

LONDON: The UK economy recorded a slight contraction in June, weighed down by weaker activity in the services sector, the main driver of economic growth in the United Kingdom.

Data from the UK Composite Purchasing Managers’ Index, which measures economic activity across various sectors, showed the index declined to 49.3 in June from 49.7 in May. -**WAM**

ENERGY / IN-COUNTRY VALUE

From Salalah to Sohar: Building the GCC’s Home for Enhanced Oil Recovery

ZL Group is investing to turn Oman from a market for enhanced oil recovery into a production and knowledge base — and a regional hub serving the wider Gulf

Enhanced oil recovery (EOR) has long been treated by the industry as a product to be imported and a problem to re-solve field by field. ZL Group is setting out to change that in Oman. With an established plant in Salalah and a new facility taking shape at SOHAR Port, the company is pursuing what it calls an industrialization pathway: not a single factory, but an entire value chain the Sultanate can own.

“For us, enhanced oil recovery is not a single facility or a product we import and sell,” says ZL Group CEO Echo Liu. “It is a full value chain that Oman can own. Salalah proved the model. Sohar is the next step. Together they signal that Oman is moving from being a market for EOR to becoming a production and knowledge base for it.” That direction sits squarely within the in-country value and self-reliance goals set out by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, and within the broader ambitions of Oman Vision 2040.

ZL’s long-term objective is a fully integrated, 100% made-in-Oman EOR value chain, from raw materials and monomer production through to finished polymer products, laboratory services, field application and technical support. The localization runs deeper than manufacturing: the company is building laboratory and R&D capability, equipment supply and field-service teams in-country, so that formulations are developed and tested against the region’s reservoir conditions and applied by local people. It is also adding conformance-control



technology, completing the offering for the many water-flooded fields across the GCC where channelling and poor sweep efficiency persist.

Each layer — R&D, manufacturing, quality control, equipment, maintenance, spares, conformance control and surface support — represents a capability and a set of jobs that stays in Oman. Equally important is the expertise built over more than a decade of operations, alongside local operators and service providers, in Omani reservoir conditions, manufacturing and logistics.

The chemistry at the core is polyacrylamide, which in the GCC is applied overwhelmingly to oil recovery. Used in EOR, it increases oil production while cutting the carbon footprint by more than 50% compared with conventional water flooding. The foundations were laid in Salalah, where ZL commissioned its first plant in 2019. It has supplied the Marmul oil field for the past seven years,

with a 100% qualification and on-time delivery record.

The scale of Sohar reflects the ambition. Land was secured in December 2023, ground was broken in December 2024 and installation was completed in February 2026. The facility spans 24 hectares, with more than 129,000 square metres of covered area. Phase 1 will produce 45,000 tonnes of monomer and 60,000 tonnes of polyacrylamide a year; the final phase will reach 335,000 tonnes. On completion, the plant will create 450 direct jobs and support more than 5,000 indirect ones. More than 6.5 million man-hours have been invested to date, together with over USD 97 million — more than half of it spent within Oman.

That conviction informs a wider argument about procurement. If the region wants real capability, ZL Group contends, evaluation systems must distinguish genuine, deep investment — an integrated plant with subsurface research, laboratory R&D, manu-



facturing and application engineering — from a simple blending unit that adds little local value at a fraction of the cost. “A fair framework, as outlined in Oman Vision 2040, recognizes in-country value, manufacturing depth, technology transfer and long-term commitment rather than the lowest headline price. Rewarding substance over appearance is what attracts serious investors and protects long-term commitments,” says His Highness Faisal bin Turki Al Said, Chairman of ZL Oman.

The paradigm shift: from piloting to industrialization

The harder change, ZL Group argues, is one of mentality. For decades the industry has approached chemical EOR as a technical problem, running pilots and waiting for perfect understanding before committing. Industrialization demands the opposite: standardize the formulation, modularize the facilities and deploy in manufacturing mode. No

single party can make that shift alone. Operators must bring the demand signal and the discipline; government must set enabling conditions and stable long-term demand; suppliers must invest, standardize what they deliver and build local capability. It is a shared goal built on close partnership across the vertical chain. The decisive moves to industrialize polymer flooding in China and shale in the United States both drove costs down once the whole chain scaled.

The decision to establish the facility at SOHAR Port reflects the strengths of its integrated industrial ecosystem: world-class port infrastructure, deep-water access, established industrial clusters and direct connectivity to regional and international markets — allowing production, logistics and export operations to sit within a single ecosystem. The complex is designed to meet 100% of Oman’s domestic EOR polymer demand while exporting more than 65% of future capacity to regional and international markets, transforming the Sultanate from an importer of specialty EOR chemicals into an exporter of high-value products. ZL Group is the principal investor, with supporting finance from Dhofar Islamic Bank. “Our backing,” says Amor Said Mohamed Al Amri, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Dhofar Islamic, “reflects a maturing appetite among Omani financial institutions to support serious industrial and downstream projects, not only traditional sectors — precisely the kind of industry-and-finance

partnership that Oman Vision 2040 envisions.”

Who benefits?

Done right, industrialization rewards everyone in the system. Operators secure a dependable local supply and the technical support to lift recovery from their mature fields. Omanis gain employment, training and transferable expertise across the entire chain. “The real return on a project like this is measured in people,” says Eng. Fahad bin Nasser Al Harthy, Partner and Chairman of Alumni Royal Academy of Management. “When Omanis are trained across R&D, manufacturing, quality control and field service, the expertise stays in the country and compounds — that is how a single plant becomes a national capability and a pipeline of talent for the whole sector.” Other suppliers and service providers become part of a growing industrial ecosystem, and the national economy retains value that would otherwise be exported. ZL Group’s own contribution is to anchor that system from within Oman, not from offshore.

For ZL Group, the objective extends beyond supplying chemicals: to help position Oman as the GCC’s centre for enhanced oil recovery technology, manufacturing, expertise and exports — an industry built in Oman, operated by Oman-based talent, and serving energy producers across the region for generations to come.

“We are not building a plant for Oman. We are building the GCC’s home for enhanced oil recovery — made here, served from here.”

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Hassan Engineering, up 50.00%, was the top gainer while, Sohar Power, down 10.00%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,564.22 points, down by -0.15% from previous close. The Shariah Index ended up by 0.28% at 603.43 points. Al Hassan Engineering, up 50.00%, was the top gainer while, Sohar Power, down 10.00%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 8457 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 38.77 million, with more than 126.55 million shares changing hands. Out of 72 traded securities, 27 advanced, 26 declined, and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for RO 696K while domestic investors were net buyers for RO 420K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 276K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 13,253.24 points, up 0.34%. Prices of Takaful Oman, Bank Dhofar, Al Madina Investments, Al Sharqia Investment, Taageer Finance were up by 4.69%, 4.55%, 3.13%, 1.96%, 1.71% respectively. Prices of Sohar International Bank, Bank Muscat, Oman United Insurance, DIDIC, OMINVEST were down by 2.04%, 1.23%, 1.16%, 0.34%, 0.26% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,747.30 points, up 0.36%. Prices



of Al Hassan Engineering, Galfar Engineering, Oman Flour Mills, Oman Cement, Voltamp Energy were up by 50.00%, 6.47%, 1.08%, 1.06%, 0.57% respectively. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Fisheries, Al Anwar Ceramics, A'Saffa Foods were down by 9.69%, 4.17%, 1.32%, 0.39% respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.00% before closing at 3,054.27 points. Prices of Al Maha Marketing, Al Jazeera Services, Ooredoo, SMN Power Holding, Sembcorp Salalah were up by 9.38%, 2.56%, 2.45%, 1.01%, 0.39% respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination, National Gas, OQ Exploration & Production, Phoenix Power, Al Suwadi Power were down by 2.15%, 1.82%, 0.89%, 0.79%, 0.52% respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	7,585.82	7,540.68	7,564.22	7,575.22	-11.00	-0.15%
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,280.91	13,187.34	13,253.24	13,207.73	45.50	0.34%
Industry Index	9,811.84	9,681.03	9,747.30	9,712.01	35.29	0.36%
Services Index	3,065.38	3,050.21	3,054.27	3,054.37	-0.10	-0.00%
MSX Shariah Index	604.36	599.48	603.43	601.75	1.67	0.28%
MSX TR INDEX	11,735.42	11,665.58	11,701.99	11,719.01	-17.02	-0.15%
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16,317.87	16,202.91	16,283.87	16,227.96	55.91	0.34%
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,566.48	12,398.94	12,483.82	12,438.62	45.20	0.36%
SERVICES TR IDX	4,107.04	4,086.71	4,092.14	4,092.27	-0.13	-0.00%
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
126,551,738	38,772,242	8,457	37,835,768,474	27	26	19	72

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JULY 5

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

OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	400	489	2	1.210	1.225	1.210	1.225	1.120	0.105	9.375	1.225	1.150	1.225	0.100	
84,525,000																
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	5,973,109	1,346,781	485	0.225	0.235	0.221	0.230	0.220	0.010	4.545	0.230	0.220	0.230	699,153,662	
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	1,431	400	2	0.276	0.280	0.276	0.280	0.273	0.007	2.564	0.280	0.270	0.280	11,996,037	
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	1,305,014	433,781	63	0.327	0.338	0.327	0.335	0.327	0.008	2.446	0.335	0.325	0.335	218,066,317	
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	45,000	4,640	5	0.104	0.104	0.102	0.104	0.102	0.002	1.961	0.104	0.104	0.104	9,380,000	
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	30,250	3,706	5	0.122	0.123	0.122	0.123	0.121	0.002	1.853	0.123	0.121	0.124	21,625,000	
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,240,350	173,074	63	0.139	0.141	0.138	0.141	0.139	0.002	1.439	0.140	0.138	0.140	315,410,378	
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,600	908	3	0.550	0.570	0.550	0.570	0.564	0.006	1.064	0.570	0.552	0.570	188,597,445	
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	9,497	1,894	5	0.196	0.200	0.196	0.200	0.198	0.002	1.010	0.200	0.190	0.200	38,927,120	
OM0000010120	ASTAD SHIPPING	1,206,973	336,224	516	0.281	0.281	0.277	0.280	0.278	0.002	0.719	0.280	0.280	0.280	1,458,448,398	
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	24,357	3,886	4	0.159	0.160	0.159	0.160	0.159	0.001	0.629	0.160	0.161	0.161	19,500,000	
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	76,600	13,022	8	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.169	0.001	0.592	0.170	0.170	0.172	52,276,618	
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,121,789	196,749	129	0.179	0.179	0.175	0.176	0.175	0.001	0.571	0.177	0.175	0.177	178,000,000	
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	39,365	10,191	10	0.259	0.260	0.258	0.259	0.258	0.001	0.388	0.259	0.258	0.259	247,234,135	
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	152,000	126,160	513	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.828	0.002	0.242	0.830	0.830	0.830	103,665,307	
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	4,001,500	1,984,749	3	0.486	0.489	0.486	0.489	0.489	0.000	0.000	0.489	0.486	0.489	0.100	811,347,231
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	5,905	2,539	6	0.430	0.430	0.429	0.430	0.430	0.000	0.429	0.430	0.429	0.430	21,647,222	
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	179,980	53,469	20	0.236	0.239	0.236	0.239	0.237	0.000	0.000	0.237	0.237	0.237	59,400,000	
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	4,525,129	1,774,048	220	0.383	0.383	0.381	0.382	0.383	-0.001	-0.254	0.382	0.381	0.420	301,918,400	
OM0000001323	OMINVEST	81,340	30,991	9	0.381	0.382	0.381	0.381	0.382	-0.001	-0.262	0.381	0.381	0.383	0.100	427,807,242
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	211,031	63,138	11	0.309	0.309	0.307	0.307	0.308	-0.001	-0.325	0.307	0.307	0.307	72,577,870	
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INTL DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	10,350	3,022	2	0.292	0.294	0.292	0.294	0.295	-0.001	-0.339	0.294	0.292	0.309	145,840,505	
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	741	575	2	0.776	0.776	0.776	0.776	0.779	-0.003	-0.385	0.776	0.775	0.776	0.100	93,120,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	4,188,627	5,776,453	102	1.381	1.381	1.372	1.375	1.381	-0.006	-0.434	1.375	1.372	1.377	0.100	1,031,250,000
OM0000003672	QAGAS NETWORKS	12,591,851	2,782,442	1,471	0.221	0.221	0.218	0.220	0.221	-0.001	-0.452	0.220	0.218	0.220	0.100	852,727,262
OM0000004925	ALBATHINAH POWER	186,530	35,914	11	0.193	0.193	0.192	0.192	0.193	-0.001	-0.518	0.192	0.192	0.194	129,578,387	
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	204,492	39,391	17	0.194	0.194	0.192	0.192	0.193	-0.001	-0.518	0.192	0.193	0.197	0.100	137,166,017
OM0000008998	QCBASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	15,935,066	4,101,487	1,318	0.260	0.261	0.256	0.258	0.260	-0.002	-0.769	0.258	0.258	0.258	0.040	892,548,639
OM0000003663	PHOENIX POWER	192,025	48,635	45	0.254	0.255	0.252	0.252	0.254	-0.002	-0.787	0.252	0.252	0.254	0.100	388,575,568
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	94,886,716	4,259,357	192	0.451	0.451	0.447	0.447	0.451	-0.004	-0.887	0.447	0.447	0.449	0.010	3,576,000,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	2,000	690	1	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.344	-0.004	-1.163	0.340	0.325	0.340	0.100	35,700,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	14,538,922	5,851,156	1,208	0.406	0.406	0.400	0.401	0.406	-0.005	-1.232	0.401	0.401	0.396	0.100	3,010,065,222
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	46,241,996	8,858,875	1,489	0.196	0.196	0.190	0.192	0.196	-0.004	-2.041	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.100	1,270,511,284
Total		33	123,811,926	38,300,828	7,940											

Parallel Market

OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACT	371,616	67,121	29	0.178	0.185	0.178	0.181	0.170	0.011	6.471	0.181	0.176	0.184	0.100	36,740,547
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	16,649	1,104	4	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.064	0.003	4.688	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.100	16,750,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	2,855	94	3	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.032	0.001	3.125	0.033	0.033	0.035	0.100	2,805,000
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	30,200	3,594	2	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.117	0.002	1.709	0.119	0.118	0.119	0.100	33,759,203
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	20,000	1,360	4	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.001	1.493	0.068	0.064	0.069	0.100	20,885,950
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	18,430	3,964	4	0.215	0.216	0.215	0.215	0.212	0.003	1.415	0.215	0.203	0.215	0.100	139,899,510
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	2,200	1,232	1	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.560	0.554	0.006	1.083	0.560	0.551	0.565	0.100	97,240,500
OM0000003260	OMAN ARAB BANK	525,962	122,502	283	0.233	0.233	0.232	0.233	0.232	0.001	0.431	0.233	0.232	0.233	0.100	466,639,197
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	30	23	1	0.773	0.773	0.773	0.773	0.772	0.001	0.130	0.773	0.773	0.000	0.100	73,435,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	12,200	1,818	3	0.149	0.150	0.149	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.149	0.151	0.100	4,500,000
OM0000001248	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	150	11	2	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.070	0.075	0.100	4,697,500
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	1,005	1,206	1	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	0.000	0.000	1.200	1.200	1.220	0.100	60,000,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	10,000	1,290	2	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.000	0.000	0.129	0.129	0.130	0.100	12,771,000
OM0000003028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	7,650	558	2	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.073	0.080	0.100	1,533,000
OM0000002812	SAHARA HOSPITALITY	1,630	4,564	1	2.800	2.800	2.800	2.800	2.800	0.000	0.000	2.800	0.000	2.800	1.000	22,185,240
OM0000004669	SHARGIYAH DESALINATION	585	102	2	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.163	0.175	0.100	17,115,378
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSURANCE	100	20	1	0.196	0.196	0.196	0.196	0.196	0.000	0.000	0.196	0.000	0.194	0.100	31,598,840
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	300	25	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.074	0.080	0.100	18,223,680
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	14,350	1,535	8	0.107	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.100	69,800,623
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	10,000	1,040	1	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.101	0.104	0.100	18,960,630
OM0000010823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	120	125	2	1.040	1.040	1.040	1.040	1.040	0.000	0.000	1.040	1.038	1.040	0.000	28,439,659
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	508,616	76,547	42	0.151	0.152	0.150	0.150	0.152	-0.002	-1.316	0.150	0.150	0.151	0.100	33,000,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	550	97	1	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.180	-0.003	-1.667	0.177	0.177	0.180	0.100	104,848,328
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	61,912	6,722	14	0.107	0.109	0.107	0.108	0.110	-0.002	-1.818	0.108	0.108	0.115	0.100	1,180,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DEVELOPMENT	16,940	1,593	7	0.091	0.093	0.091	0.091	0.093	-0.002	-2.151	0.091	0.091	0.092	0.100	14,155,896
OM0000007910	OMAN REAL ESTATE	6,897	453	6	0.071	0.075	0.071	0.075	0.077	-0.002	-2.597	0.075	0.075	0.079	0.100	15,000,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	1,218	342	2	0.295	0.295	0.291	0.291	0.291	-0.004	-3.270	0.291	0.291	0.291	0.100	14,350,000
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	1,066	326	3	0.310	0.310	0.306	0.306	0.340	-0.034	-10.000	0.306	0.310	0.306	0.100	6,120,000
Total		1,643,181	299,368	432												



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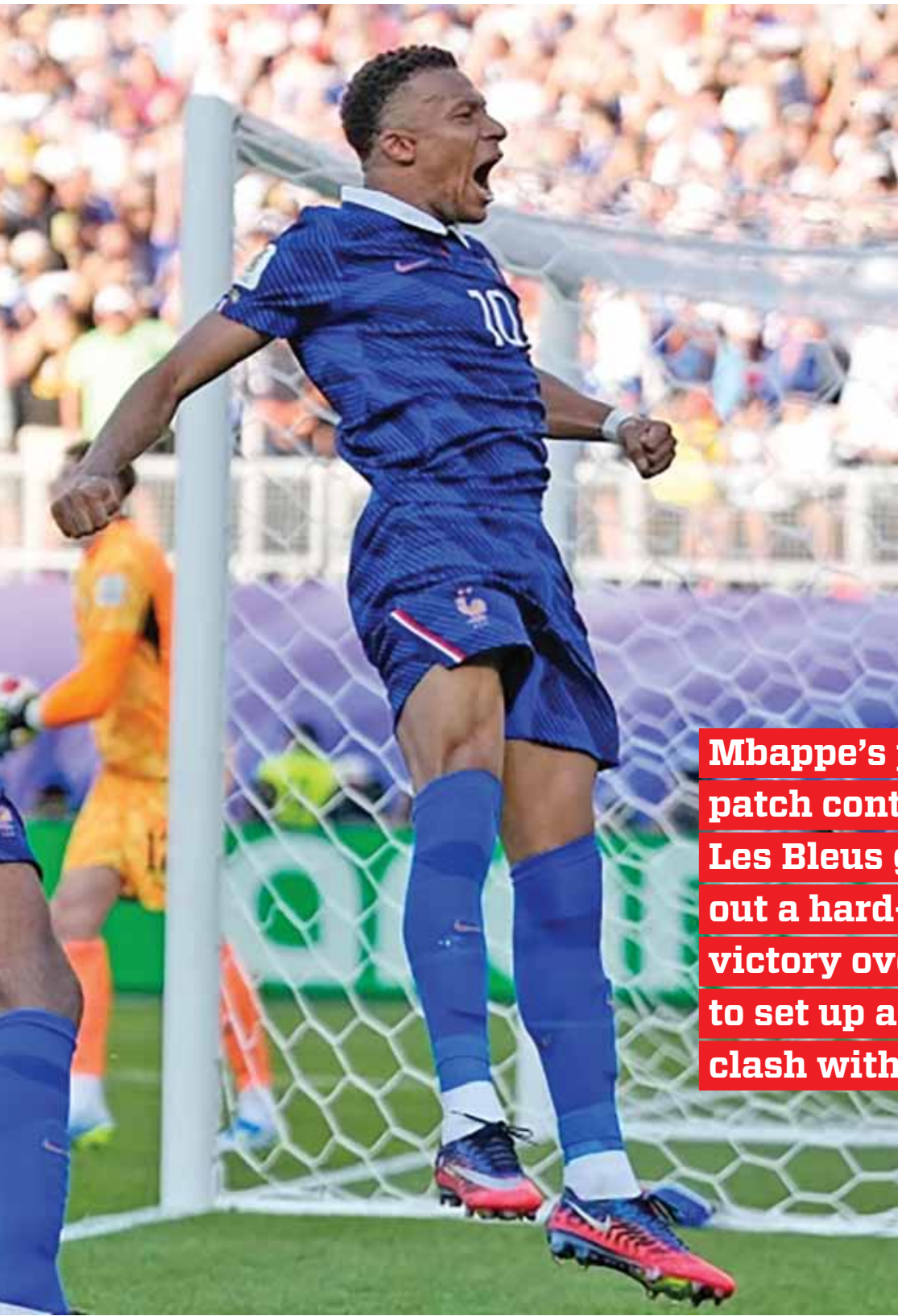
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Mbappe's purple patch continued as Les Bleus grounded out a hard-fought 1-0 victory over La Albirroja to set up a last-eight clash with Morocco



PHILADELPHIA: Kylian Mbappe scored his seventh goal of the FIFA World Cup 2026 as France overcame Paraguay 1-0 to set up a quarter-final meeting with Morocco on Saturday.

Mbappe struck a second-half penalty to settle an attritional contest at Philadelphia Stadium, moving level with Lionel Messi on goals but leading on assists in the race for the 2026 adidas Golden Boot, and one behind the Argentine's all-time World Cup tally of 20.

Having stunned Germany on penalties to reach the Round of 16, Paraguay effectively shut up shop in a frustrating first half for France.

Les Bleus dominated possession but struggled to break down La Albirroja's disciplined defence, their efforts were limited to speculative attempts from distance that never troubled goalkeeper Orlando Gill.

France began to make inroads after the restart, with Ousmane Dembele firing into the side netting following a quickly taken corner. As

the pressure mounted, Gill had to dive full stretch to keep out Manu Kone's powerful long-range effort.

Paraguay's resistance was finally broken in the 69th minute after Desire Doue was adjudged to have been upended in the penalty area following a VAR review.

Mbappe calmly dispatched the resultant spot-kick, sending Gill the wrong way to punch his team's ticket to the last eight for the fourth straight time.

Morocco — who knocked out co-hosts Canada in opening last-16 tie — await the two-time world champions at Boston Stadium on July 9.

Physical contest

Mbappe laughed and smiled — and scored his 19th career World Cup goal, of course — when Paraguay tried to bait him and his French teammates into fouls and provoke fights, as hot heads became a recurring theme during one of the steamiest World Cup games on record.

After the final whistle, Mbappe kept on walking and left Paraguayan goalkeeper Orlando Gill hanging as Gill extended his right hand in a show of sportsmanship.

In response, Gill threw the ball right at the No.10 Mbappe's jersey.

"I tried to shake his hand, but since he didn't pay me any attention, I lost my temper," Gill said. "But anyway, that was all I did; I calmed down afterward."

"We knew what kind of match it was going to be," Mbappe said in French.

"We can also get our hands dirty, we know how to do it. We know how to play ugly football. Guess they were thinking we were going to show up in tuxedos, but we were ready. Even at that kind of game, we were better than them."

Mbappe — who frequently trash-talked the Paraguayans in Spanish — is now the only player to score at least three goals in the knockout stage of three World Cups.

More than in any of the five



Ounahi brace helps end Canada's magical run as Morocco march on

HOUSTON: Co-hosts Canada's FIFA World Cup 2026 adventure came to an end in Houston as Azizouni Ounahi's second-half double and a late Soufiane Rahimi goal sent Morocco through to the quarter-finals for a second straight tournament with a convincing 3-0 win.

The Atlas Lions made history as Africa's first semi-finalists at Qatar 2022 and after struggling off a slow start with a strong second-half showing here, they can now look forward to a Boston quarter-final on 9 July against France. For Canada, a nation whose footballers had never won a World Cup match before this tournament, there will be great pride in their run to the last 16 alongside the pain of this defeat.

Canada had the better of the first energy, starting with impressive power and intensity, pressing high and forcing several corners.

It was no surprise they created

the first significant chance when, capitalising on a loose ball out of Morocco's defence, Ali Ahmed fed Tani Oluwaseyi, who spun superbly away from Redouane Halhal to put himself clean through on goal. He shot low but Yassine Bounou, Morocco's Canada-born goalkeeper, saved with his left foot.

Mohamed Ouahbi's team could not find their rhythm and their discomfort grew with the departure after 22 minutes of Ismael Saibari, their leading scorer in this tournament, with an apparent muscle injury. Rahimi took his place.

In Saibari's absence, midfielder Ounahi stepped up to make the difference, opening the scoring soon after the restart through a well-worked dead-ball routine. From the right, Achraf Hakimi played the ball across the face of the box where, from the D, Ounahi swept a terrific first-time shot past the



to back-to-back World Cup quarter-finals, becoming the first African nation to grace the last eight more than once.

Ounahi is the third Morocco player to have scored two goals in



a World Cup game after Abdelrazzak Khairi against Portugal in 1986 and Salaheddine Bassir against Scotland in 1998.

He is the first to have done it in the knockout stage. - Agencies

Proud the whole team kept its cool: France boss Deschamps

PHILADELPHIA: France coach Didier Deschamps admitted France had been dragged into an uncomfortable and fractious contest against Paraguay but praised his side for keeping its discipline in a match he felt could prove useful later in the tournament.

"It's a great pleasure to go to the quarter-finals because it was a tough game," the France coach said after a 1-0 win in Philadelphia.

"We had some easier games so far, so it was good for us to face something more complicated. We should have scored a second goal because that would have made things easier, but I am happy with the final outcome, and I think this will help us."

The France coach was also pleased with the way his players handled the tension of a game that featured frequent fouls, repeated stoppages and simmering irritation on both benches. France collected three yellow cards -- Kouadio Koné, Michael Olise, and Bradley Barcola — and Deschamps said he had warned his players at half-time not to be drawn into any emotional battle.

"We were leading and I told them that if we played their game, we would not win," he said.

"We already had three yellow cards, so I told them — no gestures, no reactions. There were some technical fouls, some actions, some words from the other bench that I could have done without, but we tried to stay calm. If the bench is calm, it helps the players. If the bench is angry, that gets communicated to them as well."

Deschamps suggested France had learned from



watching other sides lose control off-knockout ties, pointing to Germany's elimination earlier in the tournament.

"I am proud because the whole team kept its cool," he said. "If we had responded to provocation, it could have gone bad. Germany responded to it and they are out. I am happy with my team's behaviour."

"They pull out every trick in the book," Deschamps said. "It's not the kind of football that draws people to the stadium. Each team played the way it wants. But there were insults from the other bench that I could do without."

France were made to work

against a Paraguay side that defended deep, broke up play and turned the match into a stop-start battle.

Deschamps felt his players had not always moved the ball quickly enough against a low block, particularly in the hot conditions, but acknowledged that such games demanded a different kind of patience.

"We looked to play football, but the opponent just defended," he said. "When a team plays with a low block, it needs more effort and more intensity from you. Despite the heat, we should have played quicker, especially in transition. It is easier to play when you are

defending deep than when you have to carry the ball, dribble and create in these conditions."

He also defended Mbappe's contribution beyond the winning penalty, pushing back against what he sees as a distorted public image of his captain.

"He hasn't changed as a person," Deschamps said. "Kylian has an image for you that is far from reality. From the first day I have said that he has the spirit, he makes athletic efforts, and when he speaks, he speaks for the whole team. Of course, he is in the spotlight because of what he does on the pitch, but it is collective." - Agencies

Paraguay coach: 'My team fought like lions'



PHILADELPHIA: Paraguay coach Gustavo Alfaro said his side had "fought like lions" in their 1-0 World Cup defeat at the hands of France on Saturday. "France couldn't find the answers, and it took a bit of individual skill and a penalty given by VAR to make the difference which their football had not been able to do," Alfaro said after the game at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia.

The South American nation were appearing at the World Cup for the first time since 2010 and had been hoping to match their run to the quarter-finals at that tournament, which remain best ever showing.

The tactics they employed to try to unsettle their opponents irritated France forward Kylian Mbappe,

while coach Didier Deschamps accused Paraguay of issuing verbal insults.

But Alfaro insisted his men had "fought like lions out on the pitch".

He added: "It took us 16 years to get back to a World Cup, while Mbappe won the World Cup the first time he played in it, got to the final in his second and now is fighting to be the top scorer."

"We worked so hard to get a different result, but I will leave here with the knowledge that we came to compete, and we did compete," added Alfaro, who noted that his team was in tears of disappointment in the dressing room after the match.

"I have no doubt that this World Cup has made us all better, although I am sad to go out because I hoped we might go further." - Agencies

'We have established among football's elite': Morocco coach

HOUSTON: Morocco are heading back to the World Cup quarter-finals and coach Mohamed Ouahbi believes his team has established itself among football's elite.

"We are no longer a surprise," Ouahbi said through an interpreter. "Now when people talk about Morocco we're a major contender and it's a great source of pride. I think it's only the beginning and I hope we continue to have runs like this."

Despite already making history in this World Cup, Morocco have much higher goals.

"We want to keep going," Ouahbi said. "We don't want to stop." It's Morocco's second straight appearance in the final eight after becoming the first African team to reach the semi-

finals in 2022. "We are so proud to represent Africa because it's a continent with a lot of talent and Africa deserves to be at the best level in football," goalkeeper Yassine Bounou said.

Canada coach Jesse Marsch shared his postgame message to the team. "I told them that I was proud of them and I challenged them to understand that we can play like this all the time against the best teams in the world," he said. "We can be better on the day. And then the challenge is, can we hold that standard for 90 minutes?"

Marsch lauded how his team performed against a squad of Morocco's calibre and how Canada controlled the match for much of the day.

"The way we pushed, the way



we were in the match, the quality we showed, the overall impact in the match, we were better," he said. "We were better than the No. 7 team in the world today."

Ouahbi had a strong response when told of those comments.

"In terms of intensity they were good," he said. "They were

good for 98 minutes. Were they better? It's hard to say. It takes some nerve to say that when you lose 3-0."

The victory set off a huge celebration for Morocco's fans back home. Within minutes, thousands poured into the streets of Casablanca, Morocco's largest city. Horns echoed as supporters climbed onto car roofs, waving flags and chanting.

Traffic ground to a halt along the Corniche Boulevard, one of the city's main avenues, where ecstatic Atlas Lions supporters danced, set off fireworks and waved flags.

Other major boulevards across Casablanca were also jammed with jubilant fans.

It was an extremely physical match with eight yellow

cards being issued. Both teams received four.

Canada reached the round of 16 despite missing star Alphonso Davies for the majority of the tournament because of a hamstring injury. The Bayern Munich player logged only 15 minutes as a substitute in the victory over South Africa but wasn't available on Saturday.

Moments after their loss, Canada Soccer's Instagram account posted a heartfelt tribute to supporters. "Every story has an ending. This one just doesn't feel like one right now," the post began and ended on a note of optimism. "Our World Cup journey comes to a close," it said. "Canada's football journey is only just beginning. See you soon." - Agencies

HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS

India continues relief operations in Venezuela

CARACAS: The Indian Army’s Field Hospital continues with its humanitarian efforts in Venezuela after the country was devastated by twin earthquakes on June 24 that claimed the lives of over 2,300 people.

In a post on X, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal shared a video in which a man was lauding the efforts by the Indian Army’s Field Hospital in tending to the injured.

He said, “I have been treated very well here... I am thankful.”

Earlier on Saturday, Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil visited the field hospital set up by India under Operation Amistad and lauded the medical services provided there.

In his press statement at the end of the visit, Gil said that alongside the Ambassador of India to Venezuela, PK Ashok Babu, he witnessed the moving demonstration of solidarity and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for extending a helping hand.

“We want to inform you that we have toured this field hospital. A field hospital that has been set up by the Government of India, friendly government, brotherly government. Ashok Babu, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, is with us here from India in Venezuela, the commander who has been in charge of operations here, the colleague Julio Leon, who is the director of the National Hippodrome Institute, President of the National Hippodrome Institute, facilities that are providing services for the installation of this hospital,” he said.

Gil said that after Venezuelan Acting President Delcy Rodriguez’s visit to India, this is a sample of brotherhood.

“I would like to thank the government of India and its Prime Minister Modi. We recently visited India, and here’s a sample of brotherhood. This is the brotherhood of peoples, serving the Venezuelan people.” – **ANI**

Death toll from earthquakes in Venezuela hits nearly 3000

The death toll has risen by over 300 since Friday, with more than 16,500 people injured in last month’s disaster. Thousands remain unaccounted for.

CARACAS: The number of deaths from Venezuela’s devastating twin earthquakes have jumped to at least 2,954, an updated official count showed on Saturday.

The death toll has risen by over 300 since Friday, with more than 16,500 people injured in last month’s disaster. Thousands remain unaccounted for.

On June 24, two back-to-back earthquakes rocked Venezuela in what quickly became one of the worst quake disasters that Latin America has witnessed.

With a magnitude of 7.2 and 7.5, the consecutive earthquakes struck just seconds apart and hit the coastal La Guaira area north of the capital Caracas the hardest.

Authorities have recorded a total of 942 aftershocks since the quakes.

Rescue operations wind down

International rescuers have started to wrap up a frantic search for survivors with a critical 72-hour rescue window in earthquakes long passed. A few people were found alive this week, despite the slim chances of survival.



The Venezuelan government has not given any estimates of the missing but the United Nations puts the number of people unaccounted for at as many as 50,000.

International disaster squads, including some US and South American teams were starting to wind down rescue operations, news agency AFP cited their members as saying on Saturday.

The rescue teams from Florida and Virginia are reported to be

heading back home this weekend.

The Los Angeles County fire department rescue team is also ending its mandate in Venezuela after its latest search operation showed no signs of life.

Venezuela’s acting President Delcy Rodriguez handed out medals to international teams, including their rescue dogs, in an apparent indication that the rescue missions were packing up.

Venezuela is experiencing “a

profound grief gripping our people, where families still hold out hope of finding loved ones alive, people who have lost everything,” Rodriquez said.

Rodriguez defends government response to quake disaster

Venezuela’s acting president has strongly rejected allegations that her government’s reaction time to the quakes was too slow.

Several Venezuelans have expressed anger saying that families spent the crucial initial hours digging out their relatives themselves. Civilians searching through the debris alongside international aid organizations say assistance like food and medical supplies were delayed and there was a continuing lack of heavy machinery to move the wreckage.

Rodriguez defended her government’s response saying that thousands of troops and officials had been deployed.

On Saturday, workers with heavy machinery were starting to knock down structures that had caved-in in La Guaira.

“We’re still working, still searching for bodies. We’re still going. It hasn’t been easy,” Venezuelan volunteer Francisco Sasquia told AFP.

“We found two bodies that have already been released to their families,” he added.

Over 16,000 people are homeless, according to official data. Some are are currently housed in official shelters and others in tented camps. – **DW**

US 250TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY

JD Vance recalls key American milestones and contributions

NEW YORK CITY: As the US marks its 250th Independence anniversary celebrations, Vice President JD Vance called for greater American unity and recalled the contributions of people from all walks of life in key milestones of American history.

Delivering his remarks aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge, during the Sail 250 parade of ships in New York Harbour, Vance listed key moments from American history, such as recalling the country’s role “saving the world from tyranny” during World War II to sending people to the moon and underlined the contributions of common citizens in making these happen.

“When we saved the world in World War II from tyranny in the 20th century, we needed great military leadership and tactical genius from our generals. But we also needed Rosie the Riveter, Iowa farm girls who built the machinery of war and the sweethearts they sent to a world away,” Vance said.

He added, “When we went to the moon, of course, our great astronauts flew the rockets and our great men of science and engineering built them. But there were clerks and janitors and welders like my grandfather who each played their distinctive American part. All of us have a part. All of us had our part, our role to play in creating 250 years of a proud American story.”

VP Vance calls on Americans to reject “zero-sum thinking” and division as the nation marks its historic 250th birthday.

Speaking on the milestone anniversary, Vance underlined how America’s history is defined by unity and a shared mission, rather than a narrow focus on the nation’s past flaws.

“What I’d ask you to do, my fellow Americans, on our 250th birthday, is to reject the two-dimensional view of your fellow citizens, and reject the two-di-



mensional view of your country. Reject that America is a place for zero-sum thinking because it is not; our history is one of people carving a great civilisation out of the wilderness. Reject the view of your nation that sees only its sins, but not its grace and its greatness.”

“Everything we have done as a country, we have done together. Not as citizens divided against each other but as a common people working towards a common future.”

His remarks are being seen as a veiled dig at the New York City Mayor, Zohran Mamdani, who in his message for America’s 250th anniversary termed patriotism as “every act of righteous dissent”.

“Today and all days, let us remember that patriotism is not pretending our nation is without flaws. Patriotism is every act of righteous dissent -- because loving our country means fighting for the best version of it,” he said in his message on X.

In his remarks, he urged Americans to participate in creating the next 250 years of American greatness and said, “I say to all my fellow Americans, I’m proud of you. Happy birthday. And happy birthday to our great nation,” the US Vice President said.

On July 4, America is celebrating 250 years of independence.

FAMILY MEMBERS ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Senior Iranian officials attend the second day of Ali Khamenei’s funeral

TEHRAN: Top Iranian officials attended the second day of funeral proceedings for slain Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Sunday.

Khamanei’s family members were also in attendance, including three of his sons. But the son who succeeded him as Iran’s top leader, Motjaba Khamenei, was nowhere to be seen as speculation grows as to his whereabouts. Motjaba has not been seen in public for months after he was reportedly wounded in the same February 28 airstrike that killed his father and several others. His face was reportedly disfigured and he suffered significant injury to one or both legs.

Khamenei’s sons, IRGC leaders make rare public appearance

Present on Sunday were Khamenei’s sons Meysam, Mostafa and Masoud, who was seen wiping his tears with a keffiyeh — a symbol of solidarity with Palestinians. The three hadn’t been seen in public since the war broke out.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) leader Gen. Ahmad Vahidi, who himself had only been photographed for the first time since the war on Thursday, was spotted in the crowd of mourners flanked by plainclothes security.

Esmail Qaani, who leads the Revolutionary Guard’s expeditionary Quds Force, was also in



attendance.

President Masoud Pezeshkian and parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf prayed behind Khamenei’s coffin, which was flanked by the coffins of his daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law and 14-month-old granddaughter, who were also killed in the strike.

Sunday’s ceremony was facilitated by poet Mohammad Rasouli, who led chants of “Death to America!” and “Death to Israel!”

He criticised US President Donald Trump in his speech, adding that “the world is no longer a good place for” the US leader.

Meanwhile, thousands of mourners carrying flags filled the Grand Mosalla in Tehran as tem-

peratures eclipsed 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). Mist machines were deployed at scale while attendees were also handed refreshments.

Peace negotiations on hold

Authorities are anticipating a massive procession in central Tehran on Monday, after which Khamenei’s remains will be transported to the seminary city of Qom.

From there, the body will be flown to Iraq where ceremonies will continue in the Shi’ite holy shrine cities of Najaf and Kerbala on Wednesday. Khamenei’s will then return to Iran where he will be buried by the Shi’ite immam tombs in Mashhad.

The week-long funeral has put on hold talks with the US intended to reach a permanent end to the war. Trump separately told US news website Axios that he would not attack Iran during the funeral to preserve negotiations.

Having a major funeral turnout in the meantime could help Iran strengthen its position in future negotiations.

“Our foreign policy should not be shaped in a way that allows our martyred leader’s blood to be dishonored and other countries can afford to do such things, without any serious response from our government and diplomatic system,” one mourner in Tehran told the Associated Press. – **DW**



LIFESTYLE

Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) is among the most lethal and treatment-resistant cancers of the brain. Even with surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy, patients typically survive less than 15 months after diagnosis

THIS NEW VITAMIN



SHOWS PROMISE AGAINST DEADLY BRAIN CANCER: STUDY

A newly published study in *Oncoscience* explored a potential new approach to treating glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer that remains extremely difficult to treat. The paper is titled “Selective blood-brain barrier penetration and tumour targeting of nitrosylcobalamin in glioblastoma: Pharmacokinetics, tissue distribution, and synergistic activity with trail and temozolomide.” The research was led by first and corresponding author Joseph A. Bauer of Nitric Oxide Services, LLC and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation Taussig Cancer Center. The team investigated nitrosylcobalamin (NO-Cbl), a modified form of vitamin B12 that releases nitric oxide, to determine whether it could cross the blood-brain barrier (BBB) and selectively accumulate in glioblastoma tumours. Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) is among the most lethal and treatment-resistant cancers of the brain. Even with surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy, patients typically survive less than 15 months after diagnosis. One major reason is the blood-brain barrier, a protective structure that blocks many drugs from reaching tumor tissue in the brain.

Testing a vitamin B12-based brain cancer therapy
To evaluate NO-Cbl, the researchers used several experimental methods. It included testing the compound against cancer cells in the NCI-60 human tumour cell line panel, conducting pharmacokinetic studies in rats with glioblastoma tumours, and examining how NO-Cbl performed in combination with other treatments in human glioblastoma cell lines. The results showed that NO-Cbl had anti-tumor activity across a wide range of cancer types. Tumour cells originating in the central nervous system displayed a moderate level of sensitivity to the treatment. **Crossing the blood-brain barrier and targeting tumours**
One of the most significant findings came from animal experiments. After being administered systemically, NO-Cbl successfully crossed the blood-brain barrier and accumulated within glioblastoma tissue. Researchers also found evidence that the compound remained active in tumours for an extended period. Nitrate levels in tumour tissue stayed elevated for at least 24 hours after treatment, while nitrate levels in normal tissues dropped more quickly.



This pattern suggested that NO-Cbl may be retained within tumours and deliver nitric oxide directly to the tumour microenvironment. Figures 2 and 3 of the

study (pages 3-4) show sustained levels of nitrate and cobalamin-related metabolites in brain tumour tissue compared with other organs, further supporting selective accumulation in glioblastoma. **Enhanced effects with existing glioblastoma treatments**
The researchers also examined whether NO-Cbl could improve the performance of established glioblastoma therapies. In laboratory studies using U87 and D54 glioblastoma cells, combining NO-Cbl with either TRAIL or temozolomide produced much stronger suppression of tumour cell growth than any of the treatments achieved on their own. Additional analysis confirmed synergistic interactions across multiple dose ranges. “This pilot study demonstrates that NO-Cbl crosses the BBB, accumulates selectively in brain tumour tissue, and synergises with established and experimental glioblastoma therapies.” **Potential to overcome treatment resistance**
According to the authors, NO-Cbl may also help address several biological mechanisms that allow glioblastoma tumors to resist treatment. Previous research refer-

enced in the paper showed that NO-Cbl can promote apoptosis through caspase-8 activation, suppress NF-κB survival signaling, and strengthen TRAIL receptor signaling through S-nitrosylation. Together, these effects could make glioblastoma cells more responsive to therapy, including tumours that have developed resistance to temozolomide. **Early findings with more research ahead**
The authors stress that these findings come from a pilot translational study and that further research will be required before the approach can be considered for clinical use. Future studies are expected to focus on orthotopic validation, optimising dosing strategies, tracking nitric oxide activity over longer periods, and investigating the underlying mechanisms in additional central nervous system tumour models. Overall, the findings provide early evidence that a cobalamin-based nitric oxide donor could represent a promising new strategy for glioblastoma treatment. By combining blood-brain barrier penetration, selective tumour targeting, and enhanced activity alongside existing therapies, NO-Cbl may offer a new way to improve drug delivery and combat treatment resistance in one of the most challenging cancers in neuro-oncology. - **ANI**

ROUND-UP

OETC wins ‘Best Sovereign/ Semi-Sovereign Sukuk Deal’ at 2026 GBM Awards Middle East

This achievement demonstrates the competence of Omani talent in managing major financial operations and reaffirms the pivotal role the company plays in supporting the national economy by creating an electricity transmission system characterised by high reliability and financial innovation

MUSCAT: The Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) has achieved a new milestone in its track record of excellence by winning the ‘Best Sovereign/Semi-Sovereign Sukuk Deal’ award at the 2026 Global Banking & Markets (GBM) Awards for the Middle East. This recognition underscores the company’s leadership in utilising innovative financing tools and highlights the confidence of international financial institutions in its solvency and robust financial strategies.



Eng. Hisham Al Riyami, Acting Chief Executive Officer of OETC, stated: “This prestigious award reflects the success of the company’s vision in adopting the highest efficiency standards within capital markets and its ability to attract high-quality investments that support infrastructure projects in the Sultanate of Oman. The success of this Sukuk deal embodies our steadfast commitment to financial sustainability and our responsibility to enable the energy transition while developing the national grid in accordance with international standards.”

Furthermore, Ali Al Reesi, Chief Financial Officer of OETC, emphasized the strategic importance of this achievement, saying: “Winning this international award is the fruit of continuous efforts to strengthen the company’s financial position and optimize its financing structure to meet the expansion needs of the grid. This award reflects the prominent position OETC has reached as a leading issuer in the Sukuk market, and our capability to manage complex financial instruments with high efficiency and proficiency.”

In the same context, Sulaiman Al Riyami, Manager of Financial Planning and Reporting, expressed his pride in this achievement, saying: “We are proud to receive the ‘Best Sovereign/Semi-Sovereign Sukuk Deal’ award at the 2026 GBM Awards. This is a prestigious honor that reflects our excellence in financial innovation, our commitment to sustainable finance, and our role in delivering long-term value to the energy sector in the Sultanate of Oman. This achievement represents a significant milestone in our journey, embodying the outstanding efforts, expertise, and fruitful collaboration among our employ-

ees, partners, and stakeholders who continue to support our vision and successes. We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to this remarkable achievement and to everyone continuing this journey with us toward building a sustainable and resilient energy future.”

This achievement demonstrates the competence of Omani talent in managing major financial operations and reaffirms the pivotal role the company plays in supporting the national economy by creating an electricity transmission system characterized by high reliability

and financial innovation.

OETC is the sole entity responsible for the transmission and control of electricity through the national transmission grid, with its services extending across all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman with high efficiency and reliability. The company also manages the interconnection lines with the GCC Interconnection Authority grid at 220 kV. OETC works toward achieving the Sultanate of Oman’s strategic goals of building a secure, sustainable, and resilient electricity system in alignment with the objectives of “Oman Vision 2040.”

GRADUATION CEREMONY

MCBS honours 239 BTEC graduates and highlights inclusive, practical and future-focused education

MUSCAT: Modern College of Business and Science celebrated its 13th BTEC Graduation Ceremony, honouring 239 graduates across its Diploma and Extended Diploma programmes in Business, Information Technology, Marketing, and Travel and Tourism. Held in the presence of Dr Shamsa Masood Nasser Al Shaibaniya, distinguished guests, faculty members, proud parents, and graduating students, the ceremony marked a proud moment for MCBS and its growing BTEC community.

This year’s graduating class reflected the strength of the BTEC learning model at MCBS, where practical education, applied skills, and student growth remain central to the academic experience. Around 40% of the graduating cohort achieved Merit and Distinction classifications, demonstrating not only academic achievement, but also the dedication, resilience, and commitment that define the MCBS community. Speaking during the ceremony, Dr. Moosa Abdullah Al-Kindi, Dean of MCBS, described the occasion as a celebration of achievement, perseverance, and hope.

“At MCBS, our mission extends beyond awarding qualifications. We are committed to nurturing graduates who are innovative, adaptable, ethically grounded, and prepared to thrive in an ever-evolving global environment. Through quality education, practical learning, industry engagement, research, and a strong focus on employability, we strive to ensure that every graduate leaves ready to make a meaningful contribution to society.”

The ceremony also highlighted the inclusive spirit of the BTEC programme, which supports students from diverse backgrounds and creates opportunities for learners to grow in confidence, skills, and ambition. Through applied learning, continuous guidance, and a strong focus on real-world relevance, the programme enables students to recognise their potential and prepare for



meaningful futures.

Reflecting on the graduating cohort, Dr. Said Al Kittani, Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Outreach, said: “This year’s graduating class reflects what MCBS truly believes in: that every student deserves the opportunity to succeed. At MCBS, we do not simply gradu-

ate students with qualifications; we develop resilient individuals, compassionate leaders, and lifelong learners. We believe education should recognise ability rather than limitation, potential rather than barriers, and possibility rather than circumstance.”

The BTEC International Extended Diploma Level 3 is globally

recognised and designed to equip students with essential skills and industry-relevant knowledge, preparing them for higher education or direct entry into the workforce. Its flexible, modular structure supports different learning styles and allows students to gain practical, hands-on experience that connects academic learning with

workplace expectations. MCBS’s mission is to facilitate learning and growth in knowledge, skills, innovation, and technical know-how that serve the community in the 21st century, while its vision is to be a prominent institution of higher education in the region.

As Oman advances towards Vision 2040, programmes such as BTEC play an important role in preparing a generation that is skilled, adaptable, and ready for the changing labour market. Through its applied and career-focused model, the BTEC programme supports national priorities by strengthening employability, encouraging entrepreneurship, building confidence in practical problem-solving, and creating pathways into higher education and the workforce. In this way, MCBS contributes to the development of capable, innovative, and work-ready graduates who can support Oman’s diversified and sustainable future economy.

The ceremony also celebrated the important role of parents, families, faculty, and staff in supporting student success. Their encouragement, mentorship, and belief in the students helped shape confi-

dent graduates ready to contribute to their professions, communities, and the Sultanate of Oman.

MCBS’s commitment to quality education and future-focused learning continues to gain wider recognition. The college has been recognized in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, reflecting its dedication to quality education, sustainability, community engagement, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. MCBS has also been ranked among the Top 100 institutions in the QS Arab Region University Rankings, a milestone that reflects the collective dedication of its students, faculty, staff, alumni, industry partners, and the wider MCBS community.

The 13th BTEC Graduation Ceremony reaffirmed MCBS’s role in preparing graduates who are not only qualified, but also adaptable, ethical, and ready to contribute meaningfully to the future of Oman and beyond. As the Class of 2026 begins its next chapter, MCBS celebrates their achievements with pride and looks forward to the impact they will make in their communities, industries, and nation.



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