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TRUMP THREATENS KHARG, OIL WELLS

Make a deal soon and open Hormuz or face strikes, US warns

DUBAI
BY STEPHEN N. R.
Senior Associate Editor

US President Donald Trump yesterday threatened to destroy Iran's oil export hub of Kharg Island, along with its oil wells and power plants, if Tehran does not soon agree to a deal to end the war.

A day after striking a more conciliatory tone and suggesting a deal could be reached this week, Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform that Washington was in "serious discussions" with what he described as "a more reasonable regime" in Tehran, but paired that with a stark warning.

"Great progress has been made but, if for any reason a deal is not shortly reached ... and if the Hormuz Strait is not immediately 'Open for Business,' we will conclude our lovely 'stay' in Iran by blowing up and completely obliterating all of their Electric Generating Plants, Oil Wells and Kharg Island ... which we have purposefully not yet 'touched'," he said.

Regime change claim

Speaking earlier aboard Air Force One, Trump said the United States had effectively achieved "regime change" in Iran following the month-long war launched with Israel, citing the number of Iranian leaders killed.

"We're dealing with different people than anybody's dealt with before ... It's a whole different group," he said, adding that a deal "could be soon".

Trump appeared to link the progress in talks to Iran allowing more oil cargo ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, calling it a "sign of respect". However, Iranian officials have not confirmed any negotia-



People and first-responders walk amidst debris as they gather before a building that was hit by an Israeli airstrike in Beirut's southern suburbs yesterday.

Trump appeared to link the progress in talks to Iran allowing more oil cargo ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, calling it a 'sign of respect'.

tions, and the partial disruption of the strait has continued to rattle global markets.

Despite the diplomatic messaging, there was no let-up in hostilities on the ground.

The UAE said its air defences intercepted 11 ballistic missiles and 27 UAVs launched from Iran yesterday. Since the start of the conflict, UAE forces have engaged 425 ballistic missiles, 15 cruise missiles and 1,941 UAVs.

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Min-

ister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, condemned in the strongest terms the targeting of, and threats to target, civilian infrastructure and civilian facilities in the region, including schools, universities, hospitals, desalination plants, energy facilities, transportation hubs, and residential areas.

Violation of established principles

Such actions constitute a flagrant and grave violation of the established principles and provisions of international law, and cannot, under any circumstances, be accepted or justified.

In Kuwait, an attack on a power and water desalination plant killed an Indian worker and caused significant damage, according to authorities. Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity

said the strike targeted a service building at the facility.

In Lebanon, a UN peacekeeper was killed after a projectile struck a position of the UN force deployed in the south, as Israeli troops battle Iran-backed Hezbollah fighters.

Diplomatic efforts

Pakistan, acting as a go-between, hosted foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt for talks on de-escalation. Pakistan's foreign minister said both Iran and the United States had expressed confidence in Islamabad's role in facilitating dialogue.

But Iran's parliament speaker accused Washington of using diplomacy as a cover for military escalation, warning of retaliation if US ground forces enter the conflict.

SEE ALSO P5-6, P10-13

Global markets swing as aluminium and oil surge on Middle East tensions

Commodity rally fuels volatility across equities, with Asia facing sharper pressure

DUBAI
BY JUSTIN VARGHESE
Your Money Editor

Global markets swung yesterday as rising oil and aluminium prices, driven by escalating tensions in the Middle East, weighed on investor sentiment and increased volatility across regions.

Stocks in the US traded unevenly, reflecting uncertainty tied to energy markets and geopolitical risks. In Europe, markets edged higher, with shares in the UK, France and Germany posting moderate gains.

Oil drives market sentiment

Oil prices extended gains as supply concerns intensified. US crude rose \$1.95 to \$101.59 a bar-

rel, while Brent crude climbed \$3.41 to \$115.98, compared with around \$70 before the conflict.

"Oil prices extended their upward trajectory on Monday, supported by escalating geopolitical tensions and mounting concerns over supply disruptions," said Joseph Dahrieh, Managing Director at Tickmill.

He pointed to risks around key maritime routes, including the Strait of Hormuz, as a key driver of supply fears.

Aluminium joins the rally

Aluminium prices surged after Iran targeted two major Gulf production facilities, raising concerns over supply disruptions. Prices jumped about 6 per cent early before easing to a 4.2 per cent gain at \$3,435 per tonne.

"Escalation and expansion of the Middle East conflict sent crude oil and aluminium up at the open," said Ipek Ozkardeskaya, analyst at Swissquote Bank. The rise in energy and metals

points to broader supply-side risks. Investors are increasingly positioning for a prolonged conflict, which could keep costs elevated.

"Although we do not expect the conflict to be protracted, we anticipate heightened volatility in the near term," said Xavier Lee, senior equity analyst at Morningstar Research.

Higher oil and metals prices are feeding expectations of rising inflation globally and raising concerns about slower growth, particularly in Asia.

Asia under pressure

Asian stock markets closed broadly lower. Stocks in South Korea and Japan led declines, while Australia also ended in negative territory. Hong Kong slipped, while China managed a slight gain.

The weakness reflects concern over energy supply risks, particularly as access to key shipping routes in the Middle East remains uncertain.

RESILIENCE BOOST

Dubai approves Dh1b economic support package

DUBAI
BY KHITAM ALAMIR
Chief News Editor

Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, has approved Dh1 billion in economic facilitation measures to support businesses and enhance market resilience, with implementation set to begin tomorrow for a period of three to six months.

Swift response

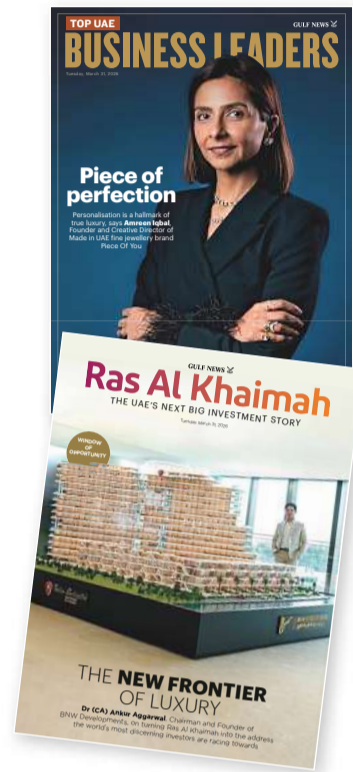
Chairing a meeting of Dubai's Executive Council, Sheikh Hamdan said the package aims to strengthen the emirate's economic flexibility, raise readiness levels and ensure a swift response to current requirements.

He added that Dubai remains committed to supporting individuals, families and the business community, enabling them to navigate the current phase with confidence and stability.

During the meeting, officials reviewed Dubai's economic performance for 2025, with growth reaching 5.4 per cent and gross domestic product exceeding Dh937 billion, underscoring the emirate's strong momentum.

SPECIAL REPORTS

RAK, the UAE's next big investment story + Dynamic UAE business leaders profiled



NATION

Several UAE universities make gradual return to campus | P2

WORLD

Back to Moon: Artemis II set to lift off tomorrow

First crewed lunar mission in over 50 years | P11

Dubai's economic model thrives amid uncertainty

Emirate reinforces position as a leading economic hub

DUBAI
BY ASHFAQ AHMED
Managing Editor

Dubai is not only weathering current global and regional challenges but is also reinforcing its position as a leading economic hub — driven by a diversified model, agile governance, and deep-rooted collaboration between the public and private sectors, according to business leaders across the emirate's key sectors.

Leaders of business groups operating under the Dubai Chamber of Commerce underscored that Dubai's economic model continues to evolve in response to global shifts, ensuring business continuity, investor confidence, and long-term growth across industries.

Spanning across sectors such as tourism and hospitality,

Dubai's economic model continues to evolve in response to global shifts, ensuring business continuity, investor confidence, and long-term growth across industries.

travel and tourism, real estate, education, health care, technology, trade and logistics, the business leaders emphasised that the emirate's resilience stems from a combination of diversification, strong infrastructure, forward-looking leadership, and an institutional framework designed to anticipate change rather than react to it. This approach, they said, has enabled Dubai to maintain operational stability even as geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty persist in parts of the world.

FULL REPORT ON P5

NATION | P4
MONEY REIMAGINED

Gen Z's risk appetite and mobile-first mindset are reshaping the rules of investment, says Rostro Group CEO **Michael Ayres** in Gulf News podcast series

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UAE outlines 22 rules for remote classes

PARENTS MUST ENSURE CHILDREN ADHERE TO LEARNING SCHEDULES

DUBAI

Gulf News Report

The UAE's Ministry of Education has outlined 22 responsibilities for schools, teachers, students and parents to ensure the effective delivery of distance learning, stressing the need for stronger coordination among all parties to maintain a comprehensive learning experience.

According to the ministry, the commitments are divided into seven responsibilities for school administrations, six for teachers, four for students and five for parents, as part of the national framework for remote learning.

Schools' responsibilities

School administrations are required to establish clear communication channels, ensure remote learning schedules are regularly shared, support teachers in planning online lessons, monitor student engagement and ensure the safe use of approved digital platforms. Schools must also provide clear information to parents and encourage collaboration among teachers.

Teachers, meanwhile, are expected to plan lessons in line with remote learning schedules, design age-appropriate activities, include interactive

elements, provide clear instructions, monitor student progress and offer timely feedback.

Students are required to attend scheduled online classes in full, complete assigned tasks, report technical issues through official school channels and maintain respectful behaviour during virtual learning.

Role of parents

Parents are expected to support their children by ensuring adherence to learning schedules, facilitating access to devices and platforms, encouraging participation, reinforcing responsible digital behaviour and maintaining communication with schools when support is needed.

The ministry also stressed the importance of monitoring student well-being during remote learning, requiring schools to follow up on students showing signs of reduced engagement, maintain communication with parents and provide guidance on healthy study habits. Schools must also ensure continued support for students of determination through adapted learning materials and ongoing coordination with families.

The ministry said the measures are intended to strengthen the quality of remote education while safeguarding students' academic progress and well-being.

Several UAE universities make gradual return to campus with hybrid learning

In-person learning resumes for priority programmes

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Chief Reporter

Several universities in the UAE began a gradual resumption of in-person learning for priority academic programmes on yesterday, marking a significant shift after weeks of remote operations.

The move follows Circular No. (2) of 2026 issued by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR), in coordination with the Education, Human Development and Community Development Council.

The ministry's directive, seen by *Gulf News*, permits the phased return of higher education institutions to campus specifically for programmes requiring clinical training, laboratory use, or direct practical and field-based application. It also allows examinations to be held on campus.

Strict conditions

However, universities must meet strict conditions: approved evacuation plans and health and safety procedures must be in place, all educational activities must be kept indoors, and safety protocols must be clearly communicated to students, academic staff, and administrative teams.

All other programmes that do not require physical attendance are to continue online until April 3, unless updated guidance is issued. Universities are also re-



Photo for illustrative purposes only

Students of Gulf Medical University are among those who began hybrid classes yesterday.

The ministry's directive permits the phased return of higher education institutions to campus specifically for programmes requiring clinical training, laboratory use, or direct practical and field-based application.

quired to monitor developments continuously, coordinate with local authorities, and bear full responsibility for maintaining learning outcomes and academic assessment quality.

Gulf Medical University (GMU) in Ajman was among the higher education institutions to implement the hybrid model.

"This aligns closely with our academic model, where experiential learning is central to developing competent health care professionals," said Professor

Manda Venkatramana, Chancellor of Gulf Medical University.

The programmes returning to campus are largely clinical and applied disciplines: Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Medical Laboratory Sciences, and allied health sciences. These are fields where virtual platforms fall short of replicating hands-on patient interaction, laboratory work, and simulation-based training.

GMU said it has introduced staggered student scheduling, hybrid teaching models, and

strict safety protocols across facilities, including simulation centres and clinical training environments.

Students continuing remotely are supported through digital platforms, and a dedicated student support hotline is available by phone or WhatsApp. The university's Emergency Response Coordination Committee (ERCC) is fully operational, and contingency plans are in place, including the option to revert entirely to online delivery if the situation demands it, the chancellor added.

Fully remote

Meanwhile, some American universities in the UAE chose to remain fully remote for the time being.

American University of Sharjah (AUS) announced on social media that it would continue remote operations until further notice.

All classes and assessments are being held online, faculty and staff are working remotely, and students are expected to attend scheduled online sessions. The university directed its community to follow official AUS channels for the latest updates.

American University of Ras Al Khaimah (AURAK) also posted that distance learning and remote work would remain in place till April 3. Classes are being delivered entirely online, university services are accessible through digital channels, and campus access during this period is strictly limited to essential personnel. AURAK urged its community to follow official communications and government advisories.

CBSE Class 12: Will internal marks reflect true potential?

Students grapple with anxiety over university admissions and scholarships

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Chief Reporter

More than 10,000 CBSE Class 12 students in the UAE are processing a mix of relief and unease after India's Central Board of Secondary Education announced an alternative assessment scheme to replace board examinations cancelled across seven Middle Eastern countries due to the ongoing regional conflict.

The new policy uses school-based assessments to compute final marks where exams could not be held.

Assessment criteria

For theory papers carrying 80 or 70 marks, the best score from these three internal assessments will be considered. For subjects with theory components of 60 marks or less, only the final pre-board result counts. While school leaders have acknowledged the policy's structure, students and some principals have raised pointed concerns on whether internal marks can fairly represent what students are capable of.

For Grade 12 commerce student Devarshi Chaube, the announcement brings a particular sting. "Throughout the year, many of us struggled to adjust to the syllabus and its depth, and our early performance did not match the standards set by the school. By the time we understood the concepts and felt



Picture for illustrative purpose only

Students argue that school examinations are more difficult than the board's.

confident, we did not get the opportunity to demonstrate our true potential in the final board examinations," he said.

Prisha Lala, a Grade 12 science student, said: "I was well prepared for the exam and hoping to get in the high 90s. I could solve the board papers very easily and it seems like a missed opportunity." She is now anxious about submitting final marks to a university that requires 98 per cent for admission.

Grace Maria Manoj from Abu Dhabi said: "It is no secret that school examinations for Grade 12 tend to be difficult, to help motivate students to study more vigorously for the final examination."

She also flagged uncertainty around the alternative examination. "Nothing much is known about it: when the exam would be conducted, where and how it would take place, and when the marks would be declared."

The concern goes beyond grades. Some students are now approaching universities directly to request entrance tests or alternative evaluations. "We want institutions to understand

that our internal marks alone do not capture the improvement, effort, and performance we would have demonstrated in the final board examinations," Chaube said.

Schools push back

Some schools have made detailed institutional pushback. One has come from Ambassador School Sharjah, whose principal Arogya Reddy submitted a representation to CBSE.

The letter argues that a significant proportion of senior students, often 60 to 70 per cent, are applying to universities in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where internal assessments serve a formative function, not a certifying one.

"Empirical evidence across cohorts consistently indicates that students outperform their school examination averages by a significant margin — often in the range of 15 to 25 per cent — in board examinations," the letter states.

CBSE's viewpoint

Dr Ram Shankar, Professor and Director of the CBSE Regional Office and Centre of Excellence in Dubai, said student welfare had been the central consideration. "The board has discussed this issue with all stakeholders and experts concerned. On the basis of concerns, issues and context, we have put the interest of students on top, and come up with this provision," he said.

For now, thousands of students in the UAE are in a holding pattern: grateful the decision came quickly, but watching their university deadlines approach with a growing sense of urgency.



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Expression of Interest must be submitted electronically through the EPADS Portal: <https://vendors.epads.gov.pk/login> by **1500 hrs** on or before **Monday, 4th May 2026**, Pakistan Standard Time (GMT +5). The bids will be opened at **1530 hrs** on the same day in the presence of the Bidder's representative at the address mentioned below. An **online pre-submission conference** is scheduled on **Thursday 9th of April 2026 at 1600 hrs**. The link is provided in the RFP, which can be downloaded from the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination website: <https://www.nhsrcc.gov.pk/> or PPRA website: <https://ppra.gov.pk/>

For any queries, please email at the address provided below.

Dr. Jasim Anwar - Project Director PCU - JMC&RC
Email: pd.jmcrc@nhsrcc.gov.pk



M/o National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination,
3rd Floor, Kohsar Complex, Pak Secretariat, Islamabad

Rain damage: Is the landlord or tenant responsible for repairs?

LANDLORD TO COVER THE COST, UNLESS CONTRACT SPECIFIES OTHERWISE

DUBAI
BY ZAINAB HUSAIN
Features Writer

Hheavy rain, thunderstorms and strong winds affected parts of the UAE last week, with some homes experiencing damage as a result. This can include issues such as water entering the property, electrical faults, or damage to furniture and windows.

In rental properties, this raises an important question: who is responsible for covering the cost of repairs? And what can tenants do to protect their belongings during extreme weather?

In Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, the law places the primary responsibility for maintaining a leased property squarely on the landlord's shoulders. The landlord is legally required to keep the property fit for use and must carry out all necessary repairs during the tenancy period, unless the tenancy contract explicitly states otherwise.

In practical terms: if your roof leaks, your walls crack, or structural damage occurs due to the storm, your landlord is expected to fix it and cover the cost — not you.

What UAE Civil Code says

The federal legal backbone for tenant protections in repair situations is Article 767(1) of Federal Law No. 5 of 1985 (the UAE Civil Code). It gives you clear rights if your landlord refuses or delays action.

The landlord is obligated to repair any defect that affects the tenant's use and enjoyment of the leased property. If the landlord fails to do so, the tenant has the right to cancel the lease or to apply for a court order permitting the tenant to carry out the repair and recover the fair and reasonable cost from the landlord.

This provision is relevant where damage is significant enough to deprive a tenant of normal use and enjoyment of their home — exactly the kind of harm a severe storm can cause.

If you were forced to spend your own money on urgent repairs that were legally the landlord's responsibility, you are entitled to seek reimbursement. This right is grounded in Article 767(1) of the Civil Code, as described above.

If the contract is silent on maintenance, and your landlord refuses to reimburse you or



Devadasan K P/Gulf News

■ If your roof leaks, your walls crack, or structural damage occurs due to the storm, your landlord is expected to fix it, according to UAE law.

STEPS TO TAKE RIGHT NOW

- **Document everything:** Photograph and video all damage immediately. Capture timestamps and include surrounding context to show the extent of the impact.
- **Notify your landlord in writing:** Send a formal written notice (email or registered letter), describing the damage and requesting repairs. Keep a copy of all correspondence.
- **Review your tenancy contract:** Check for any clauses relating to maintenance, repairs, or force majeure events. These can affect your entitlements.
- **Keep all receipts:** If you must carry out emergency repairs yourself, retain every invoice and receipt. You will need these to claim reimbursement.
- **File a case if needed:** If your landlord is unresponsive, file a maintenance case at the Rental Dispute Centre (Dubai) or the relevant authority in your emirate.

—Z.H.

refuses to make repairs, you can escalate the matter to the Rental Disputes Centre in Dubai. Equivalent bodies exist in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. This step is important as courts have ruled that tenants who fail to engage with the appropriate body may forfeit their right to compensation.

In Dubai specifically, if your tenancy contract contains terms that assign maintenance responsibilities differently, those contractual terms take precedence under Article 16 of Law No. 26 of 2007. Always review your contract before proceeding and seek legal advice if the wording is unclear.

Tenant content insurance

While the law offers significant protection for the structure of the property, it does

not automatically cover your personal belongings. Furniture, appliances, clothing, electronics, these are your responsibility, not your landlord's.

If you do not currently have content insurance, this extreme weather season is a strong reminder to consider it. Policies are widely available in the UAE and are generally affordable relative to the cost of replacing damaged belongings out of your own pocket.

A standard tenant or content insurance policy typically covers: damage to personal property (furniture, appliances, valuables), and in many cases, temporary alternative accommodation if your home becomes uninhabitable. If you already have a policy, contact your insurer as a first step.

● While the law offers protection for the structure of the property, it does not automatically cover your personal belongings. Clothing, furniture, appliances, electronics, etc, are your responsibility, not your landlord's. The answer to this is content insurance

Force majeure

In cases of extreme, unforeseeable natural events, like the recent storms and floods across the UAE, landlords may argue that they are relieved of their obligations under the legal doctrine of force majeure.

Force majeure refers to circumstances beyond a party's reasonable control that prevent them from fulfilling their contractual obligations. If a court accepts this argument, it could reduce or eliminate a landlord's liability to compensate for storm-related damage.

This does not mean you have no recourse but it is a realistic factor to weigh, particularly for damage caused directly by the storm rather than by any pre-existing fault or negligence of the landlord.

What caused UAE's record March rain?

NCM: It was result of natural atmospheric conditions, and not cloud seeding

DUBAI
Gulf News Report

244mm
rainfall recorded in Jebel Yanas in Ras Al Khaimah, the highest level in the UAE this March

After one of the heaviest rain episodes recorded in the UAE in decades, a familiar question quickly resurfaced across social media and public discussions: were the storms intensified by cloud seeding, or were they entirely natural?

Among the heaviest

Meteorological data indicates the episode between March 21 and March 28 ranks among the heaviest recorded since weather documentation began more than 80 years ago.

Jebel Yanas in Ras Al Khaimah recorded the highest levels at 244mm, followed by Al Manama in Ajman at 234.7mm and Al Hayer in Al Ain at 234.1mm. Other notable readings included 229.7mm at Jebel Mebrah in Ras Al Khaimah and 226.6mm in Khatm Al Shakla in Al Ain.

The timing of the storms arriving in March rather than

during the peak winter months prompted speculation about whether weather modification techniques such as cloud seeding had played a role.

In comments to *Gulf News*, the National Centre of Meteorology clarified that the rainfall was the result of natural atmospheric conditions linked to a low-pressure system and not the result of cloud-seeding operations. The centre confirmed that no cloud-seeding missions were carried out during the recent weather event and that none are planned in the near term.

What is cloud-seeding?

Cloud seeding is a weather-modification technique that is designed to enhance rainfall by introducing specific particles into suitable clouds in order to encourage the formation of raindrops.

Expat's fatal crash in Dubai mirrors sister's 2 years back

Sijo Johny was riding an e-scooter when he was struck by car

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASENDRAN
Chief Reporter

An Indian expat family in the UAE is grieving the loss of a 40-year-old man who died in an e-scooter accident in Dubai, just two years after his sister was killed in a similar accident back home in Kerala.

Sijo Johny, a Palakkad native who had lived in Dubai for 12 years, died last Sunday after being struck by a car while riding his e-scooter near Madina Mall in the Muhaisnah area, according to his family.

He is survived by his wife, a teacher at a school in Dubai who is three months pregnant, and their eight-year-old daughter studying in Grade 3 in the same school.

Vinod Kuruvila, a relative who spoke to *Gulf News*, said Sijo, who worked as a fore-

man at a shipyard in Dubai, had stepped out at around 1.45pm to buy groceries.

"He was supposed to be back soon. But when he didn't return, his wife kept calling him. It was only by evening that a nurse at Rashid Hospital picked up his phone and said he had been admitted after the accident," he said.

Vinod rushed to the hospital to find Sijo had suffered severe injuries to his head, chest and leg. "The other fractures could have been treated, but his head injury was serious," he said. Sijo succumbed to his injuries before 6.45pm.

The detail that weighs heaviest on Vinod is that Sijo was not wearing a helmet at the time of the crash.

The tragedy is made all the more painful by the fact that Sijo's family was still coming to terms with the loss of his sister two years ago.

Sister Sonia Johny, a nun and schoolteacher, was killed in Thrissur, Kerala, after being struck by a speeding motorcycle.



Short takes

UAE faces 700,000 cyberattacks a day

The UAE has seen a sharp rise in cyberattacks following recent regional tensions, with artificial intelligence tools increasingly being used to enhance the sophistication of digital threats, according to the head of the country's Cyber Security Council.

Dr Mohammed Al Kuwaiti, Chairman of the UAE Cyber Security Council, said hostile actors, including Iran, have used artificial intelligence tools to support cyber operations.

According to *Emarat Al Youm*, Al Kuwaiti said the UAE is currently facing between 500,000 and 700,000 cyberattacks daily.

Court rejects reclaiming of gift from ex-wife

The Dubai Court of First Instance has dismissed a lawsuit filed by a man seeking to revoke a residential apartment he had gifted to his ex-wife, ruling that the transfer was legally valid and cannot be reversed due to a statutory impediment under UAE law. The court also ordered the claimant to bear all legal costs and expenses, including Dh1,000 in lawyer's fees.

The case involved a property in Dubai the man had transferred to his then wife under a gift agreement during their marriage. Following their divorce, the man filed a lawsuit requesting the annulment of the gift contract.


RAK Police get 20,939 calls during rains

The operations room of Ras Al Khaimah Police handled 20,939 calls during the recent weather depression that affected the UAE between March 20 and March 28, officials said.


Brigadier Ahmed Saeed Al Mansoori, Director General of Central Operations, said the force efficiently responded to all incoming reports during the unstable weather conditions, which brought heavy rainfall and triggered flash floods and flowing wadis in the emirate.

He said police efforts focused on ensuring public safety, safeguarding property, and maintaining smooth traffic movement on key roads.

— Gulf News Reports



حكومة دبي
GOVERNMENT OF DUBAI



هيئة كهرباء ومياه دبي
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Tenderers are required to submit their offer online through DEWA SRM System.

Tenderers shall arrange Tender Bond for **AED 1,500,000/- (Dirhams One Million Five Hundred Thousand Only)** in case the Tenderer quotes for the complete scope of the Tender or the aggregate of the individual Tender Bond values specified by DEWA in the Tender document for each section that are quoted, strictly in the format specified in the Tender Document and submit the Bond by authenticated SWIFT message to **EMIRATES NBD Bank, Main Branch, Post Box 2923, Dubai, UAE, not later than 3 (three) banking working days before the closing date for receipt of completed Tender.** A copy of the SWIFT message duly signed and stamped by the issuing Bank, must accompany the online offer.

The Tender Bond shall be valid for 150 calendar days following the last date fixed for receipt of Tender.

The closing date for receipt of completed Tender online is 11.00 Hours of Tuesday, 28th April 2026.

For any further queries, the office of the Vice President-Contracts may be contacted.

Participants in the Tender should submit the names of their Local Partners/Sponsors, having a valid Dubai Trade License along with a photocopy of their current license.

This advertisement is a complementary part of the Tender Documents

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MANAGING DIRECTOR & CEO

Gulf News Edufair returns for its 10th edition in Dubai

3-DAY EXHIBITION WILL SPOTLIGHT FUTURE-READY EDUCATION CHOICES

DUBAI
Gulf News Report

Gulf News Edufair is back for its 10th edition, bringing together leading universities, education institutions, and career experts. The three-day event will take place from May 8-10 at The H Dubai Hotel on Sheikh Zayed Road, giving students, parents, and professionals a practical platform to explore higher education and career opportunities.

Why attend Edufair 2026

Choosing the right degree or course today requires more than personal preference. It demands a clear understanding of career pathways, industry expectations, and skill requirements.

Edufair 2026 allows attendees to engage directly with university representatives, admissions specialists, and career consultants, who can explain how specific programmes connect to internships, employability, and long-term professional growth. Students can compare academic options, explore scholarships and funding opportunities, and receive guidance on applications and fast-track admission processes.

“Edufair has always been about more than just connecting students with universities. It’s about creating opportunities,” says Tina Bhakthavalsalan, Director of Events and



Virendra Saklani/Gulf News

Parents and students turned up in huge numbers on the first day of GN Edufair last year.

Special Features, at Gulf News.

“This year, we’ve focused on bringing together a wider mix of institutions and programmes so that every visitor, whether a student or a parent, can leave with a clearer sense of direction and confidence in their choices.”

More than 35 universities and institutions from the UAE and abroad will participate, showcasing a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, certification and professional courses.

The exhibition also addresses the needs of mid-career professionals seeking to upskill or pivot careers, with executive MBAs, leadership programmes, and digital innovation courses on offer.

affect students’ higher education journey, including course selection, career pathways, opportunities abroad, skills in demand, and strategies for academic and professional success.

Study abroad a key focus

What’s more, study abroad will be a key focus at this year’s Edufair. Education abroad opportunities will be highlighted through consultants, career counsellors, foreign university representatives, and immigration experts, all available to answer questions on applications, admissions, scholarships, and post-study career pathways. This gives attendees practical guidance on international education options alongside UAE-based programmes.

Bridging the gap

“Students today are far more aware of how quickly industries are evolving, and they’re actively looking for courses that align with future opportunities,” says David George, Director of Creative Content & Design at Gulf News.

“Edufair 2026 is designed to bridge that gap by bringing together institutions that are offering relevant, future-focused programmes and giving students the chance to ask the right questions before making important decisions.”

Entry to Edufair 2026 is free, but registration is required to access on-the-spot guidance, seminars, and exclusive offers.

What: Edufair Dubai 2026
When: May 8-10
Where: H Dubai Hotel, Sheikh Zayed Road
Scan the QR code to register

Seminars offering insights and guidance

Seminars at Edufair have consistently drawn strong interest from both students and parents, and this edition is expected to follow the trend. The 10th edition features a packed agenda with leading voices from the education sector, covering topics that directly

How Gen Z is reshaping the rules of investment

Generation’s risk appetite is changing the way they invest, says Rostro Group CEO in new podcast

DUBAI
BY SONY THOMAS
Special to Gulf News



A new generation of investors is reshaping the financial landscape, and they’re doing it with smartphones, instant access to markets and a willingness to take risks that previous generations often avoided.

In the first episode of Gulf News’ podcast series, Money Reimagined: Investing for the Next Generation, out today, Michael Ayres, CEO and partner at Rostro Group, tells host Lachlan Kitchen how Gen Z is changing the way money is invested and managed.

Higher tolerance for risk

Ayres said, one of the most defining traits of Gen Z investors is their higher tolerance for risk. Having grown up amid rapid technological change and the rise of social media, this generation is more comfortable making bold financial decisions and acting quickly when opportunities arise, through digital platforms, unlike previous generations.

Technology is central to this shift. Mobile-first platforms now allow users to trade or invest at any time, giving young investors unprecedented access to financial markets and alternative assets such as cryptocurrencies, tokenised assets and

pre-IPO opportunities. This accessibility is also encouraging many to look beyond traditional wealth-building strategies like home ownership, particularly as property prices rise and lifestyles become more flexible and globally mobile.

However, Ayres warns that access has outpaced education, in the podcast produced in partnership with Rostro Group. With much financial information circulating on social media, inexperienced investors may rely on unregulated or unverified advice. As a result, financial literacy and responsible risk management are increasingly important.

One of the key lessons for new investors, he says, is understanding personal risk tolerance, something many only truly discover when they experience their first losses. Starting small, learning from market fluctuations and developing a clear investment plan are crucial steps in building long-term success.

Ayres also emphasises emotional discipline. Over-trading, chasing losses and investing more than one can afford to lose are common pitfalls.

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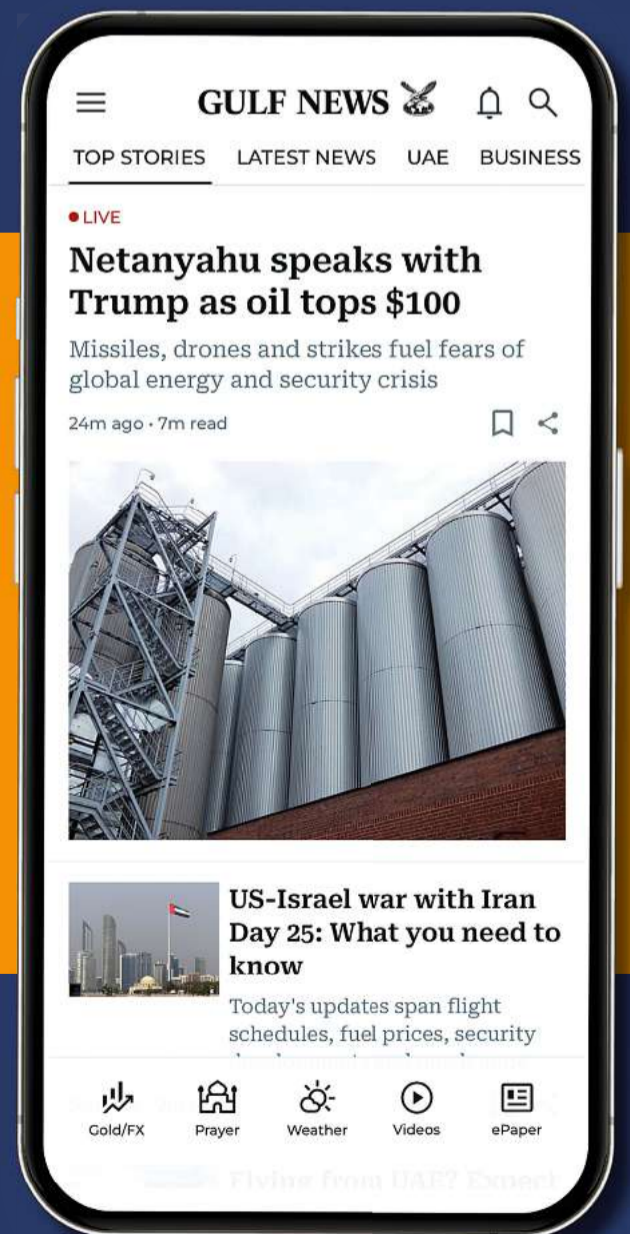
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Why Dubai's economic model shows strength amid crisis

STRONG PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION CITED AS PILLAR OF RESILIENCE

DUBAI

BY ASHFAQ AHMED
Managing Editor

Business leaders across Dubai's key sectors say the emirate is not only weathering current global and regional challenges, but reinforcing its position as a leading economic hub, driven by a diversified model, agile governance, and deep-rooted collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Leaders of Business Groups operating under the Dubai Chamber of Commerce have underscored that Dubai's economic model continues to evolve in response to global shifts, ensuring business continuity, investor confidence, and long-term growth across industries.

Future-ready business hub

They emphasised that the emirate's resilience stems from a combination of diversification, strong infrastructure, forward-looking leadership, and an institutional framework designed to anticipate change rather than react to it. This approach, they said, has enabled Dubai to maintain operational stability even as geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty persist in parts of the world.

As the global economic landscape continues to evolve, they said Dubai is not only well-positioned to navigate uncertainty, but also to seize new opportunities, reinforcing its status as a competitive, future-ready, and globally connected business hub. By aligning government policies with private sector needs, the emirate has created a business ecosystem that is both responsive and future-ready. This has allowed companies to adapt quickly, maintain high service standards, and continue expanding despite external pressures.

Hotels

In the tourism and hospitality sector, Amit Nayak, Chairman of the Dubai Hotels Business Group, said Dubai entered the current phase from a position of strength, supported by sustained visitor demand and global connectivity. He noted that the sector has demonstrated remarkable agility, with hotels and restaurants adapting operations, offering flexible services, and prioritising customer experience.

Nayak said: "Dubai's economic model is resilient because it's diversified, execution-led, and built for speed. The hospitality sector has worked closely with aviation, logistics, and tourism stakeholders to ensure seamless service delivery while maintaining the emirate's premium positioning."

He added that businesses are focusing on value-driven offerings and responsible pricing to sustain demand, while preparing to capture renewed momentum as regional conditions stabilise.

Travel and tourism

The travel and tourism ecosystem has also benefited from strong integration across sectors. Mohamed Jassim Al Rais, Honorary Chairman of the Dubai Travel and Tour Agents Business Group, said Dubai's ability to coordinate effectively between aviation, logistics, finance, and tourism ensures continuity and strengthens global confidence.

He highlighted that the emirate's airports, ports, and supply chains have continued to operate efficiently, support-



■ **Clockwise from top left:** Mohamed Jassim Al Rais, Mania Merrikhi, Redha Al Mansouri, Mohammed Kenanah, Bushra Khan, Amit Nayak, Hoda Barakat and Ajay Bhojwani.



Business leaders say Dubai is not only well positioned to navigate uncertainty, but also to seize new opportunities.

ed by advanced infrastructure and institutional readiness. "The speed and decisiveness of Dubai's leadership, combined with its collaborative governance model, are key strengths. This ensures that the city remains open, connected, and welcoming to the world."

Events and exhibitions

In the events and exhibitions sector, Ajay Bhojwani, President of The Events Group, pointed to sustained investment in infrastructure and business-friendly policies as critical drivers of growth. He said Dubai has successfully created an environment that supports the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) industry, enabling it to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

Organisers, he noted, have adopted flexible strategies such as rescheduling events and integrating virtual platforms to maintain engagement and continuity. At the same time, initiatives under the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 are attracting international investment and expanding trade opportunities.

Bhojwani added that world-class venues such as the Dubai World Trade Centre, along with strong airline connectivity, continue to reinforce Dubai's position as a global hub for business events.

Real estate

Across the real estate sector, stability and trust have emerged as key themes. Mania Merrikhi, Chairwoman of the Real Estate Valuation Business Group, said Dubai's economy is underpinned by a clear strategic vision and a proactive government approach. She noted that strong relationships between leadership, institutions, and the business community have created a stable environ-

ment that supports long-term planning.

"Dubai has consistently demonstrated its ability to overcome global challenges with efficiency and optimism," she said, adding that the sense of unity between leadership and the community plays a vital role in building confidence in the future.

Education

The education sector is also contributing to the emirate's long-term competitiveness. Bushra Khan, Chairwoman of the Education Business Group, said Dubai has developed one of the world's most dynamic private education ecosystems, offering diverse curricula and maintaining high standards of quality.

She noted that strong academic outcomes and global university placements reflect the sector's success, while ongoing collaboration between regulators and private institutions ensures continuous improvement. "Dubai's regulatory environment encourages innovation and private sector participation, creating a stable foundation for sustainable growth," she said.

Health care, technology

In the health care and technology space, Mohammed Kenanah, Chairman of the Medical Equipment Business Group, highlighted continued demand for advanced health care infrastructure and digital solutions. He said Dubai's diversified economy and long-term planning have enabled it to remain resilient even during uncertainty.

"Dubai's economic model has been built to withstand external shocks," he said, pointing to the importance of public-private partnerships in advancing health care, technology, and infrastructure development.

Students in Dubai see opportunity in uncertainty

Amid current situation, interns from different countries choose to stay in UAE

DUBAI

BY TRICIA GAJITOS
Reporter

While headlines abroad focus on regional tensions, a different story is unfolding on the ground in Dubai. For a growing number of international students, the UAE is not a place to leave during uncertain times, but one to stay, learn, and grow in. Their decisions reflect their confidence in the country's systems, leadership, and opportunities.

Gulf News spoke to students interning in Dubai who shared why, despite pressure from home and global concerns, they chose to remain.

Growth over comfort

When the conflict began, Diego Hierro, a student from Spain, faced a familiar dilemma: return home to reassure his family or stay and continue his journey. He chose the latter.

"I arrived in Dubai just a week before things happened, but I knew that if I went back home, I would not feel satisfied with my decision. I came here with a clear purpose and I was determined to achieve it, no matter what," Hierro told *Gulf News*.

For him, the experience is more than an internship; it is a personal test of resilience. He noted that moments of uncertainty are when real growth happens, and staying in Dubai has allowed him to face that challenge head-on.

"The UAE has surprised me in a very positive way. What is often shown in Europe does not fully reflect the reality here. When I arrived, I saw a highly organised country that truly cares about its residents and visitors."

Continuing his internship in the emirate has given him a new perspective, not just on service but on leadership.

"It is a country that wants to grow and succeed and I would genuinely like to be part of what they are building. Despite everything, I feel safe because I know I am in a place where leaders genuinely care and make safety a priority," he said.

A calculated decision

On the other hand, Zhasmin Kumatova, a student from Kazakhstan, pointed out that her choice to stay has been less emotional and more strategic.

"The decision came down to stability and long-term impact. Given the structure, security, and how situations are managed here in the UAE, staying felt like a better choice compared to moving somewhere else," explained Kumatova.

She highlighted that Dubai

For a growing number of international students, the UAE is not a place to leave during uncertain times, but one to stay, learn, and grow in.

has offered "structured stability," which she has described as an environment where systems continue to function smoothly despite external pressures.

"Safety is not just about the absence of risk, but about how systems are managed. This experience has been very real and practical. It's not something you learn from textbooks. It's about decision-making, risk assessment, and understanding how global events can impact careers and industries."

Kumatova's university has given her new placement options, but her decision came down to what made the most sense, and for her, staying has been the clearer path.

Safety and belonging

For Alexandra Lourenco, a student from Portugal, the decision to stay has been rooted in the sense of belonging she has found in the UAE.

"In less than six months, Dubai became home. The UAE embraces everyone and protects them no matter where they came from and that's why I decided to stay. The feeling of being welcomed in a country that's not yours is priceless," shared Lourenco.

She underscored that safety in the emirate is not just a policy, but a daily reality.

"I get home safe every day without having to look over my shoulders when I walk at night, in dark streets."

Even amid the present circumstances, she has observed a contrast between global media narratives and daily life in Dubai. "People here are actually living their normal lives. That's what makes this city special, they don't quit. They always find a solution and become even stronger."

What unites these students is not just their decision to remain, but the reasons behind it. They have emphasised that resilience is not a slogan, but a lived experience that has shaped how they think, work, and plan their futures.

In a world where uncertainty often drives people away, their stories have showcased how challenges are not just managed, but transformed into opportunities for growth in the UAE.

For these young professionals, Dubai is no longer just a place for internship, but a second home.



■ **From left:** Alexandra Lourenco, Zhasmin Kumatova, and Diego Hierro.



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OIL IS RISING BUT NOT TOWARDS A CATASTROPHE

Talk of \$200 oil reflects contingency planning for a worst-case scenario, not an expectation that prices are headed there

BY JUSTIN VARGHESE | Your Money Editor

Just weeks ago, the idea of crude oil surging to \$200 per barrel moved from fringe speculation into mainstream discussion. Analysts began floating extreme scenarios. Policymakers quietly modelled them. Markets, briefly, seemed willing to entertain the possibility.

Today, with Brent hovering near \$100 and WTI closer to \$90, that narrative looks far less certain. So what changed? And more importantly, was \$200 ever realistic?

Oil has rallied sharply since late February, with West Texas Intermediate gaining around 30 per cent and Brent rising nearly 40 per cent to just above \$100. That is a significant move in a compressed timeframe.

Yet even after that surge, prices remain far from the levels implied by the most aggressive forecasts. History offers perspective. In inflation-adjusted terms, crude has only reached the equivalent of \$200 once in the past half-century — on the eve of the 2008 financial crisis.

That episode required a unique combination of tight supply, surging demand, and financial excess. Today's market looks very different. Prices are elevated, but they are not signalling systemic scarcity.

What would actually drive prices up

The current oil market is being driven less by fundamentals and more by geopolitical risk. At the centre of that risk sits the Strait of Hormuz, a corridor through which roughly a fifth of global oil supply moves.

Any sustained disruption there would reshape the market overnight. But that is not what is happening — at least not yet. Instead, prices are reacting to the possibility of disruption. Headlines about diplomacy push prices lower. Rejections of those efforts send them higher again. This pattern reveals a market that is pricing uncertainty rather than a confirmed supply shock.

To move towards \$200, the situation would need to escalate far beyond what is currently visible. It would require a prolonged and verifiable interruption to flows through Hormuz, removing a meaningful share of global supply in a way that cannot be quickly replaced. That threshold has not been crossed.

Driven by headlines, not conviction

Recent price action makes this clear. The same market that sold off on hopes of a US-backed peace plan quickly reversed when Iran dismissed progress. That kind of behaviour reflects fragility.

This is not a market building a sustained trend. It is a market reacting in real time to shifting narratives. Such conditions create volatility, but they do not create the kind of conviction needed to drive prices towards ex-



treme levels. A move to \$200 would require sustained positioning built on a widely accepted view of structural shortage. What exists instead is hesitation.

Stress-testing is not forecasting

Part of the recent momentum behind the \$200 narrative has come from reports that officials are examining what such a scenario would mean for the economy. Within the Trump administration, discussions around extreme price outcomes have been framed as contingency planning rather than expectation.

Even if geopolitical risks intensify, oil prices face a constraint that is often overlooked. At sufficiently high levels, oil begins to undermine itself. Bloomberg Economics estimates that prices around \$170 sustained for several months would push inflation higher across major economies while simultaneously slowing growth.

At \$200, those effects would become more pronounced. Higher energy costs feed directly into production, transportation, and consumer prices. That pressure erodes demand. Growth slows. Consumption weakens. The very conditions that drive prices higher begin to reverse them. This feedback loop acts as a ceiling. Not an absolute one, but a powerful constraint.

Why prices remain elevated

Despite the pullback from recent highs, oil is still trading at levels that reflect a meaningful risk premium. The market continues to factor in the possibility of escalation, particularly around shipping routes and regional stability.

That premium explains why prices remain elevated relative to historical averages. It also explains why volatility persists. Traders are navigating a landscape where outcomes are unclear and timelines uncertain. But pricing risk is not the same as pricing catastrophe.

So, is \$200 still realistic?

It remains possible, but only under conditions that are not currently in place. A sustained supply shock, a clear and prolonged disruption to key transit routes, and limited capacity for global producers to offset losses would all be required.

The market is currently not operating under those assumptions. Instead, it is caught between competing narratives — de-escalation on one side, disruption risk on the other. That tension produces sharp moves, but not a clear trajectory.

The more useful question is not whether oil can reach \$200. It is how far current conditions are from the kind of breakdown required to get there. Right now, that distance remains considerable. **SEE ALSO P10**

Letters to the Editor

Give peace a chance

The world watches with heavy hearts as tensions across the Middle East continue. What strikes me most is not the noise of conflict, but the deafening silence of dialogue. History has shown us, time and again, that wars end at tables, not on battlefields.

Every prolonged standoff that eventually found resolution however imperfect did so because someone, somewhere, chose conversation over confrontation. Those of us watching from the outside must urge our own governments to support dialogue, pressure parties to the table, and resist the temptation to fuel fires for strategic gain. Peace is always worth the attempt.

■ FROM AKHIL B
UAE

Finding inner peace

Amid the chaos that floods our screens and conversations daily, I have been thinking deeply about something quieter; inner peace. Not the kind sold in wellness apps or motivational posters, but the real, steady, unglamorous kind that quietly lives inside each of us, waiting to be tended.

Inner peace is not the absence of problems. It is a relationship you build with yourself, slowly and deliberately. It begins with acknowledgement, of your fears, your frustrations, your grief.

■ FROM NISHA RAM
UAE

The slow disappearance of hobbies

Somewhere between the rise of streaming platforms, social media feeds, and endless content cycles, we stopped doing things and started only watching things. Hobbies are not trivial. When you knit, you create something from nothing. When you garden, you participate in a cycle far older than yourself.

The remedy is not dramatic. Pick one thing you used to love or always meant to try. Give it one hour a week to start. Protect that hour the way you protect a meeting or an appointment. You will find, almost immediately, that the urge to mindlessly scroll diminishes, not because you fought it, but because you replaced it with something that actually feeds you.

■ FROM SAMANTHA M
India

The danger we ignore

Cyber attacks are no longer the stuff of spy thrillers. They are a present and growing reality for individuals, businesses, hospitals, and governments alike. Most people still believe they are too ordinary to be targeted. This is precisely the thinking that makes them vulnerable. Awareness is the first and most powerful line of defence. We lock our doors at night without a second thought. Our digital lives deserve the same instinct.

■ FROM ASHIF JAMADAR
India

■ Editor's note: Is there a news report that you feel strongly about? Something that has to be addressed in the community and requires resolution? Email us on readers@gulfnews.com. You can also post a comment on our Facebook page or tweet to us @GNReaders.

Reader Picture

A BRIGHT SKYLINE BENEATH A BROODING SKY



■ Dark rain clouds hang over Dubai as the towers of JLT stand against an overcast sky in this striking image by Anupam Shivnani.

■ Want your pictures featured in Gulf News? Send them to us at readers@gulfnews.com.

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Empowerment is built not bestowed

Women have always played a central role in shaping communities, strengthening families, and advancing social and economic progress. Yet the critical question is not whether women contribute to development, but whether the environments around them allow their full potential to flourish.



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P8 UAE REAL ESTATE SHINES WITH MAJOR PROJECTS, STRONG MARCH SALES



GOLD		OIL		FOREX RATES				INDICES				LIVE	
Au		\$		Currencies vs Dh1				Benchmarks (points)					
US	\$4,524.75/oz	Brent	112.83	INR	25.77	BDT	33.48	ADX	9,525.78 (close)	DowJones	45,415.12 (15:30 GMT)	SSE	3,923.29 (close)
UAE	Dh545.25/g (24 ct)	WTI	102.20	PKR	76.01	LKR	85.84	DFM	5,442.62 (close)	FTSE 100	10,105.19 (15:30 GMT)	Nikkei 225	51,885.85 (close)
UAE	Dh505.00/g (22 ct)	Murban	119.79	PHP	16.55	NPR	40.80	Sensex	71,947.55 (close)	STOXX 600	578.74 (15:30 GMT)	KSE 100	146,890.50 (close)

Urgent recall: Certain UAE vehicles face airbag risks

DUBAI
BY DHANUSHA GOKULAN
Chief Reporter

A 'stop drive' notice has been issued for certain vehicles in the UAE, with owners of specific models from Opel, Chrysler, Citroën, Dodge, Jeep and RAM urged not to drive their cars until repairs are completed.

Global automaker Stellantis N.V, which manages 14 car brands, yesterday urged owners of the above brands to check their status on the company's website and complete the recall repair without delay.

The advisory covers a range of models produced between 2003 and 2018 that are fitted with Takata airbag inflators.

The action follows global safety assessments related to Takata airbag inflators.

These inflators may degrade over time, particularly in hot and humid climates. In rare cases, a ruptured inflator can project metal fragments during a collision, posing a risk of serious injury to vehicle occupants.

Delayed salary payments will now hurt firms' credit scores

UAE EXPANDS ITS SCORING FRAMEWORK TO INCLUDE NON-BANKING FINANCIAL DATA

DUBAI
BY JUSTIN VARGHESE
Your Money Editor

Etiihad Credit Bureau said yesterday it has expanded its credit reporting framework by integrating non-banking financial data from multiple government entities, aiming to provide a broader assessment of corporate risk.

The Bureau said new data-sharing partnerships with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation and Abu Dhabi Pension Fund will add indicators linked to companies' compliance with financial obligations outside the banking system.

Expanded scrutiny

The additional data points include payment behaviour related to invoice attestations handled by the foreign ministry, such as delays and associated penalties, the Bureau said.

From the labour ministry, the dataset will incorporate company-level indicators including delayed settlement of admin-

NEW AREAS AFFECTING FIRMS' CREDIT SCORES

- Payment behaviour related to invoice attestations handled by the foreign ministry
- Delayed settlement of administrative fines
- Non-compliance with Emiratisation requirements
- Non-payment of wages under the Wage Protection System
- Missed or delayed pension contributions

istrative fines, non-compliance with Emiratisation requirements, non-payment of wages under the Wage Protection System, and missed pension contributions. It will also reflect entity classifications, including flagged establishments.

Data from the Abu Dhabi Pension Fund will cover outstanding pension contributions and the number of days payments remain overdue, according to the Bureau.

Officials from the partner entities said the initiative sup-



ports broader efforts to enhance data sharing, improve transparency and strengthen coordination across government systems.

Khalil Khoori, Under-Secretary of Labour Market and Emiratisation Operations at MoHRE, said, "This cooperation affirms the Ministry's commitment to enhancing integration and coordination with its strategic partners, particularly through the exchange of data and reliable information that provide an

objective view of the labour market."

Marwan Ahmad Lutfi, Director General of Etihad Credit Bureau, commented, "At Etihad Credit Bureau, we are actively working with government entities to integrate a wider array of data sources to include financial obligations from non-banking sectors which in turn will further cement the importance of the company credit report in assessing company payment risks."

INSIDE



P9 Private markets draw more Middle East capital as companies stay private



P10 Will oil prices hit \$200 per barrel if the US hits Iran's export hub of Kharg Island?

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Dh2 billion HAYAT contract awarded

DUBAI
BY DHANUSHA GOKULAN
Chief Reporter

Dubai South has awarded a Dh2 billion contract to develop multiple phases of its HAYAT residential community, marking a key step forward for the large-scale project.

Dubai South Properties, the real estate development arm of Dubai South, confirmed it has appointed Mohammed Abdulmohsin Al Kharafi & Sons LLC for the contract, which will cover several phases of HAYAT by Dubai South, a master-planned development spanning 10 million square feet.

The project is located near Al Maktoum International Airport, adjacent to the Golf District.

The unit mix

HAYAT will include around 2,500 residential units, ranging from one- to five-bedroom layouts. The mix will feature townhouses, semi-detached and standalone villas, mansions, apartments and hotel apartments.

Nabil Al Kindi, Group CEO of Dubai South, said: "Since its launch in 2025, the project has witnessed strong demand and interest."

The development will also include amenities such as parks, shaded walking trails, play areas, outdoor recreation spaces, fitness facilities, community pools and landscaped gardens. Plans also include lagoons, a scenic lake, a community mall and a retail boulevard with shops, cafés and essential services.

Construction is scheduled to begin in the second quarter of 2026, with initial phases expected to be completed by 2028.

HAYAT will include around 2,500 residential units, ranging from one- to five-bedroom layouts.



■ Many developers across the UAE are finishing their projects ahead of schedule amid record real estate sales.

No sign of stopping the property boom in UAE

DEVELOPERS ARE LAUNCHING MASSIVE NEW PROJECTS

ABU DHABI

The UAE continues to consolidate its position as one of the most dynamic real estate markets, with a steady pace of new project launches and uninterrupted construction activity during March 2026.

In Dubai, residential and commercial project launches gained strong momentum, with record real estate sales, including a landmark transaction for a luxury apartment valued at Dh422 million, ranking as the third most expensive apartment in the market's history.

New projects hit the market

Emaar Properties revealed its residential project Golf Valley within Emaar South, comprising 262 housing units, while National Properties, the real estate arm of National Bonds Corporation, announced the launch of a new commercial tower in Barsha Heights valued at Dh500 million.

Zoya Developments launched the Nuve project in Dubailand with investments exceeding Dh200 million, while OAM Real Estate Development launched Rise Residences in Warsaw.

Dubai Multi Commodities Centre announced additional details for the Uptown area, including plans to develop an iconic tower exceeding 600 metres in height.

Deyaar Development re-

STRONG GROWTH IN ABU DHABI

In Abu Dhabi, Aldar Properties Group confirmed that its operational activities in the UAE are progressing steadily. The group launched on February 10 the Baccarat Residences Saadiyat project in the Saadiyat Cultural District in Abu Dhabi, which will include 77 residential units comprising two- and three-bedroom apartments, several four-bedroom villas and two penthouse units.

Modon launched the Tara Park project on Reem Island, while Ohana Development reported strong demand for the Manchester City Yas Residences project, which recorded sales of approximately Dh6 billion within 72 hours.

In Sharjah, Arada awarded a contract worth Dh183 million to build a school within the Masaar community, coinciding with strong real estate activity in the emirate, which recorded transactions worth Dh4.6 billion during Ramadan, marking a 71.8 per cent increase, with the number of transactions rising to 7,299.

ported that construction and development activities across its portfolio are progressing according to schedule and revealed plans to complete the Jannat project in the Midtown community in Dubai Production City within days, achieving completion three months ahead of schedule. The company is also preparing to deliver around 2,000 residential units in Dubai.

Azizi expands Creek Views

Azizi Developments launched Creek Views 4 in Al Jaddaf, complementing Creek Views 1 and Creek Views 2, which have been delivered, and Creek Views 3, which has reached 50 per cent completion and is on track for delivery in the second quarter of 2026.

Dubai Investments Real Es-

tate continued construction works in line with approved delivery schedules, while Binghatti Holding confirmed that its construction activities are progressing steadily.

Nakheel, Dubai Properties and Meraas also confirmed that work is continuing as usual across all projects and service centres, maintaining execution pace and delivery schedules.

Beyond Developments confirmed steady progress in its construction works across projects within its masterplan spanning 8 million square feet in Dubai Maritime City.

DAMAC Properties stated that Dubai's real estate market has once again demonstrated its ability to maintain project execution momentum, supported by its resilience and strength. — WAM

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

Sharjah market builds on its Ramadan surge

DUBAI
Gulf News Report

Sharjah's real estate sector is showing signs of sustained growth beyond Ramadan, supported by rising transaction volumes, steady investor demand and an expanding pipeline of projects.

Recent data from the Sharjah Real Estate Registration Department shows total transaction value reached Dh4.6 billion during Ramadan 2026, marking a 71.8 per cent increase from Dh2.7 billion a year earlier. The number of transactions rose 45.3 per cent year-on-year to 7,299, indicating both higher activity and broader market participation.

Sales remained a key driver. A total of 2,093 sales transactions were recorded, up 26.7 per cent from 1,652 in the same period last year. These included 1,121 final sales, 952 initial sales contracts and 20 usufruct transactions, reflecting continued activity across both offplan and completed properties.

Transaction mix broadens

The distribution of transactions points to a diversified market structure. Ownership certificates accounted for 3,596 transactions, alongside 2,464 title deeds, 969 initial sales contracts and 270 mortgage transactions. The mix highlights steady demand across sales, registration and financing segments.

Looking ahead, the pace of activity suggests the market could maintain momentum in the coming months. Early

Dh4.6b

Value of real estate transactions in Sharjah during Ramadan

Dh2.3b

Value of transactions recorded in the first half of March alone

March data supports this trend. In the first half of the month alone, transactions reached Dh2.3 billion across 3,556 deals, indicating consistent demand outside peak seasonal periods.

Outlook remains positive

The combination of new project launches, flexible financing options and continued policy support is expected to underpin demand across segments.

Developers are also responding to evolving investor preferences, particularly for mixed-use communities and properties with stable rental yields.

For investors, the current trajectory suggests Sharjah is moving toward a more mature real estate cycle, where transaction volumes, financing activity and end-user demand are increasingly aligned.

While market performance will remain sensitive to broader economic conditions, including interest rates and regional growth trends, current indicators point to continued expansion.



■ Sharjah's real estate is showing signs of sustained growth beyond Ramadan, which recorded 27% jump in sales.

Abu Dhabi financial hub marks 10th year with 36% growth in assets

ADGM posted double-digit growth across nearly every metric in 2025

DUBAI
BY DHANUSHA GOKULAN
Chief Reporter

The financial free zone Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM), on Abu Dhabi's Al Maryah Island, has marked 10 years of operations with strong growth across assets, licences and workforce, underlining its expanding role as an international financial centre.

According to a statement issued yesterday, assets under management (AUM) within ADGM rose by 36 per cent in 2025.

By the end of the year, 171 asset and fund managers were operating within ADGM, collectively managing 244 funds.

Moreover, ADGM issued

171
Asset, fund managers operating within ADGM by end of 2025

3,769 new licences in 2025, bringing the total number of active licences to 12,671. Overall, total active licences rose by 30 per cent during the year, reinforcing its scale as a financial centre.

Breakout year

Ahmed Jasim Al Zaabi, Chairman of ADGM, said, "2025 marked a defining chapter in ADGM's milestones."

The number of people working within ADGM increased by 51 per cent in 2025, reaching 44,339 individuals, up from 29,338 in 2024.

The growth reflects rising business activity across Al

30%
Growth in total active licences during 2025; 3,769 new ones issued

Reem and Al Maryah Islands, it said.

Moreover, a wide range of global firms set up operations in ADGM during 2025, spanning fintech, banking, digital assets, legal services and sustainability sectors.

These included Circle, Carta, Bitcoin Suisse, Skadden, DLA Piper, BBVA, Arab Bank (Switzerland) Gulf, Galaxy Digital, UBS Group and Julius Baer, among others.

In December 2025, Binance became the first crypto exchange to secure a formal global licence from ADGM's Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA). The licence

51%
Increase in the number of people working within ADGM

allows Binance to operate from Abu Dhabi under the centre's regulatory framework.

By the end of 2025, ADGM was home to 347 financial institutions, with 80 new licences issued to financial entities during the year.

The FSRA also issued 120 In-Principle Approvals, up nearly 32 per cent year-on-year, while 94 new Financial Services Permits were granted.

Improved rankings

Abu Dhabi was also ranked the number one financial centre in the Mena region and 12th globally in the Financial Centre Competitiveness Index pub-

32%
Year-on-year increase in In-Principle Approvals

lished by NYU Stern School of Business.

The emirate also hosted the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds (IFSFW) annual meeting in November 2025, bringing together major sovereign wealth funds.

ADGM also held Abu Dhabi Finance Week 2025, featuring 68 events and 394 sessions, with over 800 speakers and more than 35,000 attendees.

During 2025, ADGM conducted roadshows in China, Japan, London, New York, Singapore and India. These engagements included signing memorandums of understanding and hosting events to pro-

mote investment opportunities.

ADGM strengthened its regulatory framework with updates aligned to international standards, including BCBS and IOSCO principles.

New measures included a Funds Reporting Regime, a Virtual Assets notification regime and enhanced guidance for digital asset activities. The FSRA also signed six memorandums of understanding with international regulators to strengthen cooperation.

Expanded jurisdiction

ADGM began full operations of its expanded real estate jurisdiction in 2025, following the integration of Al Reem Island.

More than 70 services were launched for real property transactions, supported by a unified digital platform enabling remote transactions. A joint venture between Mubadala and Aldar, valued at over Dh60 billion, was also announced to expand Al Maryah Island.

Why Middle East is winning at private investing

STRONG LIQUIDITY AND DIVERSIFICATION PLANS ARE HELPING UAE, SAUDI ARABIA PLAY A LARGER ROLE IN PRIVATE MARKETS

DUBAI
BY JUSTIN VARGHESE
Your Money Editor

Private markets are drawing a larger share of investor attention, with capital shifting beyond traditional stock and bond markets. More companies are staying private for longer, reshaping where and how value is created.

This shift is influencing portfolio construction. Public markets still offer liquidity and transparency. Private markets, though, give investors access to earlier stages of growth and a broader set of sectors.


“Public markets offer liquidity and transparency, whereas private markets provide long-term capital, control, and return potential,” said Tajinder Virk, Co-founder and Group CEO of Finvasia.

Public vs private markets

“Public markets... provide investors with access to companies and assets that have chosen to list their securities for public trading, offering liquidity and price transparency in return for regulatory disclosure and market scrutiny,” said Xavier Rémond, Senior Executive Officer at Arboris Capital Limited.

He contrasted this with private markets, which involve investing in companies and assets outside exchanges, typically through funds or direct deals by institutional investors.

Private investments often require capital to be locked in for years. Exit options can be limited. In return, investors gain exposure to assets unavailable on public exchanges.



Public markets offer liquidity and transparency, whereas private markets provide long-term capital, control, and return potential.”

Tajinder Virk
Co-founder and Group CEO of Finvasia




A significant and growing share of economic value today is generated by private companies, well before – and often without – any public listing.”

Xavier Rémond | Senior Executive Officer at Arboris Capital Limited

“A significant and growing share of economic value today is generated by private companies, well before – and often without – any public listing,” Rémond said.

Where value shifts

In the US, about 87 per cent of companies with revenues above \$100 million are privately held, underlining the scale of this shift.

Private market assets under management have crossed \$13 trillion globally, supported by sovereign funds, pension funds and large family offices.

“Private markets are moving from being an alternative allocation to a core component of global portfolios,” Virk said.

In the Middle East, participation in private markets has expanded steadily. Sovereign wealth funds and large family offices are active across global

transactions, often deploying capital at scale.

“Institutional appetite for private markets has been durable and continues to develop,” Rémond said, pointing to regional investors as some of the most active globally.

“The ecosystem is smaller than the US or Europe, but more agile, with faster decision-making and increasing participation from global fund managers,” Virk said.

Saudi, UAE drive activity

Saudi Arabia and the UAE continue to account for a large share of activity, supported by diversification programmes and strong liquidity.

Together, they have represented most private equity deal activity in the region in recent years.

Several segments are gaining momentum. Private credit has

expanded quickly, driven by demand for flexible financing and reduced lending by traditional banks.

Infrastructure growth

Infrastructure investment is also expanding, driven by demand for energy projects, transport networks and digital systems such as data centres. Global fundraising approached \$300 billion in 2025.

Private equity and venture capital remain active, especially in technology and innovation-focused sectors, though investors are becoming more selective. “Private markets serve as an important complement to banks and public capital markets in financing economic activity,” Rémond said.

Filling financing gaps

They are increasingly filling gaps where bank lending

has tightened, whether due to regulation, capital constraints or shifting risk appetite.

They support companies at different stages, from early development to expansion, and help finance large-scale infrastructure.

“Private capital supports businesses before they are ready for public markets, enabling innovation, job creation, and economic expansion,” Virk said.

Risks and trade-offs

Private market investments require careful evaluation. Limited liquidity means capital is tied up for longer periods, and valuation practices can vary across funds.

“Private market investments typically involve longer lock-up periods, less liquidity, and more limited exit options,” Rémond said, noting that report-

ing standards can also be less uniform.

Evolving role in portfolios

As the market grows, attention is shifting towards governance, reporting and ways to improve liquidity without changing the long-term nature of the asset class.

Private markets are becoming more central to how capital is allocated, both globally and in the Middle East.

In the Middle Eastern region, strong capital availability and ongoing investment programmes are supporting this trend, with private markets playing a larger role in financing growth across sectors.

The balance between public and private markets continues to evolve, with each serving a distinct role in the investment landscape.

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WE ARE HIRING

EGA is looking for candidates to join their team in Jebel Ali (Dubai) and Al Taweelah (Abu Dhabi)



National Trainee Operations



About the programme:

Position: National Trainee Operations
Type: Permanent, Full-Time
Fields: Smelter, Power, Desal, Maintenance, and Technical

Trainees will undergo structured training lasting from 6 months to 3 years, aimed at equipping young UAE Nationals with the skills and knowledge required for their roles. The program includes classroom-based learning, practical workshop exposure, and on-the-job experience across EGA's operational areas, supporting long-term career development.

Criteria

- Male and Female UAE Nationals holding a UAE passport
- High School Certificate
- Good English communication skills
- Completed National Service (if applicable)
- Aged between 19-32

Utility Operator



Role Summary:

Develop the essential skills of a Utility Operator through on-the-job training and assist in the safe and efficient operation of reduction cells to produce molten aluminium.

Qualifications & Skills

Minimum Qualifications: Secondary School Certificate.
Minimum Experience: Preferably one year of experience in a heavy industry environment.

Skills:

Physically fit and able to work shift schedules within Potroom operations. Demonstrates the ability to learn and understand the aluminium smelting process. Possesses basic English communication

skills and can complete required training to operate Pot Tending Machines, Anode Beam Raising Equipment, and other Potroom tools, vehicles, and equipment as required by the department.

Instrumentation Technician



Role Summary:

Performs installation, maintenance, and troubleshooting of instrument and control systems to support reliable plant operations and ensure EHS compliance. Conducts preventive maintenance, calibration, PLC fault diagnosis, and SAP documentation while supporting safety initiatives and continuous improvement.

Qualifications & skills:

Minimum Qualifications: Diploma in the relevant field Completion of PEC Craft Training
Minimum Experience: 3 Years' of relevant experience preferably in a smelter environment or in a heavy industrial set-up after the Diploma
No experience required after completion of PEC Training

Skills:

Strong working knowledge of written and spoken English, with hands-on experience using maintenance tools and basic computer systems. Skilled in installation, troubleshooting, and instrument calibration. Able to read and interpret engineering drawings and manuals, with a solid understanding of PLC control systems maintenance and fault diagnosis.

Mechanical Technician



Role Summary:

Perform mechanical installation, repair, and maintenance of machinery and equipment to ensure safe and efficient plant operations with minimal downtime, in compliance with EHS guidelines. This includes carrying out planned, preventive, and corrective maintenance in line with OEM requirements and established procedures to reduce breakdowns and support continuous improvement.

Qualifications & skills:

Minimum Qualifications: Diploma with a relevant mechanical/technical trade certification. Completion of PEC Craft Training
Minimum Experience: 3 Years of relevant experience in a heavy industry after Diploma. No experience required after completion of PEC Training

Skills:

Proficiency in computer applications with a good working knowledge of written and spoken English. Ability to read and interpret technical drawings, schematics, and maintenance reports. Strong knowledge of maintenance tools, equipment, and general mechanical systems, including experience in the maintenance and overhauling of pumps, bearings, and gearboxes with proper alignment. Knowledge of conveyor system maintenance and troubleshooting. Ability to operate mobile equipment such as cranes, forklifts, and elevated work platforms, with familiarity in rigging, scaffolding, and welding practices. Strong troubleshooting and problem-solving skills to diagnose and resolve mechanical issues effectively.

Electrical Technician



Role Summary:

To perform a wide range of duties relating to the electrical installation, repair, maintenance and troubleshooting of machinery, equipment and fixtures to ensure their efficient operation at minimum downtime, complying with EHS Guidelines and with a focus on continuous improvement.

Qualifications & skills:

Minimum Qualifications: Diploma in relevant field. Completion of PEC Craft Training
Minimum Experience: 3 years of relevant experience in a heavy industry after Diploma. No experience required after completion of PEC Training

Skills:

Good working knowledge of written and spoken English, with strong computer skills and hands-on experience in installation and troubleshooting. Proficient in using electrical maintenance tools and equipment for installation, servicing, and repair. Solid understanding of instruments, electrical components, and systems, with strong troubleshooting and problem-solving skills. Able to read and interpret technical drawings, schematics, manuals, and reports, and operate mobile equipment such as cranes, forklifts, and elevated work platforms.

DUBAI
BY JUSTIN VARGHESE
Your Money Editor

The prospect of oil prices rising to \$200 per barrel is now being increasingly tied to a single variable: whether Iran's Kharg Island export infrastructure is directly targeted.

The shift reflects how markets are moving beyond broad geopolitical risk and focusing on specific supply nodes that could materially alter global balances.

Kharg Island remains Iran's primary crude export terminal, handling most of the country's outbound shipments. After weeks of mounting speculation, US President Donald Trump on Monday raised the possibility of deploying American ground forces to seize the Island. Any disruption there would move the market from pricing uncertainty to pricing an immediate loss of supply, making it a central variable in current price expectations.

Why Kharg matters most

As Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management in Singapore, said, "Kharg Island is where the endgame gets written," highlighting its importance in determining how geopolitical developments translate into oil price outcomes.

Oil prices have been moving sharply in response to shifting narratives around diplomacy and escalation. The market has struggled to establish a clear direction, reacting to headlines rather than confirmed changes in supply.

Joseph Dahrieh, managing director at Tickmill in the Middle East, said recent price action reflects this uncertainty. "Oil prices staged a rebound... as markets grappled with conflicting signals surrounding diplomatic efforts in the Middle East," he said.

Mixed signals

Dahrieh added that diverging messaging between the US and Iran has unsettled sentiment and kept markets on edge. "The divergence in narratives has unsettled market sentiment... while the continued absence of tanker traffic in the Strait of Hormuz is materially constraining crude flows."

That combination of narrative-driven volatility and emerging physical constraints has kept price risks skewed to the upside, even as markets lack a clear directional trend.

Much of the market's attention remains on the Strait of Hormuz, a key transit route

WILL OIL PRICES HIT \$200 IF US HITS KHARG ENERGY EXPORTS?

MARKETS WOULD SEE ANY STRIKE ON THE ISLAND AS A SUPPLY CRISIS

● **Kharg Island remains Iran's primary crude export terminal, handling most of the country's outbound shipments.**

for global oil flows. Disruptions there primarily affect shipments already in transit and tend to create short-term volatility.

Kharg represents a more direct supply risk. As an origin point, any disruption would immediately constrain the volume of crude entering global markets rather than simply delaying deliveries.

A sensitive trigger

Innes said markets would immediately treat any strike as a supply event rather than a political signal. "Any move on Kharg is immediately read as a supply disruption, not a policy action. The market prices worst case first. Flows are assumed lost, risk premiums explode higher, and oil spikes as traders scramble to price uncertainty."

A strike on Kharg would likely trigger an immediate increase



in oil prices as markets reprice supply risk. The initial move would reflect uncertainty over damage and escalation rather than confirmed supply loss.

The longer-term trajectory would depend on how long exports remain disrupted and whether flows can be restored. Temporary outages may lead to sharp but short-lived price spikes, while prolonged disruptions would tighten supply balances and support higher prices.

Control could calm markets

Innes said the market response would evolve as clarity emerges. "Once the US establishes control and the market can see that the flow of oil is being managed rather than destroyed, the narrative shifts from disruption to control."

He added that this shift could reverse early gains. "The risk premium starts to come out, positioning unwinds, and you get a relief sell-off."

Recent price moves suggest that markets remain anchored in uncertainty rather than pricing a confirmed shortage. Oil has retreated from recent highs even as geopolitical risks persist, reflecting a lack of sustained disruption.

Antonio Di Giacomo, senior market analyst at XS.com in Europe, said earlier declines

were driven by temporary optimism around de-escalation. "Crude oil prices declined... amid mixed signals on the conflict in the Middle East," he said, pointing to initial expectations of a potential peace plan.

Di Giacomo said that optimism faded quickly as uncertainty returned, with conflicting signals preventing the market from establishing a clear short-term trend and keeping volatility elevated.

A move toward \$200 per barrel would likely require more than a single strike. It would depend on a prolonged disruption to exports, continued constraints on regional shipping, and limited ability to offset lost supply.

What might happen

Short-term shocks tend to produce sharp but temporary price increases, particularly when driven by uncertainty. Sustained outages, by contrast, tighten physical balances and can push prices higher if they persist.

For now, market behaviour suggests traders are not pricing a prolonged supply shock. Prices continue to reflect a geopolitical risk premium, with the trajectory dependent on whether disruption at Kharg, if it occurs, proves temporary or sustained.

If AI can make \$1b, is it human enough? Nvidia chief thinks so

'I think we've achieved AGI': Jensen Huang's viral claim stirs debate

DUBAI
BY JUSTIN VARGHESE
Your Money Editor

Jensen Huang did not soften his words when asked about artificial general intelligence, a term the tech industry has spent years debating and, more recently, avoiding. Speaking on the Lex Fridman podcast last week, the Nvidia chief said plainly: "I think we've achieved AGI."

What he meant, though, was not that AI now thinks like humans. His point was simpler and more immediate: AI is reaching a stage where it can create real economic value, not just generate text, images, or code. That shift — from answering questions to making money — is what makes the claim land differently now.

The distinction matters because most people experience AI today as a tool that helps with tasks. Huang is pointing to something else emerging: systems that can build products, launch services, and potentially generate revenue with far less human input than before.

Chatbots to value creation

To understand the shift, it helps to look at how AGI is usually defined. In simple terms, it refers to AI systems that can perform a wide range of tasks at a human level, including reasoning, adapting, and solving unfamiliar problems.

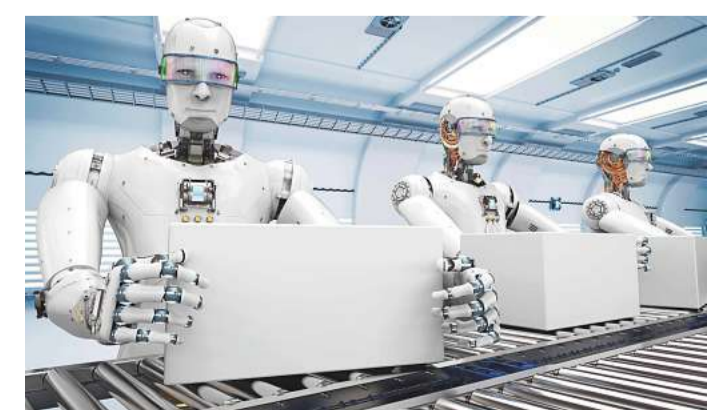
Huang's definition moves away from that idea and replaces it with something more concrete. In the podcast, Lex Fridman framed AGI as an AI system capable of launching and running a company worth more than \$1 billion, essentially asking whether AI can now create real-world economic outcomes.

Huang agreed, but with a key clarification. "You said a billion, and you didn't say forever," he said, suggesting that even short-lived success would meet that threshold.

That framing shifts the conversation. Instead of asking whether AI thinks like a person, it asks whether AI can produce something valuable enough that people will pay for it.

Tools make this plausible

Huang pointed to emerging systems like OpenClaw, an open-source platform where networks of AI agents can work together to build applications and digital products. These agents can handle tasks such as writing code, generating content, and managing workflows, which previously required teams of people.



■ Jensen Huang says the focus should shift from whether AI can answer questions to whether it can make money.

WHAT AI STILL CANNOT DO

Nvidia chief Jensen Huang acknowledged that even large-scale AI systems would struggle to build and sustain a complex company like Nvidia, which requires long-term planning, real-world awareness, and judgment shaped by experience.

Those limitations remain central to the scepticism from researchers. Current AI systems can pass exams, write production-level code, and process large amounts of data, but they still produce errors, struggle with unfamiliar situations, and lack the kind of contextual understanding humans rely on.

The gap, then, is clear. AI may be getting better at generating value, but it is not yet capable of fully replacing human decision-making across all domains.



TANKERS THROUGH HORMUZ

Markets look past Trump's 'Iran gift' claims

DUBAI
BY JUSTIN VARGHESE
Your Money Editor

Donald Trump described Iran's decision to allow 10 oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz as a "gift" and a potential opening for negotiations. Oil markets, however, are measuring the move in scale rather than symbolism.

The shipment, estimated at around 20 million barrels and valued near \$2 billion, is roughly equivalent to one day of normal oil flow through the strait. Under typical conditions, that volume moves continuously through dozens of tankers, making the release a one-off intervention rather than a restoration of supply.

Oil prices have remained above \$100 per barrel despite the gesture, reflecting a market still anchored in disruption. Analysts estimate that roughly 11 million barrels per day have been affected by the conflict, leaving global balances tight even after the tanker passage.

The Strait of Hormuz carries about a fifth of the world's oil supply, and flows through the route remain far below normal levels.

● **The release of 10 tankers through Hormuz, with shipments estimated at around 20 million barrels worth \$2 billion, is roughly equivalent to one day of normal oil flow.**

Against that backdrop, the release of 10 tankers is viewed as marginal in addressing the broader supply shock.

Analysts at XTB said the move was intended as a diplomatic signal. "Iran has allowed ten oil tankers to pass freely... this is the 'gift of immense value' that Trump cryptically referred to earlier this week," they said.

Reports indicate that vessels linked to specific countries, including Pakistan and Malaysia, were among those allowed to pass, highlighting how Tehran is managing flows to signal flexibility while retaining leverage.

The move could also signal a gradual expansion of controlled transit rather than a

one-off release. Pakistan said late Sunday that Iran agreed to allow 20 Pakistani-flagged vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, with two ships crossing daily.

Oil markets have largely looked past the headline impact of the tanker release. Prices have held firm as traders focus on restricted flows and the risk that disruption could persist.

Analyst Ipek Ozkardeskaaya said the latest developments do not point to a meaningful improvement in supply conditions. Even as it allows limited shipments, Iran continues to benefit from higher prices and improved market positioning.

Based on export estimates from Tankertrackers.com and pricing for its flagship Iranian Light crude, Tehran's oil revenues have risen to about \$139 million per day so far in March, up from roughly \$115 million in February.

At the same time, Iran's crude has become more competitive. Its discount to Brent has narrowed to about \$2.10 per barrel at the start of this week, the smallest in almost a year, according to Bloomberg. The differential had been wider than \$10 before the conflict.

Nasa's return to Moon begins as Artemis II set for tomorrow

IT'S FIRST CREWED MISSION TO THE MOON IN MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY

DUBAI

BY ALEX ABRAHAM
Senior Associate Editor

Nasa is preparing to launch Artemis II, its first crewed mission to the Moon in more than half a century, with lift-off expected as early as tomorrow.

The mission marks a major step in the United States' renewed push to establish a sustained human presence on the Moon and eventually send astronauts to Mars.

Unlike the historic Apollo missions that landed astronauts on the lunar surface, Artemis II will be a flyby mission. Four astronauts will travel around the Moon and return to Earth, testing critical systems ahead of a planned lunar landing later this decade. The roughly 10-day mission follows the successful uncrewed Artemis I flight in 2022 and is designed to verify the performance of Nasa's new Orion spacecraft and Space Launch System (SLS) rocket.

Artemis II is the first crewed mission in Nasa's Artemis programme, which aims to return humans to the Moon and build a long-term presence there. The mission is a critical test flight before a planned lunar landing, currently targeted for 2028. It is also part of a broader strategy to develop technologies needed for future human missions to Mars.

Four-member crew

The four-member crew includes three Americans and one Canadian: Reid Wiseman (commander) Victor Glover (pilot) Christina Koch (mission specialist) Jeremy Hansen (mission specialist, Canada).

The mission will mark several milestones, including the first time a woman, a Black astronaut and a non-American travel to the Moon.

The astronauts will not land on the Moon. Instead, they will:

- Enter Earth orbit and test spacecraft systems
- Conduct safety checks and simulate docking manoeuvres
- Travel toward the Moon and fly over its far side

At the point when Orion passes behind the Moon, communication with Earth will briefly be lost. The crew is expected to travel farther from Earth than any humans since Apollo 13.

After launch, the Orion spacecraft will orbit Earth before heading toward the Moon if all



■ Artemis 2 crew members (from left) Jeremy Hansen, Christina Koch, Commander Reid Wiseman, and pilot Victor Glover at the Kennedy Space Centre.

APOLLO VS. ARTEMIS

Nasa's Apollo moonshots are a tough act to follow, even after all this time. As four astronauts get set to blast off on humanity's first trip to the moon in more than half a century, comparisons between Apollo and Nasa's new programme are inevitable.

While Artemis builds on Apollo and pays homage to it, "there is no way we could be that same mission or ever hope to even be," said Nasa astronaut Christina Koch, part of the Artemis II crew.

Here's the lowdown on Apollo vs. Artemis, the twin sister of Apollo in Greek mythology, as Nasa targets the first six days of April for lift-off.

- **The trip:** The world's first lunar visitors orbited the moon on Apollo 8. The Artemis II crew will play it safe and zip around the moon in an out-and-back slingshot.
- **Reflective of society:** Artemis reflects more of society, with a woman, person of colour and Canadian rocketing away.
- **Moon rocket:** Apollo's Saturn V rockets stood 363 feet (110 metres), with five first-stage engines. The Artemis SLS rocket comes in at 322 feet (98 metres) but packs more lift-off thrust with its four main engines and two strap-on boosters.
- **Launch pad:** All but one Saturn V rocket soared from Kennedy Space Centre's Launch Complex 39-A, now leased by SpaceX. Nasa will use neighbouring pad 39-B for all SLS flights. While the Saturn V launched twice before carrying astronauts, the SLS has flown only once. Hydrogen fuel leaks delayed the SLS debut in 2022 and struck again during a countdown test in February, stalling Artemis II. Then helium trouble reappeared, causing further delay. Nasa is now targeting an April lift-off.

—A.A.

systems perform as expected.

The return journey will follow a "free-return" trajectory, using the Moon's gravity to send the spacecraft back toward Earth. Re-entry into the atmosphere — one of the mission's most critical phases — will be followed by a parachute-assisted splashdown in the Pacific Ocean.

Risks involved?

The mission carries significant risk, as the Orion spacecraft has never flown with humans before. "We don't accept anything less than perfect, otherwise we're accepting greater risk," said Nasa's former chief astronaut Peggy Whitson. "... We have

Artemis II is similar to Apollo 8, which flew around the Moon in 1968 without landing.

to live with that knowledge, because of our space flight history, that when accidents happen, people will die," she said.

Nasa has made adjustments following Artemis I, including refining the re-entry trajectory after unexpected wear on the spacecraft's heat shield.

Artemis II is similar to Apollo 8, which flew around the Moon in 1968 without landing. However, the Artemis programme differs significantly by involving international partners and private companies such as SpaceX and Blue Origin, which are developing lunar landers for future missions.

The Artemis programme comes amid growing global competition in space exploration, particularly with China aiming to land astronauts on the Moon by 2030.

Nasa is targeting a lunar landing by 2028, but the timeline depends on the development of key technologies, including lunar landers being built by private companies.

Sharif says austerity savings will fund relief for vulnerable groups

'We will not leave economically weaker section of society alone'

ISLAMABAD

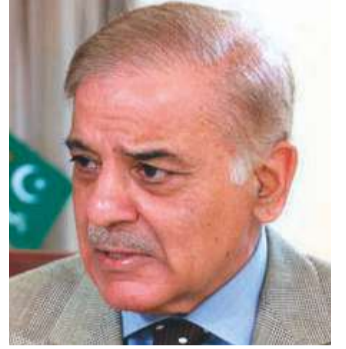
Gulf News Report

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif yesterday said the government would not raise fuel prices for now and instead channel savings from austerity measures into relief for low- and middle-income households, as global energy volatility linked to the Iran war continues to pressure markets.

Chairing a high-level meeting to review the impact of Middle East tensions on petroleum supplies, stock levels and public relief measures, Sharif said proposals to increase fuel prices had been rejected multiple times.

"We will not leave the economically weaker section of society alone in this hour of difficulty," the premier said. Officials told the meeting that sufficient fuel reserves are available to meet current demand, with contingency arrangements being put in place to ensure future supply.

The government has rolled out a series of austerity measures in recent weeks to reduce fuel consumption and ease fiscal pressure. These include significant cuts to development spending, restrictions on non-essential expenditure, and grounding 60



■ Shehbaz Sharif

per cent of official vehicles.

Sharif said funds saved through these steps would be redirected toward public relief, adding that a "digital system" would be used to ensure targeted delivery of support directly to citizens.

The meeting was also informed that timely government decisions had helped avert any disruption in fuel supply despite global uncertainty.

As part of its relief strategy, the government is working with provincial authorities to finalise registration of motorcycle and rickshaw owners so they can benefit from subsidised fuel schemes. The plan, first announced on March 17, is aimed at cushioning the impact of rising oil prices on lower-income groups.

A detailed briefing covered fuel conservation measures, current stock positions and future planning, alongside an Intelligence Bureau audit report on the implementation of the government's austerity campaign.

Russia expels UK diplomat on spying allegations

London rejects charges as 'complete nonsense'

MOSCOW

Russia yesterday expelled a British diplomat over allegations he was working as a spy — charges rejected by London as "complete nonsense".

Moscow and London have each expelled multiple embassy staff over the last decade, trading accusations of espionage. Expulsions from one side have typically been followed by a tit-for-tat response from the other.

The diplomat, named as 29-year-old embassy sec-

retary Albertus Gerhardus Janse Van Rensburg, was expelled for engaging in "subversive intelligence activities that threaten Russia's security", Russia's FSB security service said.

"A decision was made to strip Janse Van Rensburg of his accreditation, and he was ordered to leave Russia within two weeks," it added.

The Russian foreign ministry said it had summoned Britain's charge d'affaires over the incident and warned the United Kingdom not to retaliate.

Britain accused Russia of waging an "aggressive and co-ordinated campaign of harassment".

—AFP

Australian fugitive shot dead after seven-month manhunt

Freeman fled last year after killing two police officers

MELBOURNE

Australian police said yesterday they shot a fugitive wanted for killing two officers, ending a seven-month manhunt for one of the country's most-wanted criminals.

Desmond Freeman fled into dense bushland in August last year after shooting and killing two police officers who came to search his rural home in Victoria state.

Hundreds of police have pursued Freeman through the region's rugged terrain over the past seven months, pour-

ing resources into one of Australia's largest manhunts.

Police tracked Freeman to a caravan parked on a "very remote" property in rural Victoria, police commissioner Mike Bush said, shooting him after he refused pleas to surrender.

"Everything I know at this point tells me that this shooting was justified," Bush told reporters. "There was a standoff. There was an opportunity for him to surrender peacefully, which he did not."

The state coroner would now confirm the identity of the body and cause of death, he added. Two local residents told AFP Freeman had been shot at a property in Thologolong, near the border of New South Wales and Victoria states.

—AFP

Nitish moves to Rajya Sabha, quits Bihar council

He served four consecutive terms in the Council

DUBAI

BY ALEX ABRAHAM
Senior Associate Editor

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar yesterday resigned from the state's Legislative Council, complying with constitutional requirements after being elected to the Rajya Sabha earlier this month.

Kumar, who secured a seat in the Upper House of Parliament in the March 16 biennial elections, is scheduled to take oath on April 10. Under constitutional provisions, a public representative cannot hold membership in two Houses simultaneously and must resign from an existing post within 14

days of election to Parliament.

His resignation, submitted to the Legislative Council Secretariat through JD (U) MLC Sanjay Gandhi, brings to a close a long association with the state's Upper House that dates back to 2006.

Kumar served four consecutive terms in the Council — 2006–2012, 2012–2018, 2018–2024, and from 2024 onward — and has largely anchored his tenure as Chief Minister through membership of the Upper House since assuming office in November 2005.

Significant transition

His move to the Rajya Sabha marks a significant transition in a political career spanning over four decades. Having previously served as a member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly and the Lok Sabha, Kumar is



■ Nitish Kumar

now set to achieve the rare distinction of being part of all four legislative bodies in India.

The development also has immediate constitutional implications. With his resignation from the Legislative Council, Kumar is required to step down

as Chief Minister. However, provisions allow him to continue in office for up to six months without being a member of either House of the state legislature, during which he must secure membership again.

Separately, BJP leader Nitin Nabin confirmed he will resign as Bankipur MLA after being elected to the Rajya Sabha from Bihar. In a post on X, Nabin said, "Today, I am resigning from my position as the elected member from the Bankipur constituency of the Bihar Legislative Assembly. Through the new role the party has given me, I will remain ever ready and committed to the development of my area and Bihar."

Both leaders were elected to the Rajya Sabha in the same round of polls, reinforcing the broader political reshuffle underway in Bihar.

Pakistan doubles down on talks, says only diplomacy can end war

SAUDI ARABIA, TURKEY AND EGYPT SUPPORT ISLAMABAD'S PUSH FOR DIALOGUE

DUBAI
BY ASHFAQ AHMED
Managing Editor

Pakistan has reaffirmed its commitment to sustained diplomacy and dialogue as the only workable solution to the ongoing Middle East conflict, positioning itself at the centre of renewed international efforts to end the war through negotiations.

The pledge came after a high-level quadrilateral meeting on Sunday in Islamabad, where the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt collectively called for an immediate and permanent cessation of hostilities, warning that continued fighting would only deepen regional instability and human suffering.

In his address on national television after the meeting, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said the participating countries were unanimous in their view that "dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable pathway" to resolving the crisis involving the United States, Israel and Iran, which has entered a dangerous phase.

Meaningful negotiations

Dar stressed that Pakistan would continue engaging all relevant stakeholders with "sincerity and commitment" to facilitate meaningful negotiations. "War serves no one's interest," he said, adding that the conflict was inflicting devastating consequences on lives and livelihoods across the region.

The meeting, attended by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, focused on de-escalation strategies and the creation of conditions necessary for structured peace talks.

The ministers agreed to work collectively in order to reduce the risk of further military escalation and to promote regional stability.

Talks between US and Iran

A key outcome of the discussions was broad support for Pakistan's initiative to host potential talks between the United States and Iran. Dar revealed that both Washington and Tehran had expressed confidence in Islamabad's role as a facilitator, with Pakistan of-



■ Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar (second from right) with his counterparts — Turkey's Hakan Fidan (right), Saudi Arabia's Faisal Bin Farhan (second from left) and Egypt's Badr Abdelatty — before their meeting at the Foreign Ministry office in Islamabad, Sunday.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar stressed that Pakistan would continue engaging all relevant stakeholders with "sincerity and commitment" to facilitate meaningful negotiations. "War serves no one's interest," he said, adding that the conflict was inflicting devastating consequences on lives and livelihoods across the region.

fering to provide a platform for negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive and lasting settlement.

Pakistan's diplomatic outreach has intensified in recent days, with Dar confirming contacts with major global players, including China and the United Nations.

Dar said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and UN Secretary-General António Guterres had both extended full support to Pakistan's peace efforts, reflecting growing international backing for dialogue-driven solutions.

The quadrilateral meeting also underscored the importance of adhering to the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, as tensions continue to escalate across the Middle East.

Peace efforts

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who met the Saudi foreign minister following the talks, reiterated Pakistan's resolve to play a constructive role in de-escalation.

Sharif highlighted Islamabad's ongoing diplomatic engagement with regional and global partners, including direct outreach to Iran and the United States, in its attempts to bring both sides to the negotiating table.

Sharif emphasised the need for unity within the Muslim world at a time of crisis, while also appreciating Saudi Arabia's restraint and leadership. He assured Riyadh of Pakistan's continued solidarity, describing bilateral ties as strong and unwavering.

The Islamabad meeting comes against the backdrop of

a prolonged and intensifying conflict that began on February 28 and has since drawn in multiple actors, raising fears of a wider regional war.

Central role

Pakistan has emerged as a critical intermediary, relaying messages between Washington and Tehran and working alongside countries like Turkey and Egypt to keep diplomatic channels open.

Despite setbacks, including Iran's reported rejection of a recent proposal by the US, Islamabad remains optimistic that sustained engagement can eventually lead to a breakthrough.

Officials say indirect communication between the two sides is ongoing, with Pakistan playing a central role in keeping negotiations alive.

Dialogue over conflict

Reaffirming this stance, Dar said Pakistan would continue its efforts with sincerity and commitment and called on the international community to support initiatives aimed at achieving lasting peace.

"We will be honoured to facilitate meaningful talks," he said, expressing hope that dialogue would ultimately prevail over conflict.

UAE President and US senator discuss regional developments

Mohamed also holds talks with heads of Kurdistan region and Congo

ABU DHABI

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan held a virtual meeting with US Senator Joni Ernst on Sunday, during which they discussed strategic cooperation between the UAE and the United States and their shared commitment to strengthening ties in a way that serves their mutual interests.

The meeting also addressed developments in the region and their serious implications for regional and international peace and security, with both sides exchanging views on these developments.

They also discussed the continued Iranian terrorist attacks targeting the UAE and other countries, including attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. Ernst condemned these attacks, noting that they violate sovereignty and international law and norms.

The meeting was attended by Yousef Al Otaiba, UAE Ambassador to the United States.

UAE condemns attack

Sheikh Mohamed held a phone call with Nechirvan Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, during which

he condemned the terrorist attack targeting his residence in Duhok Governorate.

Sheikh Mohamed reaffirmed the UAE's support for all efforts to enhance the security of the Republic of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

Barzani expressed his appreciation to Sheikh Mohamed for the UAE's supportive stance towards Iraq in general and the Kurdistan Region in particular.

The call also addressed the continued Iranian terrorist aggression targeting the UAE and other countries in the region

Solidarity with UAE

Meanwhile, Sheikh Mohamed received a phone call from Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of Congo, to discuss the latest developments in the region and their implications for regional and international peace as well as their impact on the global economy.

Nguesso condemned Iran's aggression and affirmed the Republic of the Congo's solidarity with the UAE regarding the measures it is taking to safeguard its security, stability, and territorial integrity and ensure the safety of its people.

The call also explored opportunities to advance bilateral ties within the framework of the two countries' Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Sheikh Mohamed also congratulated Nguesso on his reelection as President of Congo.

— WAM

DRONE AND MISSILE ATTACKS

UAE air defences engaged Iranian ballistic and cruise missiles and UAV attacks.

30 MARCH 2026

UAVs

27

Ballistic missiles

11

Statistics since the onset of the blatant Iranian aggression

UAVs



1,941

Cruise missiles



15

Ballistic missiles



425

Total deaths

11

Total injuries

178

Source: UAE MoD

©Gulf News

Indian worker killed as Iran attacks Kuwait power and water plant

Qatar condemns targeting of water desalination plant

DUBAI
BY STEPHEN N. R.
Senior Associate Editor

An Iranian attack on a power and water desalination plant in Kuwait has killed one Indian worker and damaged a building at the site, according to Kuwaiti authorities, as regional tensions heighten amid the United States-Israeli war on Iran.

"A service building at a power and water desalination plant was attacked as part of the Iranian aggression against the State of Kuwait, resulting in the death of an Indian worker and significant material damage to the building," Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity said in a statement yesterday.

Technical and emergency response teams were immediately sent to the site to deal with the aftermath of the attack and ensure the normal continuation of operations, it added.

'Vileness and depravity'

Later yesterday, Iran claimed Israel was behind the attack.

"The brutal aggression by the Israeli regime against Kuwait's desalination plant, carried out in recent hours under the pretext of accusing the Islamic Republic of Iran, is a sign of the vileness and depravity of the Zionist occupiers," said the military's operational command, Khatam Al Anbiya, in a statement carried by state TV.

Kuwait has been subjected to repeated attacks since the start of the United States-Israeli war on Iran more than a month ago. The Official Spokesman for the National Guard, Brigadier General Dr Jadaan Fadel, confirmed



■ Kuwait's Defence Minister, Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al Sabah inspects the country's international airport after an attack.

that Kuwait successfully intercepted and shot down one drone and four UAVs within sites under the Guard's security mandate.

The spokesman said the operation is part of continu-

An official said that Kuwait successfully intercepted and shot down one drone and four UAVs. Kuwait has been subjected to repeated attacks since the start of the war more than a month ago.

ous efforts to strengthen security, safeguard vital installations, and neutralise emerging threats before they escalate.

10 servicemen injured

On Sunday, the Defence Ministry said that 14 missiles and 12 drones were detected in Kuwaiti airspace, with several targeting a military camp, where 10 servicemen were injured.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry

condemned the attack in the "strongest terms", describing the "heinous Iranian aggressions targeting a camp, power station, and water desalination plant in Kuwait".

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in this context, affirms the State of Qatar's full solidarity with the State of Kuwait and its support for all measures it takes to preserve its sovereignty and security," it said in a post on platform X.

Maritime navigation

Qatar's Ministry of Transport announced that maritime navigation gradually resumed yesterday, exclusively for vessels licensed for marine fishing activities.

In a statement on Sunday, the ministry outlined the technical requirements for vessels including ensuring the safety, readiness, and seaworthiness of the vessel before departure.

It said vessels should operate the Automatic Identification System (AIS) throughout the voyage until returning to port, maintain operation of the VHF radio (Channel 16) during the voyage and until return, and comply with all provisions of the Maritime Equipment Law and related regulations.

Saudi Arabia interception

Separately, Saudi Arabia said it intercepted five ballistic missiles targeting the Eastern Region.

The Saudi Ministry of Defence announced the interceptions yesterday, according to the Saudi Press Agency, quoting Major General Turki Al Malki, the official spokesperson for the ministry.

The ministry had earlier also announced the detection and destruction of a cruise missile heading towards the same region.

UN peacekeeper killed in Southern Lebanon attack

AGENCY: NO ONE SHOULD EVER LOSE THEIR LIFE SERVING THE CAUSE OF PEACE

BEIRUT

The United Nations force in Lebanon said yesterday that one of its peacekeepers was killed when a projectile hit its position, where Israeli forces are fighting Iran-backed Hezbollah as part of efforts to establish a buffer zone.

"A peacekeeper was tragically killed last night when a projectile exploded in a Unifil position near Adchit Al Qusayr," the force said in a statement, adding that another was critically injured.

The town lies near Lebanon's southern border with Israel, where Israeli forces have been battling Hezbollah fighters for nearly a month.

Indonesia confirmed that one of its peacekeepers was killed and three others wounded due to "indirect artillery fire".

The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil) said it did not know the origin of the projectile and had launched an investigation. "No one should ever lose their life serving the cause of peace," it added.

Guterres condemns

Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, condemned the killing in a post on X, warning that recent incidents have increasingly jeopardised the safety and security of peacekeepers.

The war spread to Lebanon in early March after Iran-backed Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel following the assassination of Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, on the first day of the US-Israeli offensive.

Israel has since launched wide-ranging air strikes on Lebanon and is advancing into multiple towns in the south.

Unifil has reported that its positions have been hit more than once since the latest fighting began. On March 7, three Ghanaian soldiers were wounded by gunfire.

Envoy standoff deepens

Iran yesterday defied Lebanon's expulsion order for its ambassador, saying he would remain in the country.

Lebanon had declared Ambassador Mohammad Reza Shibani "persona non grata" in an effort to curb Iran's diplomatic presence, but the deadline for his departure expired on Sunday.

"Our embassy in Lebanon is active," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said.

— AFP; AP



Damage at the site of an Israeli airstrike in the southern Lebanese village of Hanouiyeh, yesterday.

WHY IT MATTERS

US loses key 'eyes in the sky' after Iran strike at Saudi base

DUBAI

Gulf News Report

The destruction of a key US airborne radar aircraft in an Iranian strike is being seen as a significant setback to Washington's battlefield awareness and command capabilities, with analysts warning it could weaken the ability to detect and respond to threats across the region.

Dramatic images of the wreckage — geolocated by CNN — show a US Air Force E-3 Sentry aircraft with its tail severed and its distinctive radar dome lying on the ground at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia. The aircraft is part of the Airborne Warning and Control System (Awacs), considered a cornerstone of US military operations.

'Serious blow'

The loss of the platform is "a serious blow to (US) surveillance capabilities," said CNN military analyst Cedric Leighton, a former US Air Force colonel who has flown on the aircraft.

"It can potentially impact (US) ability to control combat aircraft and vector them to their targets or protect them from engagements of hostile aircraft and missile systems," he said.

The E-3 is far more than a radar plane. Often described as a flying command post, it can

monitor vast areas of airspace — up to 120,000 square miles — tracking hundreds of targets simultaneously, including aircraft, missiles, drones and even ground movements. Its onboard personnel relay real-time intelligence to commanders, ships and ground forces, while also directing fighter jets and coordinating strikes.

'Quarterback' of the battlefield

A recent report by the Centre for a New American Security described Awacs as the "quarterback" of the battlefield, highlighting its role in turning individual missions into a coordinated and dominant force.

The strike, which reportedly injured at least 10 US service members and also damaged a tanker aircraft, underscores a worrying shift in Iran's targeting strategy.

Analysts say Tehran appears to be focusing on high-value assets that underpin US operational effectiveness.

Kelly Grieco, a fellow at the Stimson Centre, said the attack reflects a broader pattern. "Iran's going after the radars that detect threats, the tankers that keep jets flying, and the Awacs that direct the battle. That's a counter-air campaign. Adapted to what Iran can actually do. And the damage is real," she wrote.

In modern warfare, losing one Awacs is not losing one aircraft — it's losing the battlefield's central nervous system.



NATO DOWNS FOURTH IRAN MISSILE OVER TURKEY

Turkey's Defence Ministry said yesterday that Nato forces had intercepted a new missile fired from Iran — the fourth since the start of the Middle East war. "A ballistic munition, which has been determined to have been fired from Iran and to have entered Turkish airspace, was neutralised by Nato forces," said a ministry statement.

Strike on Iraq base: Rockets fired overnight targeted an Iraqi military base inside the Baghdad airport complex, which also houses a support centre for the US embassy, Iraq's defence ministry said.

Non-proliferation treaty: A spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry said Iran was not seeking nuclear weapons, but the issue of whether to remain part of the non-proliferation treaty was under review in parliament.

Spain shuts out US: Spain's left-wing government has closed Spanish airspace to US planes carrying out missions against Iran in addition to denying Washington use of its bases, the defence minister said.

Lebanese soldier killed: An Israeli strike killed a Lebanese soldier and wounded several others when it hit an army checkpoint in the country's south, a Lebanese military official said, in the first direct attack on a military post since the start of the war.

Israeli soldier killed: The Israeli military said a soldier was killed a day earlier in combat in southern Lebanon, bringing to six the number of troops killed since fighting with Iran-backed Hezbollah erupted in early March.

Armenia university: The American University of Armenia said it was moving all classes online over Iranian threats to target US universities in the region. Iranian made the warning after saying US-Israeli strikes had destroyed two Iranian universities.

Ukraine's 'historic' deals: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hailed as "historic" deals Kyiv signed last week with Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The deals' contents have not been made public, but Zelensky said they include Ukrainian expertise in downing drones.

Syria attacks: Syria's military said a large-scale drone attack targeted its bases near the border with Iraq, in the latest such incident since the outbreak of the war. It was not immediately clear who had launched the attack.

Commander confirmed dead: Iran confirmed yesterday that Revolutionary Guards commander **Alireza Tangsiri** had been killed, days after Israel said it targeted him in an air strike. A statement on the Guards' Sepah News website said Tangsiri "succumbed to severe injuries" from the attack.



Missile sites hit: Israel's military said it had struck dozens of weapons production sites including a long-range surface-to-air missiles manufacturing line in Tehran.

Tehran power restored: Iran has restored electricity in parts of the capital and nearby areas after strikes damaged power grids and briefly disrupted supply, the deputy energy minister said.

Trump threat: US President Donald Trump has threatened to strike Iranian power stations if Tehran does not negotiate a peace deal, before repeatedly extending a deadline to do so.

Israel punishes military unit: The Israeli military has suspended a battalion whose soldiers assaulted a CNN crew in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, in a rare case of punishment for soldier misconduct. The army announced yesterday it was suspending the Netzah Yehuda battalion after soldiers were filmed assaulting the CNN crew last week. Netzah Yehuda is a unit of ultra-Orthodox soldiers that has been linked to abuses of Palestinian civilians in the past, including the death of a 78-year-old Palestinian American man after his detention by the battalion's forces in 2022.

Al Sissi calls on Trump to end war: "I say to President Trump: no one can end the war in our region, in the Gulf, except you," Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al Sissi said in a speech yesterday. "I'm talking to you in the name of humanity and in the name of everyone who loves peace, and you are one of the people who love peace. I'm sending a direct message to you on behalf of the region. There are dangerous consequences in continuing this war any further. Please help us end the war, you're capable of that," he said.

Fire hits an Israeli oil refinery: The fire erupted yesterday at the refinery in the Israeli city of Haifa for the second time during the long war with Iran, according to footage. Video showed flames on a large refinery tank with thick black smoke that was quickly extinguished. It wasn't clear if a missile strike or debris caused the blaze.

— AFP

Trump back on Kharg: What seizing Iran's oil lifeline could trigger

Trump revives 'take the oil' idea, raising risks of escalation

DUBAI

BY STEPHEN N. R.
Senior Associate Editor

US President Donald Trump has revived an idea he first floated decades ago — as early as 1988 — telling the *Financial Times* on March 29 that he is still considering whether to seize Kharg Island, Iran's key oil export hub.

The reference to 1988 dates back to the final phase of the Iran-Iraq War, when the Gulf was caught in the "Tanker War" — a period marked by attacks on oil tankers and energy infrastructure that raised fears of a global supply shock.

At the time, the United States had deployed forces to protect shipping lanes, bearing the military cost of securing the region.

In that context, a younger Trump — then a New York businessman — argued in paid newspaper advertisements that if Washington was safeguarding Gulf oil flows, it should also "take the oil" — a transactional view that the US should benefit economically from its military role.

Why Kharg Island matters

For decades, Kharg Island has handled the overwhelming bulk of Iran's crude exports, serving as the primary loading terminal for tankers supplying global markets. In effect, it is not just an energy facility — it is Iran's financial lifeline.

Disrupting Kharg would



A satellite image of Iran's Kharg Island.

therefore strike at the core of Iran's ability to sustain both governance and conflict.

Unlike conventional strikes on bases or weapons systems, targeting Kharg would represent a shift towards economic warfare.

The logic is straightforward: if battlefield pressure does not force a breakthrough, hitting revenue streams might.

Analysts say such a move would aim to rapidly reduce Iran's export capacity, placing immediate strain on its economy and increasing pressure on its leadership.

At the same time, some see the remarks as strategic signalling — an attempt to raise stakes and push negotiations, rather than an indication of imminent action.

Can the US seize Kharg?

Despite its appeal as a target, seizing Kharg Island would be far from simple. Any attempt to take control would require a sustained military operation, exposing US forces to prolonged engagement and counter-attacks.

Legal and diplomatic risks

Such a move would also carry significant legal and diplomatic consequences.

Targeting or seizing a country's primary economic infrastructure could be viewed as an act of war, raising questions under international law and potentially complicating support from allies.

Historically, these risks — along with fears of escalation — have deterred direct attacks on Iran's oil export system.

Could Iran bypass Kharg?

While Iran has explored alternative export routes and terminals, none match the scale, efficiency or capacity of Kharg Island. That makes it a critical vulnerability — but not an absolute single point of failure.

Limited exports could con-

tinue, but at significantly reduced levels, amplifying the economic impact.

Risk of escalation

The consequences would likely extend far beyond Iran.

Tehran has repeatedly warned that attacks on its economic infrastructure would trigger retaliation. This could include strikes on energy installations, shipping routes and military assets across the region.

For Gulf countries, including key energy producers, the risks would be direct — raising security concerns around infrastructure and shipping lanes.

Ultimately, targeting Kharg reflects a high-risk calculation. It could deliver a sharp economic blow and increase pressure on Iran's leadership. But it also risks widening the conflict.

It's a very, very special moment, Sinner says

IMPLACABLE WORLD NO 2 OVERPOWERS LEHECKA TO WIN MIAMI OPEN

MIAMI

World No 2 Jannik Sinner powered past Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-4 to win the ATP Miami Masters 1000 for a second time on Sunday, adding the title to his Indian Wells crown.

Sinner had to wait out rain delays before and during the match to complete his "Sunshine Double," becoming the first man to sweep the elite hard court tournaments in California and Florida since Roger Federer in 2017 and the first to do so without dropping a set.

In fact, Sinner - who won Miami in 2024 but missed last year as he served a three-month doping ban - has now won three straight Masters 1000 events, starting with a victory in Paris last year.

"It's a very, very special moment," Sinner said. "Coming here, performing again in a very good way after Indian Wells means a lot to me."

"It's something I never would've thought (I'd win) because it's difficult to achieve."

Sinner's victory, coupled with Aryna Sabalenka's triumph over Coco Gauff on Saturday, mark the first time the Indian Wells-Miami sweep was achieved on both the men's and women's sides since Novak Djokovic and Victoria Azarenka both did it in 2016. It also saw the Italian gain a bit on Spain's Carlos Alcaraz - who was upset in the third round - in the race for world number one as the clay court season beckons.

Early showers saw the match delayed for more than an hour. Sinner had just pocketed the first set when the showers hit again, halting the match for 90 minutes. It wasn't enough to unsettle Sinner, who fired 10 aces and won 33 of 36 points when he put his first serve in play.

His return game was also spot on as he handed 22nd-ranked Czech Lehecka his first service break of the tournament for a 2-1 lead in the opening frame.

Sinner trailed 0-40 in the following game but fired three service winners and a pair of aces to hold. "I tried to be focused," Sinner said. "I tried to understand



EALA DROPS IN RANKINGS

Filipino tennis standout **Alex Eala** dropped from a career-high No. 29 to No. 45 in the latest Women's Tennis Association (WTA) rankings released yesterday.

Eala concluded her Miami campaign with a Round of 16 finish, exiting the tournament after a loss to Karolina Muchova in straight sets. Her run included notable wins over Magda Linette and Laura Siegemund in the earlier rounds.

Her Round of 16 finish earned her 120 ranking points - significantly fewer than the 390 points she gained from her semi-final appearance in the same tournament last year.

As a result, Eala's total points fell from 1,525 to 1,255, allowing several players to overtake her in the rankings.

"I can confirm, Miami's still the best. I'll always have a special place in my heart for this tournament. First sunshine double done!" Eala said after her Miami run.

Meanwhile, Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka remains world No 1 with 11,025 points, followed by Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina (8,108) and American Coco Gauff (7,278). Poland's Iga Swiatek (7,263) and American Jessica Pegula (6,243) complete the top five.

Sabalenka won her second straight Miami Open title on Sunday beating Coco Gauff 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 to complete a "Sunshine Double" Indian Wells-Miami sweep.

— Gulf News Report



It's a very, very special moment. Coming here, performing again in a very good way after Indian Wells means a lot to me. It's something I never would've thought (I'd win) because it's difficult to achieve."

Jannik Sinner » World No 1

De Zerbi, Redknapp amongst candidates for Spurs top job

Tottenham one place above the relegation zone with just seven games to go

DUBAI

BY ROBERT ILSLEY
Sports Writer

After Tottenham Hotspur confirmed Igor Tudor's departure, speculation has immediately emerged over who would step in as the club's next manager.

The Lilywhites are now looking for their third new manager in what has been a disastrous season for the side who are currently one place above the relegation zone with just seven games to play.

The appointment of Tudor didn't go to plan with the Croatian lasting just 44 days in charge with a record of four losses and one draw from his five Premier League games.

The hierarchy at Spurs are now on the hunt for their third manager of the season, and the appointment better be a good one...

The club appears to be primarily targeting former Brighton boss Roberto De Zerbi, with Spurs keen on securing the Italian on a permanent basis.

The 46-year-old is a free agent following his exit from Marseille earlier this season where he initially impressed helping the side finish second in Ligue 1 in 2024-25. However inconsistent results, a disappointing Champions League campaign, and a heavy loss to PSG led to his departure by mutual consent in February 2026.

De Zerbi has something Tudor lacked, proven Premier



■ Roberto De Zerbi

League experience having previously impressed during his tenure at Brighton.

Big impact

Arriving in September 2022, he quickly made a big impact, leading the Seagulls to their highest ever Premier League finish, in sixth place. This secured Brighton's first-ever qualification for European football with his attractive, attacking style earning widespread praise and raised Brighton's profile in England.

However, initial indications suggest whilst De Zerbi is open to becoming the club's next permanent head coach, he would prefer to wait until the end of the season when he knows whether the club are still in the Premier League.

Several Tottenham fan groups have expressed their objections to the potential appointment of De Zerbi due to his decision to bring former Manchester United striker Mason Greenwood to Marseille.

Greenwood joined De Zerbi in 2023 after leaving Man United, following the dropping of legal charges against him, including attempted rape and assault.

PREMIER LEAGUE

FANS BACK CALL TO SCRAP VAR

More than three-quarters of Premier League fans would like to see VAR scrapped and even more believe it has a detrimental impact on the matchday experience, according to a survey by the Football Supporters' Association (FSA).

The poll of nearly 8,000 supporters, just over half of whom attend more than 15 home games a season, showed how unpopular the current system has become despite the Premier League insisting it has resulted in more correct decisions.

Asked if they support the use of VAR, 76 per cent said they do not, with more than 70 per cent disagreeing that it has improved the overall accuracy of refereeing decisions.

The consensus that VAR has made football less enjoyable was nearly unanimous at 97 per cent, while over 90 per cent disagreed it has made the matchday experience better.

"The results show that most fans want VAR removed," said Thomas Concannon, the FSA's Premier League network manager.

— AFP

'Rohit has arrived in his new avatar'

Kumble says Mumbai Indian's icon form will worry all IPL teams

MUMBAI

Former Indian cricketer Anil Kumble lauded Mumbai Indians batting icon Rohit Sharma's majestic half-century against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), describing it as a return to his dominant "2.0 avatar".

Kumble highlighted Rohit's effortless strokeplay against top bowlers, his improved fitness, and sharp timing, calling the knock a statement performance that will pose a challenge to all IPL teams.

Mumbai Indians ended a 13-season jinx by winning their first opening Indian Premier League (IPL) match with a



■ Rohit Sharma

clinical six-wicket victory over KKR on Sunday.

"Rohit Sharma seems to have arrived in his 2.0 avatar, and his innings showed he is ready to dominate again. The way he hit the ball all around the ground reminded me of his prime. It is not easy to hit sixes against bowlers

like Varun Chakaravathy, Sunil Narine and Blessing Muzarabani, but he made it look easy," Kumble said on Star Sports.

"He has worked a lot on his fitness, and when you come back after a short break, it takes five to seven days to get your timing back and find your rhythm. This was a fantastic innings, very similar to what we have seen at Wankhede, where he takes on the bowlers from the first ball. The six-hitting looked easy, and even though the boundaries were small, those shots were going into the stands. This knock shows that Rohit means business, and this version of him will worry all IPL teams," Kumble added.

Rohit put in a good showing, scoring 78 runs in 38 deliveries laced with 6 fours and sixes each.

— ANI

But he made the advantage stand up and gave himself a first set point in the ninth game with a blistering cross-court forehand service return winner.

Lehecka saved that one with a service winner and saved another set point with a volley, going on to seal the hold on his sixth game point before Sinner pocketed the set with a love game.

Lehecka fought off five more break points before Sinner

pounced for the lone break of the second set and a 5-4 lead, the Czech gifting Sinner a break chance with a loose forehand.

Sinner didn't face a break point in the second set and gave himself a match point with a forehand volley winner, thought he had it on a serve that was called a let, and polished it off with another winner at the net.

While Lehecka, playing in his first Masters 1000 final, couldn't follow compatriot Jakub Mensik into the Miami winner's circle, he will reach a career-high 14th in the world rankings yesterday. "I came here with not good form and I was able to come back to the tennis that I want to play," Lehecka said at the trophy ceremony.

— AFP

Short takes

Zaman charged with ball-tampering in PSL

Lahore Qalandars' Fakhar Zaman could face a ban after being charged with a ball-tampering offence in his side's defeat to Karachi Kings in the T20 Pakistan Super League.

The Kings, who needed 14 to win off the final over of Sunday's match, were awarded five penalty runs when the umpires decided that Fakhar had altered the condition of the ball. The ball was changed at the request of the Kings, who then knocked off the nine runs they needed to win.

Fakhar was charged with violating the playing condition "which makes it an offence to take any action which changes the condition of the ball."



Lukaku says 'could never turn back on Napoli'

Romelu Lukaku yesterday defended his decision to undergo treatment in his home country rather than at his club after pulling out of Belgium's World Cup warm-up matches in the US.

The 32-year-old has barely played this season because of injury but said that success for Napoli and his national team were all he wanted. "This season has been a lot for me from dealing with the injury and the personal loss (of his father)," Lukaku posted.

Kenya's Korir gets 5-year doping ban

Kenya's 2021 New York marathon champion Albert Korir has been banned for five years after he admitted using a banned performance-enhancing drug, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) said yesterday.

Korir, 32, tested positive for the synthetic form of erythropoietin (EPO) that stimulates red blood cell production during out-of-competition tests in Kenya in October 2025.

The AIU said that Korir had received a one-year reduction from the original six-year suspension "based on an early admission and acceptance of the sanction".

— Agencies



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Human Resource / Payroll Officer, having 25 years experience (13 years in UAE and rest in Philippines), looking for a job. Contact: +971-50-9652213

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JOBS VACANT

Accountancy

Accounts Assistant required. Applicants may please send resume to: jobalertgsc@gmail.com

Domestic

Indian Cook Required for an Emirati family.

Must have knowledge of:
* Local and International Cuisine
* English Language
Email CV to: sohaib@algre.ae
Call: 050-452 2239

Engineering & Technical

Civil Engineer, with 5 to 10 years experience required for a contracting company in Dubai. Email CV to: hrd@aikhbarbashgroup.com

Miscellaneous

Fire Alarm Technicians, Mech./Elec. Engineers, Office Asst., Sales Person reqd. E: safestuaejobs@gmail.com

JOBS WANTED

Accountancy

050-5391385 - We provide accounting softwares, part accounting services, Tally, Odoo, Focus, SAP and QB.

Domestic

Nanny cum Housemaid / Cook (cafeteria / restaurant), Indian, with 7-9 years exp., seeks job. Call 052-9759992.

ATNAV OCEANIC INC. (In Voluntary Liquidation) Company No. (1964192)

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 204, subsection (1)(b) of the BVI Business Companies Act, 2004 that the Company is in voluntary liquidation. The voluntary liquidation commenced on 12th March 2026. The Liquidator is Humphry A. Leue of 531 Nottingham Estate, Long Look, P.O. Box 4754, Road Town, Tortola, VG 1110, British Virgin Islands.

Dated 12th March 2026

(Sgd.) Humphry A. Leue
Voluntary Liquidator

LIQUIDATION NOTICE

We, Screeno Innovation FZE incorporated in Dubai under the jurisdictions of Dubai World Trade Center Authority with License no. L-3905 duly announce the liquidation of our company. If you have any objection to this or any financial claims or rights, you may reach out to the company representative within 14 days of the publication. Please see following contact details:

Email: angelee@thepositivethinkers.com
Number: 050-329-9017

ATNAV OFFSHORE INC. (In Voluntary Liquidation) Company No. (1947862)

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 204, subsection (1)(b) of the BVI Business Companies Act, 2004 that the Company is in voluntary liquidation. The voluntary liquidation commenced on 11th March 2026. The Liquidator is Humphry A. Leue of 531 Nottingham Estate, Long Look, P.O. Box 4754, Road Town, Tortola, VG 1110, British Virgin Islands.

Dated 11th March 2026

(Sgd.) Humphry A. Leue
Voluntary Liquidator

LIQUIDATION / LICENSE CANCELLATION NOTICE

M/s. Redington Middle East LLC (License No:100354) located at Dubai Internet City P. O. Box 12816, Dubai, UAE, licensed with the Dubai Development Authority (the "Company"), wishes to announce the decision taken regarding closing down and cancellation of license via board resolution passed at the Board meeting of M/s. Redington Middle East LLC (the Parent Company) held on 25th Mar 2026

Accordingly, any interested party who has a claim against the Company is hereby requested to submit its outstanding claims within 45 days of notice by registered post or contact:

Mr. Shery Joseph
Company Name: Redington Middle East LLC | P. O. Box 12816, Dubai, U.A.E
Tel No. 045161000 | Email: admin.dxb@redingtongroup.com

Claims received after expiry of the notice period of 45 days shall not be considered

NOTICE

Government of Sharjah
Judicial Department
Date: 30/09/1447 H
Corresponding to: 18/03/2026
To the Defendant: Javid Abdul Wali | Nationality: Afghan
Address: Unknown
Whereas the Plaintiff, Haniqa daughter of Abdul Ghafar (Afghan national), has filed the abovementioned lawsuit before this Court, the subject matter of which is "Khul" (dissolution of marriage).
You are hereby required to appear before the Sixth Personal Status Circuit of the Family Court on Monday, 06/04/2026, at 9:00 AM, to respond to the lawsuit and submit any relevant information you may possess. Should you fail to appear, or fail to send a legal representative on your behalf at the specified time, the Court shall proceed to hear the case in your absence.
Issued on Wednesday, 18/03/2026.
// Signed & Stamped //
Case Manager
Judicial Department

FOR PUBLICATION

IN THE COURT OF CIVIL JUDGE SENIOR DIVISION-8, PATNA
Title Partition Suit No. 38 of 2025

Dr. Aditya Kumar Verma - Plaintiff
VERSUS
Mo. Rekha Verma & Others - Defendants

NOTICE TO

S. Miss Aashmi Prasad, Daughter of Late Ganga Prasad Verma and wife of Mr. Rajesh Prasad, Resident of Villa C-22, District-2, Jumeirah, Village Triangle, Dubai, U.A.E. Dubai - 500 001

Whereas the Plaintiff has filed a Title Partition Suit in the aforementioned Court, in which summons and copies have already been sent to you through the Court Nazarat and Registered Post, but you are not appearing before the Court.

Therefore, through this newspaper publication you are hereby informed / warned to appear personally or through your advocate on Date: 15th Month: April Year: 2026 at 10.30 am o'clock in the day, to present and objections or contentions you have. Otherwise, in your absence, the hearing of this suit will proceed ex-parte (one-sided), consider this a strict instruction.

Issued Date: 28th Month: March Year: 2026, under the seal and signature of the Court.
Civil Judge
Senior Division-8, Patna.

This notice is published under the responsibility of the advertiser.

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GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR & NARCOTICS CONTROL
NATIONAL DATABASE AND REGISTRATION
AUTHORITY NADRA
NADRA HEADQUARTERS, ISLAMABAD

TENDER NOTICE

PROCUREMENT OF POLYCARBONATE WITHOUT CHIP CARDS

Tender # NADRA-HQ-RFB-41/2026

- National Database & Registration Authority invites sealed bids for Procurement of Polycarbonate without chip cards through International Competitive Bidding. In case of National / Local Firm, firm must have valid Income Tax and Sales Tax Registration and must be on active Taxpayer List of Federal Board of Revenue.

Sr.#	ITEM	Qty	Pre-Bid Meeting
1	PROCUREMENT OF POLYCARBONATE WITHOUT CHIP CARDS	20 million	Pre-Bid meeting will be held on 8 th April 2026, 1100 hrs(PST) at NADRA HQ, G-5/2, Islamabad. OR Bidders wish to participate online may join via following zoom link https://zoom.us/j/94089497986?pwd=GMo4CfrvdfnkEXGN6Vu7GRakwOQLe1 Meeting ID: 940 8949 7986 Passcode: 847832 Note: Only One representative will be allowed to join Pre-Bid meeting from each bidder

- The bidding documents containing detailed specifications, instructions, conditions & forms etc, for participating in the bid are available on E-PADS <https://epads.gov.pk>.
- The electronic bids must be submitted by using E-PADS on or before 6th May, 2026 at 1100hrs (PST). Manual bids will not be accepted. Electronic bids will be opened on the same day i.e. 6th May, 2026 at 1130hrs (PST). The hard copy of the bid security (in Original) must be submitted on or before 1100hrs (PST) 6th May, 2026, otherwise electronic bid will not be accepted. No late submission of bid security will be accepted in any case. Hence, bidders are requested to observe timings strictly.
- NADRA reserves the right to reject all the bids as per Rule 33 of Public Procurement Rules 2004.

Note: Procuring Agency will not be responsible for any technical issue occurred at E-PADS related to the bidder's module. Bidder will be sole responsible for timely submission.

PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT
(Ex-Facilitation Center) NADRA HQ
State Bank of Pakistan Building, Shahrah-i-Jamhuriat,
G-5/2, Islamabad - 44000.
Telephone: +925190392837

The BTS brotherhood, with all its chaos and imperfections, is more powerful than ever

By **Lakshana N. Palat**
Assistant Features Editor

It's a touching moment. In the first few minutes of *BTS: The Return*, a Netflix documentary charting the group's journey back to where they belong, a concerned V nudges an exhausted Jin, coaxing a few tired smiles out of the eldest hyung. It's a quiet moment of softness and care, one that cuts through the noise Army hasn't been able to escape for years. For context, ever since the 2022 Festa, when an emotional RM bared his soul about the group's direction, being honest and vulnerable with fans, the K-Pop world spiraled. Some interpreted it as an indefinite hiatus, others as a disbandment announcement. The speculation grew loud enough that the members had to step in and clarify: they weren't breaking up, just taking time to explore solo work. Later, they announced that they would be attending mandatory military service, and would be back soon.

FRICION, AND TRUST

The brotherhood remained intact, and Army understood. Yet through solo eras, enlistments and returns, the discourse only grew louder. The release of *Arirang* only added to the scrutiny, with debates over credits and creative direction fuelling fresh waves of commentary. Select clips from the documentary circulated online, often stripped of context, reinforcing the idea that the group's dynamic was fracturing. But watched properly, the documentary tells a different story. It captures the difficult, often messy process of coming back together. There are disagreements, certainly, but also resolution. There is friction, but also trust. It shows the process of creating their new album *Arirang*, the weight of making it more authentic, and still making it a global success. The docu-

REVIEW: BTS THE RETURN



From left: J-Hope, Suga, Jin, RM, Jung Kook, and Jimin in a scene from the documentary.

DOCUMENTARY REFLECTS A BITTERSWEET JOURNEY

mentary shows the light and dark sides of the band, a brotherhood that stays together, working with each other through every hurdle. The documentary begins with Jin's return to his brothers in LA where they're preparing for their comeback, and the band sitting together through lunches, dinners and breaks, puzzling over song lyrics. J-Hope stands up for a sample that he believes in. RM and Suga aren't convinced, yet. Yet, what stands out the most, are the moments of brotherhood: V taking care of a tired Jin, Jin saying goodbye to all the members again, and then collapsing in Jungkook's

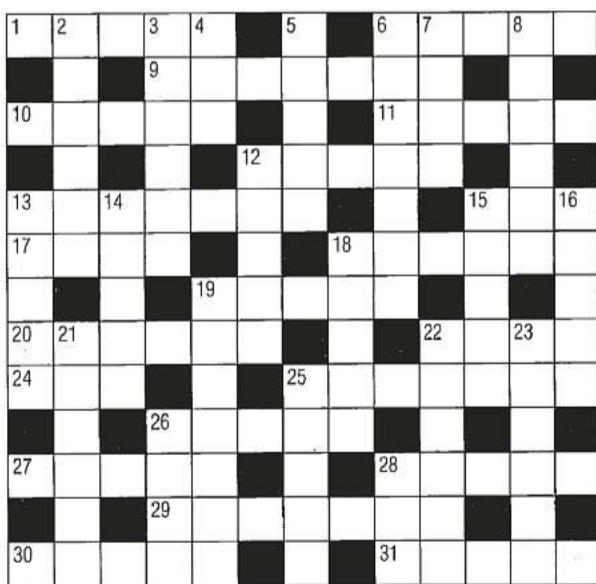
room, who tells him to stay for a little longer. It's a heartwarming moment between the eldest and the youngest, because those who watched Jin leaving for military service, won't ever forget Jungkook's glassy and teary eyes. There's levity too, joy in the swimming pool, Jimin pretending to be a dolphin, glimpses that shine light on a larger truth: BTS has always been more than just the music. It's the sound of their laughter, silliness, love and jokes that heals Armys. And that's what fans needed to see, after four years. The documentary leans into complexity, the strain, the affection, the uncer-

tainty, and the choice to return to each other. It's this sense of hope and healing that BTS has come to embody for their fans over the years, and the documentary reflects that bittersweet, messy journey in all its highs and lows. It has already sparked countless inside jokes, debates, and a wave of memes, part of the shared love language between BTS and Army. For anyone overwhelmed by the online discourse, the answer is simple, watch it in full. The story feels very different when it's whole. And take a breath, BTS isn't going anywhere anytime soon. The brotherhood is towering as ever, with all its imperfections and chaos.

Don't miss it!
BTS The Return is streaming on Netflix

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
1 Spirit of a grand entertainer (5)
6 Study in quietude (5)
9 Whence the train's guard can cry out, just in case (7)
10 Use bad language in the witness box? (5)
11 The body in the box (5)
12 Man of the manor, maybe, in Spain? (5)
13 Gallant chap in pain (7)
15 Cry during homework (3)
17 Bookish captain's exclamation to a seaman (4)
18 What to win when you lose (it's tricky) (6)
19 Swimming school (5)
20 Belief in direct action! (6)
22 Only to lose badly (4)
24 Being venerated, he cried (3)
25 A resilient chucker-out (7)
26 Choice of potherbs (5)
27 Played by the band in all-Italian style (5)
28 Go off course, say



- about two-fifths of a metre (5)
29 Dash off and obtain a ripping takeaway! (4,3)
30 To uncle, a very large Aegean island (5)
31 A lord by name (5)
- DOWN**
2 The way to get had up for riding an elephant (6)
3 A crab's in beetle-like form (6)
4 Jack may take Paul in (3)
5 Shakespeare's name

- for frailty (5)
6 Loiters around a Portuguese resort (7)
7 Flier making a sound turn (4)
8 It's safer to keep out of it (6)
12 Direction of a blow (5)
13 A church head has a way round this area (5)
14 A tag that upsets Bella (5)
15 Wine makes me a bit docile (5)
16 Were wrong about Spithead being in Germany! (5)
18 House with its own tube station (5)
19 Enough neckwear for a decade? (7)
21 Sicilian town producing jazz for America? (6)
22 Conceited as a midshipman (6)
23 Leo gets out a gun with a smooth movement (6)
25 Bread product usually with trimmings (5)
26 The hot toddy man (4)
28 It's paid us to return to Brideshead (3)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 3, Tri-o-s 8, Sarah 10, Rhone 11, T-or 12, Mince 13, Unequal 15, Ha-I-I's 18, U-RN 19, Piffle 21, Die-Hard 22, Lean 23, Pond 24, Blowout 26, Centre 29, LI-p 31, Elsi-e 32, Helpers 34, R-ace-R 35, Ivy 36, Fives (na-vv-y) 37, F-east 38, Study.

DOWN: 1, Pat-na 2, Tar-quin 4, Rail 5, Orchi-d 6, She-af 7, K-Nell 9, Roe 12, Manhole 14, Ure 16, If not 17, Seedy 19, P-r-owler 20, Place 21, Dawn's 23, P-up-pies 24, Breast 25, Oil 27, E-LV-ls. 28, Tires 30, Try-St. 32, Head 33, Eva.

SUDOKU

3		9	8	5	2			4
2		1	6					5
	8	5		1	7		2	6
	3				9			
9	2			6			3	7
			2				4	
6	4		3	7		1	9	
5					6	4		3
7			4	9	8	5		2

THE CHALLENGE

An unsolved Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 grid that has been subdivided into nine smaller grids of 3x3 squares. To solve the puzzle each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers one to nine. Good luck!

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

4	8	1	7	2	6	3	5	9
7	9	3	4	5	8	6	2	1
5	6	2	3	9	1	4	7	8
8	7	4	2	1	9	5	3	6
3	5	9	6	8	7	1	4	2
2	1	6	5	3	4	9	8	7
9	3	5	8	6	2	7	1	4
6	4	8	1	7	5	2	9	3
1	2	7	9	4	3	8	6	5

EASY CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
1 Wounds (5)
6 Halts (5)
9 Accuses (7)
10 Den (5)
11 Indefinite (5)
12 Anteroom (5)
13 Stockings (7)
15 Heavy-hearted (3)
17 Dry (4)
18 Spanish dish (6)
19 Essential (5)
20 Necessitate (6)
22 Heroic (4)
24 Man's name (3)
25 Sportsperson (7)
- 26 Pear drink (5)
27 Shoulder movement (5)
28 Unfertilised seed (5)
29 Gruesome (7)
30 Curse (5)
31 Make law (5)
- 12 Physically weak (5)
13 Filbert (5)
14 Sieves (5)
15 Slant (5)
16 Move to music (5)
18 Beano (5)
19 Sour liquid (7)
21 Male relative (6)
22 Number (6)
23 Slanting type (6)
25 Display (5)
26 Cougar (4)
28 Mineral (3)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 3, Poach 8, Fable 10, Lower 11, Boo 12, Pivot 13, Drastic 15, Sewer 18, Sat 19, Delete 21, Topcoat 22, Warm 23, Trot 24, Lengthy 26, Anchor 29, Lie 31, Titan 32, Reprove 34, Beaus 35, Ale 36, April 37, Spend 38, Types.

DOWN: 1, Sabre 2, Blossom 4, Otic 5, Closet 6, Hotel 7, Beret 9, Boa 12, Pitcher 14, Tap 16, Weary 17, Rests 19, Dangles 20, Sweat 21, Tract 23, Therapy 24, Lonely 25, Tip 27, Nippy 28, Habit 30, Event 32, Rude 33, Ole.

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GULF NEWS

Weekend Unwind

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