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HIS MAJESTY, QATAR EMIR EXPLORE NEW AVENUES FOR BILATERAL COOPERATION

HM the Sultan pays a private visit to Sheikh Tamim

DOHA: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik paid yesterday a private fraternal visit to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar.

During the visit, a cordial meeting was held between the two leaders at the Amiri Diwan in the Qatari capital, Doha. Their discussions reviewed the trajectory of bilateral relations and explored avenues for further developing existing cooperation across various sectors, in a manner that serves mutual interests and shared aspirations.

Alongside His Majesty the Sultan, the meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'mani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Dr. Sultan bin Yarub Al Busaidi, Advisor at the Private Office and Sayyid Ammar bin Abdullah Al Busaidi, Ambassador the Sultanate of Oman to the State of Qatar.

It was attended from the Qatari side by Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani, Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Khulaifi, Chief of the Amiri Diwan, Sheikh Hamad bin Tamim Al Thani, Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi, Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Sheikh Faisal bin Thani Al Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani, Minister of Transport, Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Sheikh Mubarak bin Fahd Al Thani, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Sultanate of Oman.

The Emir of the State of Qatar was at the forefront of those welcoming and bidding farewell to His Majesty the Sultan at the Amiri Terminal of Hamad International Airport, accompanied by a number of senior officials. – ONA

TAX AUTHORITY

Oman to launch mandatory e-invoicing in 2027

MUSCAT: The Tax Authority yesterday issued Decision No. 189/2026 amending certain provisions of the Regulations of the Value-Added Tax Law, which include the issuance of tax invoices in an approved and secure electronic format that ensures their integrity and retention.

Idris Hamoud Al Rashidi, Director of the E-Invoicing Project at the Tax Authority, affirmed that the electronic tax invoice project represents a qualitative leap in the development of the Sultanate of Oman's tax system. He stated that the project aims to enhance tax compliance, raise the level of transparency in commercial transactions, and improve the efficiency of tax procedures, alongside supporting digital transformation and fostering a more efficient and reliable business environment.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), he explained that an electronic tax invoice is an invoice issued, transmitted, and retained in an approved electronic format in accordance with the technical requirements specified by the Tax Authority, thereby ensuring data integrity, security, and verifiability.

He elaborated that the implementation of the system contributes to reducing errors and manipulation by issuing invoices in the approved XML electronic format—a format that enables electronic systems to read, analyse, and process data automatically. He noted that invoices are exchanged between the seller's electronic system and the buyer's electronic system in business-to-business transactions through e-invoicing service providers accredited by the Tax Authority, in near real-time and without human intervention.

He added that paper invoices, invoices issued in PDF format, or those sent as digital images via email do not qualify as electronic tax invoices under the new requirements, and will not be recognised following the implementation of the recent amendments to the Regulations of the Value-Added Tax Law.

He pointed out that all companies registered for value-added tax will be obliged to issue their tax invoices electronically in accordance with the system approved by the Tax Authority. >A3

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

OHB finances over 10,000 Omani families

1 Housing finances provided by the Oman Housing Bank (OHB) reached more than OMR364.4 million, benefiting over 10,000 Omani families across various wilayats of the governorate. >A2

OMAN

Survey of Masirah coast commences

2 The Environment Authority in the Wilayat of Masirah has commenced field survey work within the framework of two indicators of the Authority's operational targets for 2026. >A3

MARKET

MSX trading value surges by 654.8%

3 The main index of the Muscat Stock Exchange rose by 66.8% by the end of June 2026 to reach 7,507.9 points, compared with 4,500.9 points at the end of June 2025. The value of securities traded also increased by 654.8% to reach OMR6.92 billion, NCSI data shows. >B2

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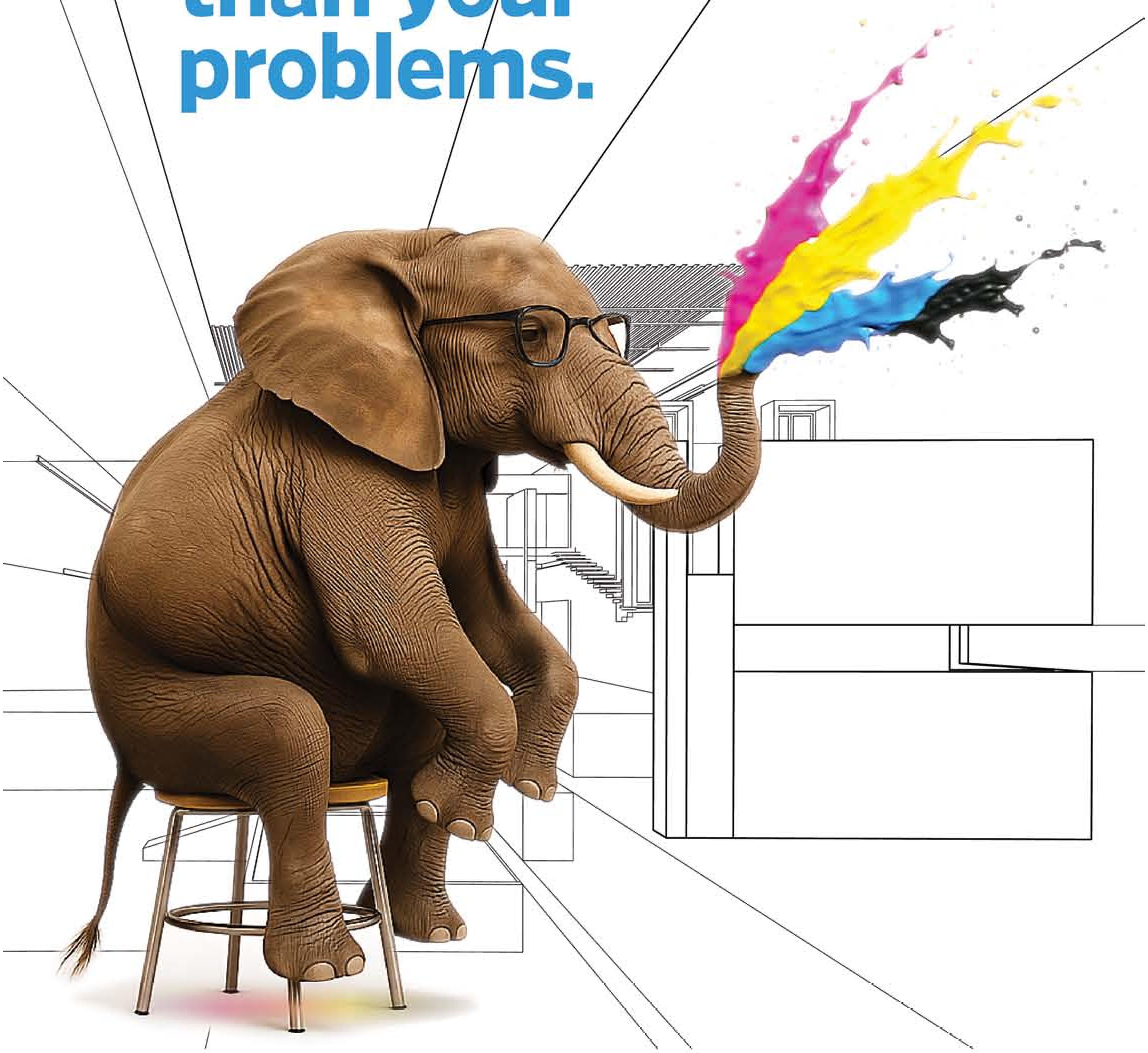

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COMMENTARY

Oman's Next Energy Advantage May Not Be Energy Alone

For decades, Oman has built a distinctive diplomatic role in the region through something that does not appear on an energy balance sheet: its ability to maintain relationships across political divides. As the global energy system changes, that diplomatic experience may be taking on new economic significance.

At the same time, Oman is positioning itself for a lower carbon energy future, particularly through renewable energy and green hydrogen. Globally, however, the market for low emissions hydrogen is still far from mature. The International Energy Agency's latest assessment shows that many of the commercial and institutional arrangements needed to support its growth are still developing.

Producing cleaner energy is therefore only part of the picture. New energy markets will also depend on cooperation between governments, investors, producers and consumers across borders.

This is where Oman presents an interesting case. Its clean energy ambitions are advancing alongside a diplomatic tradition built on maintaining relationships, facilitating dialogue and engaging across political divides. The significance may lie not simply in these two strengths, but in how they begin to intersect.

There are already signs of that intersection. In February, Oman's Diplomatic Academy and Oman Net Zero Centre brought together heads of diplomatic missions to discuss low carbon investment opportunities and cooperation with partner countries. Oman is also building international partnerships around hydrogen corridors and the infrastructure needed to support them. An agreement with Japan this year established cooperation through the Joint Crediting Mechanism to encourage emissions reduction projects and investment.

Taken together, these developments raise a broader idea. Energy diplomacy is about more than using diplomacy to sell energy.

It sits where foreign policy and energy strategy meet. It can bring energy security, investment and technology into the wider diplomatic conversation. For newer energy markets, that can mean helping producers and consumers find common ground, while supporting the investment, standards and infrastructure that make cross border trade possible.

For Oman, there is a wider significance to this. In the hydrocarbon era, energy resources, security of supply and trade relationships became important sources of geopolitical influence. As the energy system changes, influence may also come from an ability to connect resources, markets, capital and political relationships.

Seen in that context, energy diplomacy could become more than an extension of the Sultanate's energy policy. It could become another expression of Oman's established role as a connector, this time among the producers, investors and consumers participating in a changing global energy economy.

Oman's next energy advantage, then, may not rest on energy alone. The Sultanate's longstanding emphasis on dialogue and constructive engagement offers another asset as energy relationships are redrawn. The question is how that diplomatic experience might shape Oman's place in the energy system now taking form.

Sadiq Sami Saffarini is a Harvard University alumnus and scholar of international relations, with interests in global governance, energy and sustainability. He previously served with the American Red Cross and held a faculty appointment lecturing in international security, conflict studies and global governance.

PROTECTING STOCKS

Kingfish fishing banned from 15 August till 15 October 2026

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources will begin implementing a ban on catching, possessing, and trading kingfish across all coasts of the Sultanate of Oman from 15 August lasting until 15 October 2026.

This comes within regulatory measures aimed at protecting kingfish stocks and ensuring the sustainability of its fisheries, in accordance with the provisions of Article (178) of the Executive Regulations of the Living Aquatic Resources Law issued by Ministerial Decision No. (70/2026).

The decision gains economic significance considering the status kingfish holds in the Omani fisheries sector. Indicators for 2025 show that the Sultanate of Oman's total kingfish production reached approximately 19,743 tonnes, with a total production value of OMR44.422 million, and an average value of OMR2.25 per kilogram.

A large percentage of kingfish production is concentrated in Al Wusta and South Al Sharqiyah Governorates, which together accounted for about 83.5 percent of total production during 2025.

Production in Al Wusta Governorate reached 8,241 tonnes, representing 41.74 percent, while production in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate reached 8,239 tonnes, representing 41.73 percent, whereas the remaining coastal governorates contributed about 3,264 tonnes, or 16.53 percent of total production.

Kingfish is considered one of the most important large pelagic fish species in the Sultanate of Oman, due to its quality and high demand in local and regional markets.

This gives it economic and nutritional importance beyond its value as a catch product, serving as a resource tied to fishermen's income and the movement of trading and commerce in the fisheries sector.

The ban period comes as part of a package of measures implemented by the Ministry to maintain the sustainability of kingfish stocks, including regulating fishing seasons, protecting stocks during breeding periods to enhance their natural replenishment capacity, strengthening control and compliance with regulations and bylaws governing fishing activities, and raising fishermen's awareness of the importance of preserving this resource.

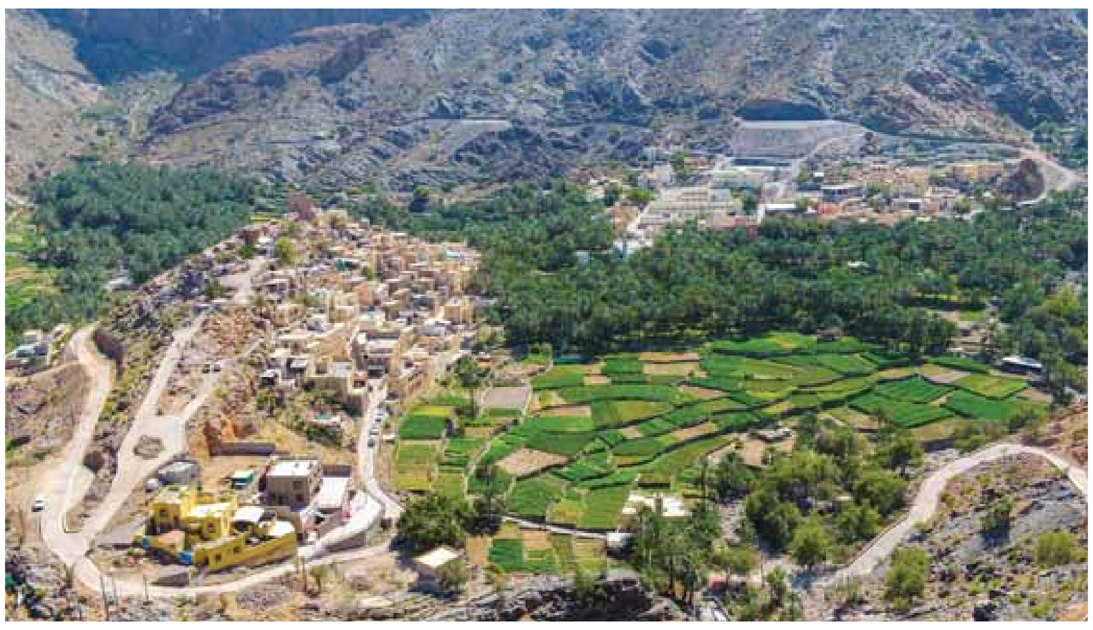
Fishermen, fish transporters, companies, and establishments involved in catching, transporting, purchasing, selling, trading, and exporting kingfish are required to refrain from catching, possessing, transporting, purchasing, selling, storing, freezing, trading, or exporting kingfish throughout the ban period. The Ministry also obligated individuals and companies holding quantities of kingfish to register them with the competent authority in accordance with the procedures and controls specified in the executive regulations.

The regulation of the kingfish fishing season reflects a direction toward managing fisheries resources on the basis of sustainability, balancing current economic activity with preserving the fish stock's capacity to replenish, and promoting the continuity of the resource for future generations, particularly given the production value represented by kingfish within the fisheries economy system in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Ministry emphasises that the commitment of all parties to the ban period constitutes an essential element in protecting fish stocks and ensuring the sustainability of kingfish fisheries, as well as avoiding legal procedures resulting against violators. — ONA

Over OMR471 million housing finance provided in South Al Batinah, Al Buraimi

These figures reflect the Oman Housing Bank's developmental impact in supporting the construction of new housing, stimulating urban movement, and revitalising economic sectors associated with building and construction, in alignment with the targets of Oman Vision 2040 to enhance quality of life and achieve sustainable urban development



A'RUSTAQ / AL BURAIMI: The total value of housing finances provided by the Oman Housing Bank in South Al Batinah Governorate until mid-June 2026 reached more than OMR364.4 million, benefiting over 10,000 Omani families across various wilayats of the governorate.

Figures issued by Oman Housing Bank also indicated that the total financial value of housing finances provided by the bank's branch in Al Buraimi Governorate until mid-June 2026 exceeded OMR106.9 million.

These figures reflect the bank's developmental impact in the governorate by supporting the construction of new housing, stimulating urban movement, and revitalising economic sectors associated with building and construction, in alignment with the targets of Oman Vision 2040 to enhance quality of life and achieve sustainable urban development.

Moosa Masoud Al Jadeedi, CEO of Oman Housing Bank, emphasized in a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA) the bank's continued support for urban development in South Al Batinah Governorate through providing financing solutions that enable citizens to own their homes and enhance family and social stability.

He noted that statistics confirm the bank's success in accelerating the pace of financing and offering diverse options that meet citizens' aspirations.

He said that the bank is keen to provide an integrated system of financing solutions across various governorates by building strategic partnerships with real estate developers.

It has signed cooperation agreements with accredited developers currently numbering 11 real estate developers to execute integrated residential neighbourhood projects in the governorate, most notably the "Al Azm" neighbourhood project in the Wilayat of A'Rustaq, and the "Al Naseem" neighbourhood project in the Wilayat of Barka within the "Surouh" initiative.

He added that the bank offers citizens multiple advantages, most prominently obtaining financing without waiting in line, raising the financing ceiling to OMR80,000, and simplifying procedures through direct coordination with real estate developers and via the "Iskan" platform, which contributes to boosting housing supply and elevating project quality.

Regarding the performance of the "Iskan" programme, the CEO of Oman Housing Bank explained that since its launch in January 2024 until mid-June 2026, the program has achieved positive results, financing 8,731 Omani families with a total value exceeding OMR424 million across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, drawing on a strategic partnership with 11 conventional and Islamic banks to offer greater flexibility and accelerate the processing of applications.

He noted that the "Iskan" programme is considered one of the most prominent national projects that contributed to redesigning the journey of obtaining housing finance, raising procedural efficiency, and reducing waiting periods, in line with the targets of digital transformation and "Oman Vision 2040."

As for Al Buraimi Governorate, the CEO of Oman Housing Bank pointed out in a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the financing provided by the bank enabled more than 2,900 Omani families to build or own their private residences, noting that reducing the waiting period to obtain loans from four years to just six months represented a fundamental turning point in the speed of meeting housing demands, enabling citizens to execute their housing projects in record time.

He explained that these finances directly contributed to driving urban development and enhancing family and community stability in the governorate's wilayats.

He mentioned that building new homes topped the list of beneficiaries' requests, followed by the option of purchasing new homes, and then financing land purchases.

He emphasised that the bank is keen to ensure a balanced distribution of financing services among the governorate's three wilayats and their affiliated villages, in accordance with approved eligibility criteria based on the principles of transparency and equal opportunity.

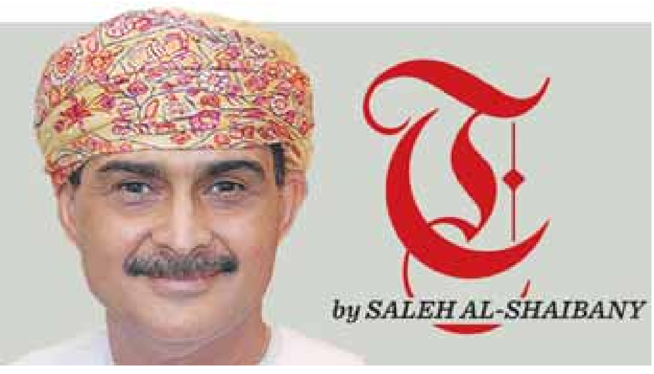
Regarding the tangible economic role of these finances, Moosa Masoud Al Jadeedi, CEO of the Oman Housing Bank, said that these finances contributed to revitalising the construction sector and its associated activities, including contracting companies, engineering offices, building material suppliers, and small and medium enterprises.

Concluding his statement, he emphasised that providing soft loans to low- and middle-income segments comes at the top of the bank's priorities to elevate quality of life and social welfare levels, in line with the national targets of Oman Vision 2040 to achieve sustainable development and balanced urban expansion.

— ONA

COMMENTARY

When children cross the line


by SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

I was watching two little girls stare at each other. One of them grabbed a toy and whacked it on the face of the other girl. She let out a scream. Her mother picked her up and looked in disgust at the four-year old little offender sitting at the floor.

The girl got a rapping on the fingers from her own mother as a punishment. I opened my big mouth as usual. Look at myself, I told the two mothers, my teachers put a permanent scar in me from the constant screams and caning that it left me with a stammer in my speech. How could small children learn to experiment and explore if they are constantly rapped on the fingers?

The mother probably did that to please the other woman but it was wrong. The second mother frowned because she could not find the wisdom in my words. The other girl could have scarred her daughter for life, she told me. How could a toddler scar anyone with a little hand? Perhaps the look of shock on everybody's faces in the room made her regret the choice of her words. She put her down next to the 'naughty' girl as a way of apology. We watched the two played happily completely forgetting their quarrel.

It was just the way children express themselves when they are left alone. Stopping them from exploiting their surrounding is limiting the development of their natural resources.

No wonder that we don't have rocket scientists in the Gulf. We don't let our kids develop their minds without us parents breathing hard down their necks. The power to express at will is educational as long as it does not leap the boundary of decency. The long hot summer means school holidays and time away from strict academic routine. So it is important to see if our children 'learn' something away from school during the break. If we stop them from taking a swim in the sea for the fear of drowning or riding a bike in case they fall, than we are taking away a huge chunk of their experience they never had.

On the other hand, if we raise hell or beat them up when we caught them smoking a cigarette instead of calmly explaining the health consequences, then we take the task of parenthood to the extreme. Children, in this day and age, do not need bullying. They rebel and you lose them for good. Let's look at their childhood and find answers for their behavior. If it was difficult for us then let's smooth out a few things for them. Let's look at the problem this way. There were fewer temptations when we were growing up and it was probably easy then to stay on the right side. Now, with Internet, dangerous sports and abundance of drugs, it is easy for them to rebel than not when they feel they have no room to express themselves.

What we need to do is keep the line of communication fully open all the times. The rest will take care of themselves, we hope. If they are going to stray then it is easy for them to come back for our help as long as the communication channel is always open.

TWO-DAY CONFERENCE

Forum focuses on ongoing rapid change in business environments

SALALAH: The 15th GCC Conference on Developing Human Resources Productivity opened on Sunday at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah.

The two-day conference is being held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar.

Naif bin Hamid Bait Fadhil, member of the conference's organising committee, said in a speech that the event takes the title "Quality of working life: Towards a stimulating work environment, sustainable productivity".

He explained that the conference's themes reflect a modern global trend affirming that productivity is no longer measured solely by the volume of outputs, but rather by the ability of institutions to foster a positive work culture and humane leadership, in addition to establishing a work environment that stimulates innovation, promotes sustainability and enhances competitiveness.

Global experiences proved that institutions that invest in the quality of working life achieve higher levels of productivity and have higher rates of innovation and lower employee turnover and burnout rates, said Bait Fadhil. He added that the findings show that such institutions become more capable of attracting talents and retaining them in a manner that directly influences the growth of the national economy.

The conference seeks to keep pace with ongoing rapid change in business environments and to contribute to the establishment of more competitive and sustainable institutions, said Bait Fadhil. This, he said, is achieved by outlining steps for shifting to smart work environments, measuring productivity indicators, promoting human leadership and highlighting the importance of mental health and job well-being as a fundamental pillar of sustainable productivity.

The conference is organised by Alassayel Company for Conferences, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, the Office of the Governor of Dhofar, and Dhofar Governorate's branch of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), in strategic partnership with OQ Basic Industries.

It aims to develop a practical roadmap for integrating job well-being with productivity and envisaging future work environments in view of the global digital transition drive.

The conference focuses on many themes, including the shift from a traditional work environment to a smart work environment, measuring basic indicators in work environments, stressing the impact of humane leadership, mental health and job well-being in boosting sustainable productivity. – ONA

Environment Authority conducts field surveys of coastal Masirah

The survey aims to evaluate the environmental condition of coasts, coastal wetlands and enhance the national biodiversity database

MASIRAH: The Environment Authority, represented by the Environment Center in the Wilayat of Masirah, South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, has commenced field survey work within the framework of two indicators of the Authority's operational targets for 2026.

These indicators relate to the number of field surveys of coastal marine ecosystems and the rate of safety of water connectivity between lagoons (khawrs) and the sea, aiming to evaluate the environmental condition of coasts and coastal wetlands and enhance the national biodiversity database.

The survey work also aims to provide accurate field data on beach characteristics, natural components, and environmental pressures they may be exposed to, thereby contributing to assessing their condition and identifying sites of environmental importance and priority in protection and management efforts.

In its first aspect, the field survey work involves conducting longitudinal beach surveys by dividing them into segments each four kilometres in length, and documenting the beach's nature and the proportions of its components. This is alongside monitoring coastal erosion indicators and recording biological and environmental observations at the sites, including mangroves and coastal plants, tracks and nesting signs of sea turtles, invertebrates, and birds, in addition to inventorying the types of waste present on the beaches.

In the second aspect, the survey work covers coastal wetlands, with a focus on evaluating the safety of water connectivity between lagoons and the sea by measuring several physical water indicators during high tide. This is alongside conducting hydrological measurements of the lagoons, including the width and depth of their openings, the extent of tidal movement impact, and the percentage of tide water reaching inside the lagoon, in addition to documenting biodiversity components at the sites covered by the survey work.

Ghasi Hamad Al Farsi, Supervisor of the Environmental Control Unit at the Environment Authority Center in the Wilayat of Masirah, said that these surveys represent one of the important scientific foundations for assessing the environmental condition of coastal ecosystems and providing field information that contributes to identifying areas eligible for protection and guiding environmental management work based on actual data and results.

He added that the field team utilised sensing and aerial documentation technologies using an unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) to document the sites from above, monitor the extent of lagoons and their openings, mudflat areas, and the spread of mangroves, alongside defining beach erosion lines. He explained that aerial photos constitute a visual reference that can be relied upon for future comparisons and for tracking changes that may occur at the sites during coming seasons.

He noted that aerial photography operations are carried out according to controls and safe altitudes that take into account the nature of the sites and the sensitivity of wildlife, thereby minimizing the potential for disturbing birds and creatures present in coastal areas.

He stated that the Environment Center in the Wilayat of Masirah has introduced electronic field forms allowing teams to record data directly from the devices used in the survey, with the ability to operate without requiring a network connection, alongside automatically recording the geographic coordinates of the sites. – ONA

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

TAX INVOICES IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT

Project implementation to proceed in two phases

< FROM A1

The implementation will proceed in two phases: the first phase, commencing on 1 April 2027, will cover companies with annual supplies exceeding OMR5 million; the second phase, commencing on 1 October 2027, will cover companies with annual supplies below this threshold.

He further stated that the Tax Authority has selected 100 companies to participate voluntarily in the pilot phase of the project, which will launch at the end of this August, with the aim of testing the system and assessing its readiness. He noted that a number of participating companies have already begun early preparations for system implementation, commending their cooperation with the Authority during the pilot phase.

He affirmed that the project will yield direct benefits for the end consumer by enhancing the reliability of tax invoices and enabling consumers to verify their authenticity—thereby reinforcing trust in commercial transactions and safeguarding consumer rights—alongside promoting transparency between sellers and buyers.

He clarified that the electronic invoice must be issued through an electronic system linked to an e-invoicing service provider accredited by the Tax Authority, and must be secure and verifiable, containing all the mandatory data stipulated in the Value-Added Tax Law and its Regulations, in addition to the technical requirements specified by the Authority. He noted that accredited service providers offer technical support to companies to align their systems with the approved requirements.

He stated that the e-invoicing project represents a paradigm shift in the development of tax administration through the digitalisation of invoice issuance and exchange processes, improved data quality, enhanced tax compliance, and data-driven decision-making based on accurate and secure information—all of which contribute to enhancing the efficiency of the tax system.

He added that the project is one of the national initiatives supporting Oman Vision 2040 and the National Digital Transformation Strategy; it contributes to the digitalisation of government procedures, enhances system integration, develops digital services, and improves the efficiency of government service delivery using the latest technologies, in addition to providing economic data and statistics that support the formulation of policies and economic strategies. – ONA

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IN PICTURES

HM THE SULTAN PAYS PRIVATE VISIT TO SHEIKH TAMIM

Youth-led projects in Wadi Darbat boost tourism in Khareef Dhofar

This contributes to economic vitality, provides seasonal employment opportunities and supports entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism

TAQA: Wadi Darbat in Dhofar Governorate is witnessing growing economic and tourism activity during the 2026 Khareef Dhofar (monsoon) season, driven by Omani youth-led projects that have successfully leveraged the valley's unique natural assets to offer diverse tourism services and experiences.

This contributes to economic vitality, provides seasonal employment opportunities and supports entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism. These projects are distributed across hospitality facilities, rural rest houses, tourist chalets, cafés, watercraft services, and adventure tourism, in addition to environmental conservation initiatives and the promotion of Omani handicrafts and heritage products.

This has contributed to raising the quality of services provided to visitors arriving from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman and from abroad.

A number of project owners in Wadi Darbat told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the increasing demand during the Khareef season has served as an incentive to expand their investments and develop their services, in line with the sustained growth in tourism traffic and the year-on-year increase in visitor numbers to Dhofar Governorate.

Salim Mohammed Al Mashani, owner of the Reef Darbat Rest House project, explained that the project aims to embody Omani rural identity through a design inspired by the local environment, using natural materials such as wood and clay, in addition to showcasing heritage products including ghee, honey, pottery, and traditional crafts. This contributes to supporting artisans and family businesses and promoting community-based tourism.

Said Mahad Al Mashani, owner of the "Darbat Chalets" project, noted that the project has evolved from just three chalets at its launch five years ago into an integrated tourism destination offering online booking services, meal provision, and upgraded facilities and interior décor, alongside providing employment opportunities for Omani talent and a commitment to cultivating native plants and environmental conservation.

In the food and beverage sector, Hamid Alawi Ba Omar, owner of the "Molo Darbat" café, explained that the café—which opened in 2022—has become one of the valley's premier tourism destinations, thanks to its integrated experience combining nature with modern services. Its design has also made it a favourite spot for photography enthusiasts and content creators, thereby contributing to the destination's promotion across social media platforms.

Mohammed Mohsen Al Maamari, owner of "Darbat Park Boats" project, stated that the project began with just three boats in 2008 and has since expanded to over 85 boats, operated by 48 employees—33 of whom are Omani nationals.

He noted that the expansion has included the development of hospitality facilities and the establishment of a modern café, helping to accommodate the growing number of visitors and reduce waiting times. In the adventure tourism sector, Eng. Abdul Hakim Amer Al Mashani, co-founder of Dhofar Tourism and Investment Company, affirmed that the "Zip Line" project—launched in 2022—has undergone continuous development phases. This year, the project aims to implement four launch lines and four return lines, providing approximately 72 seasonal job opportunities and reinforcing Dhofar Governorate's position as a preferred destination for adventure tourism, with a focus on qualifying national talent to manage and operate the project.

These initiatives represent a successful model of youth-led investment in Wadi Darbat's natural and tourism assets, transforming them into sustainable economic projects that stimulate tourism activity, diversify income sources, and create employment opportunities—thereby fulfilling key aspects of the Sultanate of Oman's developmental, economic, and tourism objectives. -ONA

5TH EDITION

RIA organises Research Skills Forum

MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Arab Open University in the Sultanate of Oman, the Research and Innovation Authority (RIA) is organizing the 5th edition of the Research Skills Forum.

The forum, which began on Sunday and will run until 20 August 2026, sees the participation of 100 male and female researchers from among postgraduate students in higher education institutions in Oman.

Dr. Nisreen Yahya Al Balushi, In-Charge of the Department of Research and Innovation Capacity Building at the RIA, pointed out that the forum stems from efforts to upgrade the skills of postgraduate students and empower them in line with the priorities of Oman Vision 2040 in supporting scholarly research and innovation.

Dr. Nisreen explained that the 5th edition of the forum focuses on advanced analysis of statistical data, in implementation of a strategy to boost the efficiency the researchers to deal with data, interpret data and raise the quality of the research outputs in a manner that qualifies them for publication in scientific peer-reviewed journals.

For his part, Dr. Hamad Hilal Al Yahmadi, Dean of the College of Education at the Arab Open University in the Sultanate of Oman, said, stressed the need to maintain the strategic partnership with the RIA, in response to postgraduate students' need to use modern statistical tools and develop their research skills. -ONA

AL DAKHILIYAH

'Rummana' season opens in Jabal Akhdar

JABAL AKHDAR: The fourth edition of the "Rummana" season opened on Saturday at Janain Farm in the village of Saih Qatna in Jabal Akhdar, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

Running until September 2026, the seasonal event offers visitors an agricultural tourism experience featuring the opportunity to explore the farm and pick fresh figs and pomegranates directly from the trees during their harvest season. Organised by Tibi Company and Janain Agricultural Tourism Development Company, in partnership with Omran Group, the event seeks to promote sustainable agricultural tourism, support rural communities and make greater use of the agricultural assets of Green Mountain. The event features a plant nursery showcasing local species, an Omani heritage corner displaying traditional products, a café and a platform offering fresh local products made from produce grown in the Green Mountain.

Amjad bint Khalid Al Maawali, CEO of Tibi Company, said the fourth edition builds on the success of previous seasons and reflects the company's efforts to create authentic agricultural tourism experiences connected to the land, its seasons and Omani heritage.

She noted that new experiences are introduced each year, ranging from fruit picking and discovering local products.

DIGITAL TRANSITION

Workshop discusses future of electronic invoicing

MUSCAT: A workshop was held in Muscat on Sunday about the future of electronic invoicing and the readiness of companies for the next stage of digital transition in the Sultanate of Oman.

The workshop brought together a select group of business leaders and specialists from the financial and technological sectors.

Idrees Al Rashidi, E-Invoicing Project Manager at the Tax Authority, presented a working paper on regulatory developments related to e-invoicing in the Sultanate of Oman.

He stressed the importance of companies' furnishing environments for the next stage of digital transition.

The workshop included two dialogue sessions, the first of which underscored the significance of drawing out a roadmap for electronic invoicing and regulatory requirements.

It discussed the role of various parties in supporting company readiness.

The second dialogue session focused on examples of practical experiences of companies, the challenges of implementation of e-invoicing and the importance of providing flexible technological solutions that help organizations achieve compliance smoothly.

The workshop concluded with an open discussion session during which the participants exchanged experiences, while the organisers answered the queries of companies about the future of electronic invoicing in the Sultanate of Oman.

The workshop was organized by InvoiceQ company in cooperation with Tasdeed company, with the aim of providing integrated electronic billing solutions that help companies connect with their existing systems, in addition to streamlining procedures, achieving compliance with changing regulatory requirements and enabling Omani companies to prepare for the next stage of electronic invoicing. -ONA

ASTRONOMICAL EVENTS

Perseid meteor shower to light up Oman's skies

MUSCAT: The skies over the Sultanate of Oman are currently witnessing the annual Perseid meteor shower, one of the most spectacular astronomical events of the year, with the phenomenon visible to the naked eye from dark locations away from artificial lights.

According to the Oman News Agency, the Perseids will continue until August 24, reaching their peak on the night of August 12–13, when observers under ideal conditions could see 80 to 100 meteors per hour.

Ashwaq Nasser Al Siyabi, Vice Chair of the Member Affairs Committee at Oman Astronomical Society, explained that meteor showers occur as Earth passes through streams of debris left behind by comets.

The Perseids originate from Comet Swift-Tuttle, which completes an orbit around the Sun approximately every 133 years. As Earth crosses the comet's debris trail, tiny particles enter the atmosphere at speeds of up to

59 kilometres per second, heating up through collisions with air molecules and producing the bright streaks visible across the night sky.

Al-Siyabi noted that the Perseids are particularly known for producing fireballs, exceptionally bright meteors that can outshine ordinary meteors.

The best viewing period is after midnight and before dawn, when the Perseid radiant in the constellation Perseus is higher above the northeastern horizon. Observers are advised to choose open, elevated locations far from buildings, trees and artificial lights and allow their eyes at least 20 minutes to adjust to the darkness. This year's peak offers particularly favourable conditions because it coincides with a new moon, meaning there will be virtually no moonlight to interfere with observations. This should allow even relatively faint meteors to be seen more clearly.

Those who miss the peak can still observe the shower on August 14, although meteor activity will gradually decline after the peak.

The Perseids can also be observed alongside other celestial objects, including Saturn and the bright star Capella, offering additional opportunities for astrophotographers.

Al-Siyabi stressed that no special equipment is required to enjoy the Perseids. A dark location, clear skies and patience are sufficient to experience one of the year's most impressive natural astronomical displays. – ONA

ILLEGAL ENTRY AND DRUG SMUGGLING

Six Asians arrested

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The law enforcing agencies of Oman has apprehended six Asian nationals in a series of operations involving illegal entry and drug smuggling.

In North Al Batinah Governorate, a Coastal Guard Police Unit intercepted a boat carrying three Asian nationals near the shores of Shinas while they were allegedly attempting to enter the country illegally. The suspects were also found carrying a quantity of marijuana.

In a separate operation, the Coast Guard Command apprehended three other Asian nationals on a beach in Quriyat Governorate as they were allegedly attempting to enter Oman illegally and smuggle more than 66 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine into the country for the purpose of trafficking.

To Whomsoever It May Concern


Bijoy T. Daniel

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FAO

Food prices rise amid supply disruptions

ROME: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has reported an increase in global food prices during July, driven primarily by rising prices of cereals, sugar, and vegetable oils, while meat and dairy product prices declined.

The Organization indicated that the average FAO Food Price Index stood at 131.1 points in July, marking a 0.6 per cent increase compared with June. It noted that disruptions to export flows in the Black Sea region, coupled with the impact of heatwaves on crops, contributed to the upward price movement.

The Cereal Price Index rose by 3.4 per cent, driven largely by higher wheat prices amid damage to export infrastructure in the Black Sea region, as well as the effects of heatwaves on crops in several major producing countries.

The Vegetable Oil Price Index recorded a 2 per cent increase, reaching its highest level since June 2022, driven by higher palm oil and soybean oil prices.

In contrast, the Meat Price Index declined by 2.8 per cent, while the Dairy Price Index fell by 0.7 per cent.

The Sugar Price Index also rose by 5.6 per cent, influenced by concerns over the impact of hot and dry weather on crops in key producing regions. -ONA

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Iran could play a constructive role in regional cooperation: Turkish minister

Fidan said Riyadh had conveyed to the United States that military intervention against Iran would not provide a solution and favoured resolving the issue through dialogue and an agreement

ANKARA: Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the recently signed Mecca Joint Defence Agreement between Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is not directed against Iran, stressing that the alliance is defensive in nature and is not intended to attack or eliminate any country.

During an interview with Anadolu Agency on Saturday, Fidan said Saudi Arabia had no strategy to attack or eliminate Iran and instead wanted an end to the violence surrounding the Strait of Hormuz.

Fidan said Riyadh had conveyed to the United States that military intervention against Iran would not provide a solution and favoured resolving the issue through dialogue and an agreement.

He added that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had reiterated the position during their recent meeting in Mecca and that the same message had been conveyed during discussions with US President Donald Trump.

"You have to be deterrent enough not to be attacked. But problems need to be managed in different ways," Fidan told Anadolu Agency.

Fidan said the Saudi-Iran issue could not be viewed merely as a dispute between the two countries, arguing that the involvement of the United States and Israel had also contributed to the emergence of the problem.

He said Turkiye had been discussing regional issues with Iranian officials for more than two years and maintained that Iran could play a constructive role in regional cooperation once it addressed its regional challenges.

"Two years ago -- we have been discussing this in the region. There were also periods when we discussed these issues with the Iranians. When Iran solves its own problems in the region, when it needs to contribute to the region's constructive policies and enter that collective sphere, their role is also needed. We always tell them this; the Iranians are not unfamiliar with this issue," Fidan said.

The Turkish Foreign Minister stated that the agreement does not identify any specific country as a common threat and rejected suggestions that Iran was the target of the arrangement.

"There is no common threat that we have put in writing," Fidan said, adding that the agreement does not target any country that does not attack its signatories.

He said Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were not expansionist countries and that their foreign policy positions were focused on their borders, domestic challenges, development and positive relations with neighbouring countries.

"Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye, when you look at their foreign policy positions, are not countries that have expansionist policies. They are countries concerned with their own borders, their own problems and their development, and, if possible, they want to contribute positively to their environment through good relations and good neighbourliness," he said.

Fidan said the three countries have different capabilities and approaches but that their coming together would result in a defence-orientated organisation rather than an offensive alliance.

"Now, when we come together with these countries, naturally we are becoming a defence-orientated organisation. It is not an approach of going on the offensive and saying, 'Let's do this or that together.' Therefore, unless it is attacked by a country, whether from inside or outside the region, this alliance cannot have any dispute with any country. But, of course, the power composition we have put forward will make a constructive contribution to regional stability," he added.

Fidan also said the agreement had been examined from legal, political and strategic perspectives and that Turkiye saw no issue with its framework.

The Foreign Minister further compared the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement to NATO's Article 5 on collective defence, noting that it was technically similar, under which an armed attack against one member is treated as an attack against all.

He said Turkiye's experience as a NATO member since 1952 would provide an important reference for the new alliance, particularly in terms of deterrence and institutional practices.

Fidan said the alliance would draw lessons from existing models, with NATO providing the most significant example of a large-scale and enduring defence organisation.

He explained that the pact's collective defence mechanism would require practical decisions by the alliance's relevant political and military bodies if a member were attacked.

According to Fidan, a country facing an attack would need to request assistance and determine the kind of support it required. Such assistance could include intelligence, logistics, ammunition or, depending on the scale of the threat, military units.

He said the alliance would have political and military committees comprising foreign and defence ministers and chiefs of general staff. These bodies would translate decisions taken by the leaders into measures within the alliance, while a secretariat would oversee implementation.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement on Friday amid escalating tensions and conflict across West Asia.

The agreement seeks to strengthen defence cooperation and collective deterrence among the three countries. According to the summit statement, an armed attack against any one of the three signatories would be regarded as an attack against all three.

"The Agreement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression, and stipulates that any armed attack against any one of the three States shall be regarded as an attack against them all. It further provides for the enhancement of all aspects of defence cooperation among the three States," the summit statement said.

While the pact does not specify detailed operational or military commitments, it establishes a framework for enhanced defence cooperation and identifies peace, stability and security in the region and beyond as its broader objectives.

Fidan said the initiative had been under discussion before the current conflict environment and that Turkiye had anticipated changes in regional security dynamics and the continued importance of counterterrorism.

He said the agreement was intended to create greater deterrence and mutual security commitments among the signatories, rather than serve as an instrument for offensive military action.

"The Mecca Agreement is the most important step toward bringing lasting stability to this region," Fidan said.

Fidan also said the alliance could eventually be expanded beyond the three founding members.

"Under our president's vision, we should not remain limited to three countries. We should grow and, if necessary, bring all countries under this umbrella," he said. -ANI

IOF

73,380 Palestinians killed, 174,250 injured since October 2023

GAZA: The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) killed at least 73,386 Palestinian civilians and injured at least 174,250 others since the beginning of the genocide that the Israeli occupation has been committing against the Gaza Strip in October 2023.

Palestinian medical sources reported today that hospitals across the Strip received two Palestinian martyrs and eight injured others over the past 24 hours.

The sources indicated that many of the victims remain under the rubble and scattered on the streets, as ambulance and civil defense crews are still unable to reach them. Since the "ceasefire" agreement went into effect in October 2025, the IOF murdered at least 1,258 Palestinians, and injured at least 4,139 others, while 807 bodies were pulled out from under the rubble.

Colonists cut down dozens of fruit trees in Jenin-area village

Israeli colonists cut down dozens of guava and avocado trees overnight on Palestinian-owned land in the village of Khirbet Farasin, located west of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, according to local sources.

The sources told WAFA that the land belongs to Palestinian farmer Raed Ahmad Amarnah, adding that some of the trees were around 10 years old. The colonists deliberately targeted the trees under cover of darkness, as part of ongoing attacks on the area's agricultural land.

The latest attack was not the first, the sources said, noting that colonists cut down hundreds of trees in the area during the previous agricultural season. They added that the trees are often deliberately targeted shortly before their harvest season, depriving Palestinian landowners of their crops and agricultural income.

The village has faced repeated attacks by colonists from the nearby Israeli settlement of Hermesh, including attacks targeting agricultural land, trees and farmers, amid escalating attacks on Palestinian property and livelihoods.

Israel lays foundation stone for new colonial settlement southwest of Jenin

Israeli ministers, Knesset members and officials on Sunday laid the foundation stone for a new Israeli settlement, named Emek Dotan, on lands belonging to the town of Arraba, southwest of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, in a further escalation of Israel's settlement expansion in the region.

Jenin Governorate's settlement affairs official Tareq Eghbariyeh told WAFA that the establishment of the new settlement, with the participation of Israeli ministers, Knesset members and other officials, represents a dangerous escalation targeting Palestinian land and aimed at tightening restrictions on the local population and creating new facts on the ground, ultimately forcing Palestinians from their homes.

He said the settlement projects violate international law and form part of Israeli efforts to impose sovereignty and annexation over large areas of the occupied West Bank, particularly its northern areas and Jenin Governorate.

Around 22 Israeli colonist families participated in the foundation-stone ceremony alongside Israeli ministers, Knesset members and officials, reflecting official political support for settlement expansion in the area.

The new settlement is located in the Arraba area and its plain, one of Jenin Governorate's most fertile agricultural areas, encompassing extensive lands on which Palestinians depend for farming and their livelihoods. -Agencies

DIPLOMATIC DIALOGUE

Indian envoy set to meet Bangladesh PM Tarique

DHAKA: Amid escalating diplomatic friction between Dhaka and New Delhi, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi is scheduled to meet Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Monday for an important meeting.

The diplomatic dialogue unfolds after a virtual press interaction by former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi on August 5 triggered strong objections from Dhaka.

During her address, Hasina stated that she remains resolute about returning to her homeland in December to put the nation on the "right track" by restoring democracy, despite acknowledging the risk of imprisonment or a death sentence upon her return.

In a swift response, Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs registered a strong protest and condemned the statements, noting that the incident impacted public sentiment and complicated efforts to enhance bilateral cooperation.

Addressing reporters after inaugurating a Children's Corner at the Indian Visa Application Centre in Dhaka, Indian High Commissioner Trivedi highlighted the strength of leadership on both sides.

"The Prime Minister of Bangladesh... we all respect him a lot. I have listened to his speeches many times, and he talks from his heart. This, I have seen. He is a people's person. And our Prime Minister is also of the people," Trivedi said.

Emphasising the value of direct diplomatic engagement, the envoy expressed optimism regarding constructive dialogue between the two nations.

"I feel that when... when two leaders meet, a lot of problems are solved. Problems are sorted out when we talk to each other. And I have full confidence that people are together, and a solution will definitely happen... it will happen. I am very confident. There is nothing negative here; everything is positive," Trivedi stated.

Trivedi, a senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader holding Union minister status, arrived in Dhaka on June 12 as India's High Commissioner. His upcoming interaction with Rahman, while structured as a courtesy call, is viewed as a key engagement given the prevailing diplomatic context.

The development follows India's invitation to Prime Minister Rahman to attend the upcoming BRICS Summit in September in his capacity as current chair of BIMSTEC, though Dhaka is yet to formally announce its decision regarding attendance.

Clarifying its position, India's Ministry of External Affairs stated on August 7 that New Delhi had no involvement in Hasina's media event and does not endorse statements made regarding the Bangladeshi administration.

Following the political transition in Dhaka in August 2024, a special tribunal in November 2025 issued a verdict against Hasina in absentia concerning the 2024 unrest.

While bilateral engagement experienced a cautious recalibration after Rahman's administration assumed office in February, both sides continue to engage through formal diplomatic channels to navigate shared regional priorities and maintain stable neighbourhood ties. -ANI

Fire extinguished at Saudi's Aramco facility in Jazan after suspected attack

The development came amid reports from regional sources that Saudi energy infrastructure had been targeted

RIYADH: A fire that broke out at dawn on Sunday at a Saudi Aramco facility in the country's southwestern region of Jazan was extinguished by the company's industrial security firefighting teams, with Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Energy reporting no injuries in the incident.

The ministry said the fire occurred at one of the facilities belonging to the Saudi Aramco refinery in the region, adding that competent authorities were carrying out the necessary procedures to deal with the incident.

"Industrial Security Firefighting Teams affiliated with Saudi Aramco extinguished a fire that broke out at dawn on Sunday, corresponding to 26/2/1448 AH, in one of the facilities belonging to the Saudi Aramco Refinery in Jazan, with no injuries," the Saudi Ministry of Energy said in a post on X. The ministry did not immediately specify the cause of the fire.

"The competent authorities are completing the necessary procedures to deal with the incident," the post added.

The development came amid reports from regional sources that Saudi energy infrastructure had been targeted.

Anadolu Agency reported that a loud explosion was heard in the Jubail region, while Iranian state media Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), citing Arab sources, reported that gas facilities in Jubail Industrial City had been targeted and caught fire.

The cause of the reported blast remained unclear, and there was no immediate confirmation linking the Jubail incident to the fire in Jazan.

Jazan, located in southwestern Saudi Arabia on the Red Sea close to the border with Yemen, is home to Saudi Aramco's integrated refinery and petrochemical complex, making the area strategically important to the Kingdom's energy infrastructure.

The latest incident also follows a statement by Yemen's Houthis in late July on Telegram that it had carried out missile and drone operations against Aramco-affiliated facilities in Jazan and Yanbu.

Houthi military spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Saree Qasim Saree said the group had targeted sensitive Aramco facilities in Jazan with ballistic missiles and drones and facilities in Yanbu with ballistic and cruise missiles as well as drones.

The group in the July 27 statement took responsibility for attacks targeting Saudi oil-transport infrastructure linking the country's eastern oil-producing region with the Red Sea export hub of Yanbu.

The reports come against the backdrop of renewed tensions between Saudi Arabia and the Iran-aligned Houthi movement, which announced a naval blockade of Riyadh in the Red Sea, particularly along the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, last month, citing Saudi blockade of Yemen--a claim that Riyadh had rejected.

Houthis claim responsibility for attack in Jazan

Yemen's Houthi group on Sunday claimed responsibility for an attack on a Saudi Aramco facility in Jazan, saying it targeted the site with a drone and achieved a "precise strike". The claim was made by Houthi military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree in a statement on Telegram, in which he said the group had "successfully targeted the Aramco refinery in Jazan with a drone, achieving a precise strike."

According to Saree, the attack was carried out in response to what the Houthis described as Saudi drone incursions into the airspace over Yemen's Saada and Hajjah governorates.

"This attack comes in response to the Saudi enemy's drone incursions into the airspace of Saada and Hajjah governorates," the statement added.

The latest statement also follows an earlier remark by Houthis in late July on Telegram that it had carried out ballistic missile and drone strikes against Aramco-affiliated facilities in Jazan and Yanbu.

The speculation over Saudi energy facilities coming under enemy attack comes days after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey signed the "Mecca Joint Defence Agreement" on Friday, amid escalating tensions and conflict across West Asia.

The agreement, formalised against the backdrop of mounting regional security threats, seeks to strengthen defence and military cooperation among the three countries and bolster their collective deterrence.

"The Agreement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression, and stipulates that any armed attack against any one of the three States shall be regarded as an attack against them all. It further provides for the enhancement of all aspects of defence cooperation among the three States," the summit statement said.

While the pact does not specify detailed military obligations or operational commitments, it establishes a framework for enhanced defence cooperation and identifies the promotion of peace, stability and security in the region and beyond as its broader objective. -ANI

IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

'No direct talks with US, exchange of messages through intermediaries'

TEHRAN: Iran is not currently engaged in direct negotiations with the United States, while messages between the two sides are being exchanged through intermediaries, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday.

According to his statement carried by Iranian state media, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), Araghchi said that several countries were continuing efforts to create conditions for the resumption of negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

"We are not currently negotiating with the United States; the exchange of messages takes place through intermediaries," Araghchi said, as quoted by IRIB.

The Iranian Foreign Minister said some intermediary countries were still working to create the groundwork for renewed negotiations but maintained that Tehran would not return to direct talks with the US until Washington ends its violations of the 14-point memorandum of understanding signed between the two sides in June.

"Some intermediary countries are still trying to re-establish the ground for negotiations. In our opinion, there is no possibility of resuming negotiations until the US's violation of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding ends and the US makes up for what it has violated," the Foreign Minister added.

Earlier on Saturday, Araghchi said that the deal with Oman on a legal mechanism for managing traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is "very close", but reopening the strategic waterway will be subject to additional conditions, including compensation from the US over the latter's violations of the memorandum.

Speaking at the Iranian President's press conference, Araghchi said negotiations with Oman were focused on determining a new route for maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, adding that the two sides were close to reaching an agreement.

"Negotiations with Oman regarding the legal mechanism and management of the Strait of Hormuz regarding determining the route of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz are underway, and we are very close to an agreement, but the opening of the Strait of Hormuz is subject to other conditions, including compensation for violations of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding by the United States," Araghchi said.

The Iranian Foreign Minister said a previously used traffic separation scheme (TSS) through the Strait was no longer acceptable to Tehran and that a new route would need to be established.

"In the past, there was a TSS or route that the Islamic Republic considers no longer acceptable for ship traffic, and it is necessary to consider a new TSS, which, of course, has extensive technical and legal complexities," he added.

The statement comes as a US official stated on Friday that progress has been made in talks between Iran and Oman, which could lead to the reopening of the strategic Strait of Hormuz and restore oil exports disrupted by the five-month-old conflict.

Reuters, citing the US official speaking on the condition of anonymity, noted that Washington expects an agreement shortly between Iran and Oman, the two nations bordering the waterway, allowing standard commercial oil shipments to resume.

"There is progress between Oman and Iran on the strait, and we expect a deal soon. Once the deal is announced to restore commercial shipping without impediments, the United States will lift the blockade of Iranian ports," the official said, as quoted by Reuters. -ANI

INDIA'S GESTURE

Another Bailey Bridges consignment handed over to Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: India handed over another consignment of Bailey Bridges weighing over 250 metric tonnes (MT) to Sri Lanka as part of its USD 450 million reconstruction package following Cyclone Ditwah.

The Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka announced on X that a shipment weighing over 250 MT was delivered on Wednesday.

"Bridges that reconnect communities and rebuild lives. Another consignment of Bailey Bridges, weighing over 250 MT, has been handed over to Sri Lanka on 08 August 2026 as part of India's USD 450 million reconstruction package in the wake of Cyclone Ditwah. Indian Army engineers will install them across the island, helping restore vital connectivity and strengthen infrastructure," the post read.

Earlier on Thursday, India handed over a fresh consignment of Bailey bridges weighing over 250 metric tonnes to Sri Lanka.

The handover took place during an official ceremony where India's Deputy High Commissioner, Maitrey K, transferred the infrastructure materials to Sri Lanka's Deputy Minister of Co-operative Development, Upali Samarasinghe.

The details were shared by the High Commission of India in Sri Lanka in a post on X.

"The next set of Bailey Bridges, weighing over 250 MT, was handed over today by the Deputy High Commissioner @Maitrey_K to Hon. Upali Samarasinghe, Deputy Minister of Co-operative Development Sri Lanka. Part of India's USD 450 million reconstruction package, these bridges will be installed across Sri Lanka by Indian Army engineers, restoring connectivity and supporting infrastructure development."

Reconstruction package

The supply of these bridges is a crucial component of India's expansive USD 450 million reconstruction package aimed at supporting regional development and rebuilding critical infrastructure across the island nation.

Once installed, the bridges will be constructed by Indian Army engineers, directly addressing transport bottlenecks and restoring vital connectivity to isolated communities.

The initiative underscores ongoing strategic and developmental cooperation between New Delhi and Colombo, focusing on swift infrastructure restoration and long-term socio-economic resilience. -Ani

GOOD HEALTH

Iran's Mehr News agency releases undated video of Khamenei

TEHRAN: Days after Israeli media claimed that Iran's Supreme Leader was in critical condition and had been rushed to a hospital, Iran's semi-official Mehr News agency released an undated video showing Mojtaba Khamenei appearing to be in good health.

The video of Mojtaba Khamenei was published for the first time by Mehr, a semi-official news agency sponsored by the government of Iran and run by the Iranian government's Islamic Development Organisation, as an effort to negate mounting speculation over Khamenei's health and whereabouts.

Earlier on Friday, Israeli media reports had claimed that Khamenei was in an "extremely critical condition". Channel 14, citing sources inside Iran, and an earlier report by The Jerusalem Post, quoting IranWire and sources close to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, reported that concerns over his health were circulating within Iran's leadership.

One source cited by The Jerusalem Post had claimed, "We would not be surprised if we heard news of his martyrdom soon."

Khamenei assumed the position of Supreme Leader shortly after his father Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was assassinated in joint US-Israeli military strikes on February 28. Since taking office, he has not made any public appearances and has communicated exclusively through written statements.

Reports indicate he was injured and potentially disfigured in the initial strikes that targeted his father's compound, forcing him into hiding and compelling him to communicate with senior regime figures through a slow network of intermediaries to avoid targeting.

Adding to the speculation surrounding his status, President Masoud Pezeshkian acknowledged in a state TV interview that direct interaction with Khamenei is currently "very difficult".

International and regional reports have repeatedly questioned his physical location and capacity.

In July, Saudi news outlet al-Hadath, citing an Israeli security source, claimed that Khamenei was "not in Iran."

Around the same time, US President Donald Trump asserted in a Fox News interview that Iran's top military leadership had been eliminated, claiming that Khamenei was "90% gone" and incapacitated following the military campaign.

Intense regional and international speculation

Iranian state officials have previously downplayed the severity of his initial injuries, but the persistent lack of live appearances or direct public addresses continues to fuel intense regional and international speculation regarding his health and leadership stability.

While Western and opposition intelligence sources have frequently suggested that he sustained severe or disfiguring injuries, leading to his total absence from live public appearances and reliance solely on written statements, Iranian state officials have offered contrasting accounts.

Representatives from Iran's Health Ministry previously characterised his initial injuries as superficial, and senior officials have maintained that he continues to provide strategic oversight and operational directives for the country.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on Saturday said the Strait of Hormuz will reopen only after the US "fully" accepts Iran's conditions, even as Tehran and Oman said they are "very close" to a new shipping protocol for the key waterway, Al Jazeera reported. -ANI

SPORTS

LANDMARK MOMENT

Kusal Mendis appointed inaugural president of Sri Lankan Professional Cricketers' Association

COLOMBO: The newly formed Sri Lankan Professional Cricketers' Association (SLPCA) was officially launched on Saturday, with men's white-ball captain Kusal Mendis appointed as its inaugural president.

Backed heavily by prominent stars like women's captain Chamari Athapaththu and all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga, the association has been established to serve as an independent and collective voice for professional cricketers in Sri Lanka.

"The formation of the SLPCA comes at a landmark time for Sri Lankan cricket, following a sustained period of positive progress and reform across the sport in the country, including the work of the game's transformation committee to strengthen governance and modernise the domestic structure," a media release said.

The launch comes amid a major phase of administrative upheaval, with Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) in the middle of a heavy reform process under a temporary, government-appointed cricket Transformation Committee.

The creation of a players association is the latest move towards modernising the game in the country, with a new constitution in the pipeline as well.

"Alongside the governance reforms and transformation work already underway, having a genuine, organised player voice is another important step toward a modern, collaborative game that is aligned with international best practice," the release added.

The SLPCA is directly affiliated with the World Cricketers' Association (WCA), the global federation for professional cricket players.

Historically, Sri Lankan players have lacked structured access to the WCA's international programmes, welfare safety nets, and global player-advocacy networks.

The alignment is already visible at the top tier of global cricket governance, with Athapaththu appointed to the WCA Player Advisory Board earlier this year.

Prior to this, Sri Lanka was one of the few prominent cricket boards alongside India (BCCI) and Pakistan (PCB) that did not formally recognise or affiliate with the WCA.

By launching the SLPCA, Sri Lanka will now mirror highly successful player associations like the Australian Cricketers' Association, England's Professional Cricketers' Association, and the New Zealand Cricket Players' Association.

With tensions over the years having repeatedly flared between SLC and the players, such as earlier this year with regard to no-objection certificates and mandatory physical fitness testing requirements to play in commercial leagues like the IPL, the SLPCA now offers a centralised body to negotiate these scheduling and career-flexibility conflicts.

Sarfaraz called up for Sri Lanka Test series

India named the middle-order batter as Sai Sudhasarn's replacement for the two matches

MUMBAI: India on Sunday named middle-order batter Sarfaraz Khan as replacement for the injured B Sai Sudharsan for the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka.

Sai Sudharsan, who was ruled out with a right toe stress reaction, has been at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru and has made "significant progress in his recovery", according to a BCCI statement.

Sarfaraz last played a Test in 2024, the year in which he also made his debut. He has played six Tests so far, scoring 371 runs, including one century and three fifties. Although he was part of India's squad for the 2024-25 tour of Australia, he did not get a game and was subsequently left out of the squad for the England tour last year.

He was the third-highest run-getter for Mumbai in the 2025 Ranji Trophy season, with 429 runs in seven games at an average of 53.62. His first-class average of 64.73 is among the highest for players to have played at least 50 innings.

India have been hit by injuries ahead of the Sri Lanka tour, with several key players including Jasprit Bumrah and Washington Sundar ruled out.

Captain Shubman Gill did not bat in India's first innings in the tour game against Sri Lanka Cricket XI (SLC XI), but India's spin-bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule said the decision was precautionary.

Gill returned to bat in the second innings and contributed 44 off 54 balls, helping the visitors seal the chase on the final day.

"It was just a precaution more than anything else," Bahutule said after the end of the tour game.

"Gill has been absolutely fine and he's been training and the management decided we could just take the precaution of not putting him in the first day.

"The way he batted in the second innings was flawless and he's very much ready for the Test match."

The two-match Test series will start on August 15 in Galle, with the second Test scheduled from August 23 at the SSC in Colombo. It will be part of the WTC in which India currently sit in fifth spot after four wins and as many losses from nine games.

'No miscommunication'

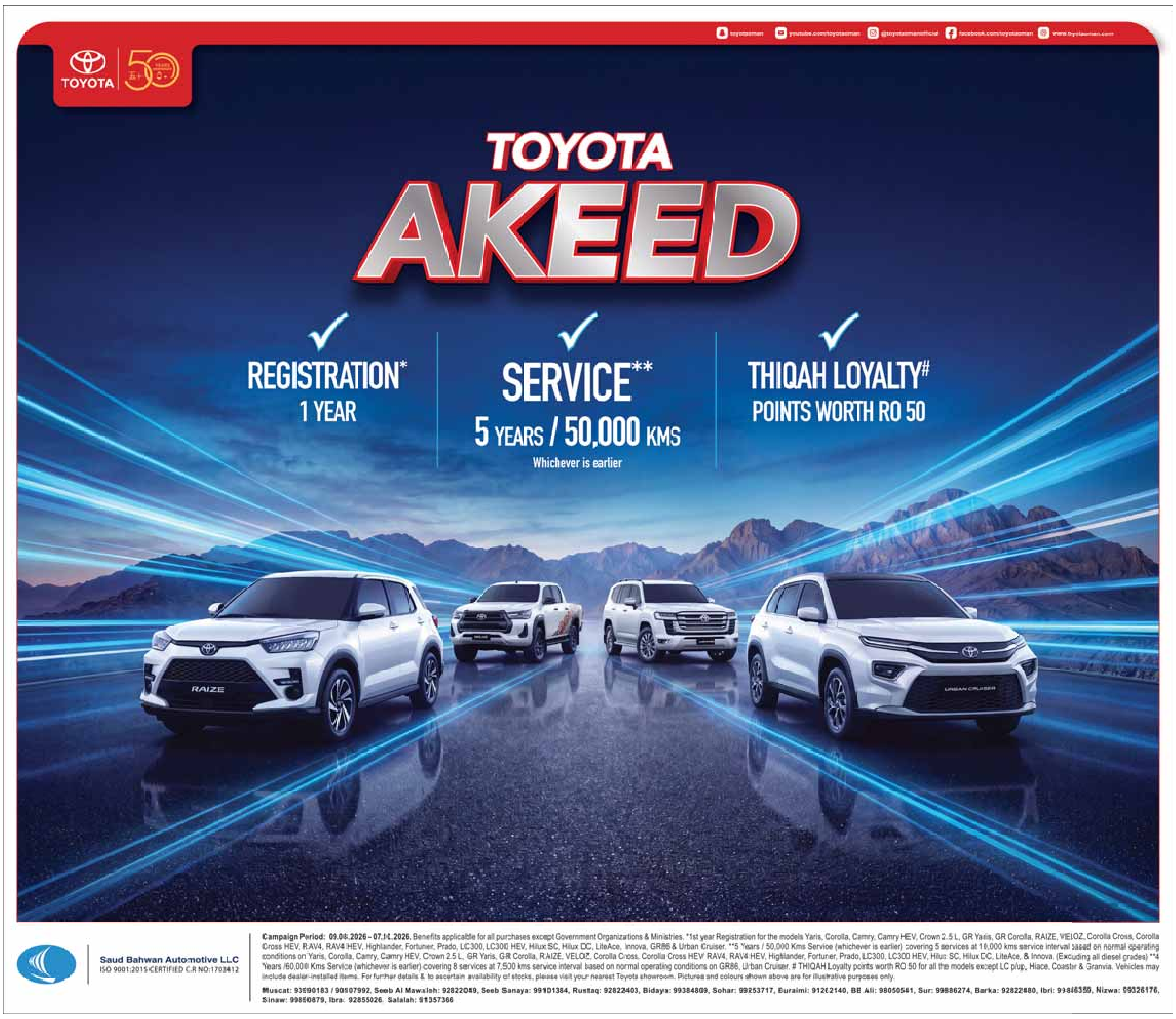
Meanwhile, VVS Laxman, head of the BCCI's Centre of Excellence, has quashed any talk of miscommunication between the CoE, team management and selectors over player management, while detailing the protocols they've set in stone.

India will be without at least three first-choice players - Jasprit Bumrah, Sai Sudharsan and Washington Sundar - for the Test series in Sri Lanka.

"There's a brilliant coordination between the COE, the team management of both the teams [men and women], the SSM [Sports Science & Medicine] staff and the selection committees, Laxman said.

"The process is that the selector [chairperson] reaches out to the COE asking for the fitness status report [of players]. And we collect the current status and send it to the selection committee chairperson, with a copy to the respective head coach and BCCI."

India squad: Shubman Gill (capt), KL Rahul, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant (wk), Dhruv Jurel (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Manav Suthar, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Gurnoor Brar, Devdutt Padikkal, Saransh Jain, Auqib Nabi, Sarfaraz Khan.



MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE

MSX TRADING VALUE SOARS

The value of securities traded on the Muscat Securities Exchange increased by 654.8% to reach OMR6.92 billion, while the total number of securities traded rose by 337.4% to 23.15 securities. >B2

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 7,395.55 points, up by 0.37% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.06% at 587.18 points. OMINVEST, up 8.97%, was the top gainer while, Oman Flour Mills, down 2.78%, was the top loser. >B2

Chairman's Statement | H1 2026

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I present the unaudited financial statements for Renaissance Services SAOG for the six-month period ended June 30, 2026.

This year has been marked by an unusually disruptive regional environment which affected business activity across several of the sectors we serve. While these conditions remain challenging, they are external in origin and have not altered the underlying fundamentals of our business or the long-term demand for our services.

Throughout this period, Renaissance remained focused on those areas within our control, maintaining strict cost discipline while actively working on supply chain resilience and mitigating inflationary pressures. We moved ahead with key strategic initiatives including sustainability, digitalisation and the responsible adoption of AI. These priorities position the company well to benefit when operating conditions improve.

Financial Performance

RS Consolidated

	﷼ mn		USD mn	
	6-month period ended		6-month period ended	
	June 2026	June 2025	**June 2026**	June 2025
Revenue	**52.89**	55.27	**137.38**	143.56
EBITDA	**6.33**	8.85	**16.44**	22.97
Operating profit	**1.92**	4.32	**4.99**	11.23
Net profit after tax	**0.36**	2.10	**0.94**	5.44
Net profit after non-controlling interest	**1.36**	2.87	**3.53**	7.45

The first half of 2026 reflected the impact of a challenging operating environment on both revenue and profitability, driven primarily by geopolitical factors. Revenue declined by 4.3% to ﷼ 52.89mn, primarily reflecting lower utilisation across our Accommodation Solutions portfolio. The impact on performance at the operating and net levels was driven principally by lower occupancy and rising input costs, which could not be recovered within fixed-price contracts in the near term.

Cost pressures were most pronounced in logistics and key operating inputs, particularly food products, which weighed on gross margins. While disciplined pricing and operational efficiencies helped offset part of this impact, the local operating environment remains cost-sensitive, limiting the extent to which rising input costs can be reflected in pricing. This dynamic is amplified by the nature of our client relationships, which are mainly long-term contracts with large entities. The governance structures within these agreements often do not provide for the pass-through of unforeseen cost increases unless explicitly defined at the outset.

Despite these headwinds, Renaissance secured new and retained business valued at ﷼ 12.4mn during the first half of the year. The company continues to maintain a conservative balance sheet and disciplined capital allocation, preserving financial flexibility while continuing to invest selectively in future growth opportunities.

Performance Review

Occupancy across our Accommodation Solutions portfolio was affected by the disruptions of March and by a pause in new energy-sector project awards, which weighed on utilisation across the Permanent Accommodation for Contractors (PACs). Oil and gas occupancy has recently begun to improve from its position in early Q2.

At Renaissance Village Duqm (RSVD), occupancy remains muted in the absence of major project groundbreaking before 2027. RSVD continues to operate at a reduced cost base consistent with current occupancy and will continue to track the pace of investment activity in the Special Economic Zone.

Our focus on strengthening our Hard FM capabilities continues to yield results, with the award of two new contracts by the Ministry of Health. At the same time, we are actively evaluating greenfield FM opportunities across the wider GCC region.

Initiatives to enhance productivity and operational efficiency resulted in a net YoY reduction in total employee headcount whilst mobilising a number of new contracts. However, as part of our commitment to developing national talent, we grew our Omani headcount by more than 10% in the first half of the year, welcoming over 250 nationals into roles from site level through to senior positions. Meanwhile, our in-country procurement stood at over 92% of total procurement spend for the first half of the year.

Operational Excellence and Sustainability

New initiatives in the first half of the year focused on optimisation of human resources and process enhancements, both of which have begun yielding tangible results. Building on this, we are appointing Operational Excellence champions at major sites to act as a technical bridge between corporate strategy and site-level execution.

These initiatives reinforce the new Target Operating Model launched earlier on January 1, 2026. By having clearly defined Business Units, we have brought accountability and decision-making closer to the customer, enabling faster responses and greater consistency in the quality of our services.

Improving resource efficiency remains a strategic priority for Renaissance, particularly in a region where energy and water are among the most valuable natural resources. During the first half of the year, we continued to invest in initiatives that reduce energy consumption, improve water efficiency and strengthen the long-term sustainability of our operations. Together, these investments optimise energy efficiency and costs, while reinforcing our contribution to Oman's Net Zero ambitions.

M&A

Following the successful completion of the Socat acquisition in Q1, integration activities are well underway. Our main priorities include integration of IT systems and procurement as well as alignment on governance and harmonisation of HR systems and policies.

We have also established a clear commercial framework defining how Renaissance and Socat will operate as one coordinated group. The entities will collaborate around jointly developed client propositions, with each focused where it is strongest. We expect this integrated approach to open new market opportunities, strengthen our competitive positioning across key growth sectors and deliver measurable value to clients and shareholders alike in the periods ahead.

At the same time, Renaissance continues to evaluate further acquisition opportunities across our core sectors, including facilities management, accommodation services and waste management.

Digitalisation and AI

The adoption of technology to enhance efficiency, service quality and cost control is another important pillar of our operating model. During the first half, we replaced third-party software with products developed in-house, including a proprietary patient-diet system now being scaled across a leading tertiary hospital, and a digitised overtime workflow that embeds governance controls at site level.

We are continuing to invest in digital capabilities and automation to simplify processes across the business, improve efficiency and enhance quality of service provided to our clients. Within HR, these initiatives are expanding self-service capabilities and improving the employee experience. By reducing repetitive and monotonous tasks, this also supports the development and retention of talent within the organisation.

Alongside this, continued progress on real-time, data-led measurement of energy, water and food waste is enabling our frontline teams to act on accurate information.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly evolving from an emerging technology into a business necessity. Renaissance is committed to adopting AI across our operations, and to doing so responsibly. Accordingly, we are strengthening governance and training our employees to use these tools well while ensuring appropriate oversight so that our productivity, decision-making and service are enhanced without compromising trust and security.

Outlook

The external environment remains fluid. Ongoing disruption to supply chains has increased procurement costs and reduced visibility over the timing of new project activities. While these conditions influence performance at present and the path to normalisation remains difficult to predict, we remain optimistic.

Against this backdrop, our priorities remain clear. We will continue to focus on agile procurement, prudent capital allocation, operational efficiencies, and on maintaining the financial flexibility necessary to respond to ever-changing market conditions. These are areas within our control and they will continue to guide our decisions while external uncertainty persists.

Oman remains a beacon of stability, and we are encouraged by the government's continued commitment to national development. With more than four decades of experience, Renaissance has successfully navigated many economic and market cycles. While near-term conditions remain uncertain, we remain confident in the resilience of our operating platform, the strength of our client relationships and our ability to create long-term value for shareholders.

Tribute

We extend our heartfelt gratitude and loyalty to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his visionary leadership and steadfast commitment to the progress of the Sultanate. His guidance continues to inspire us to contribute to the nation's prosperity through diversification, strengthened In-Country Value and the delivery of high-quality, sustainable services.

On behalf of the Board, I also extend my sincere appreciation to all our employees, clients, shareholders and partners for their ongoing trust and support as we continue on this important journey.

Samir J. Fancy
Chairman

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT JUNE 30, 2026

	As at Jun 2026	As at Jun 2025
	﷼ '000	﷼ '000
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	**121,962**	128,617
Intangible assets	**2,667**	1,918
Investments	**6,577**	4,816
Deferred tax asset	**1,089**	846
	132,295	136,197
Current assets	**70,621**	70,151
Current liabilities	**56,621**	54,908
Non- current liabilities		
Term loans excluding current maturities	**35,534**	39,684
Deferred tax liability	**-**	5
Other non current payables	**11,148**	10,235
	46,682	49,924
Net assets	**99,613**	101,516
Equity		
Share capital	**23,641**	23,641
Treasury shares held by subsidiary	**(6,772)**	(6,772)
Treasury shares held by liquidity provider	**(257)**	(186)
Share premium	**26,936**	26,936
Legal reserve	**9,145**	9,145
Other reserves	**2,394**	919
Retained earnings	**28,211**	29,601
Equity attributable to the owners of the parent company	**83,298**	83,284
Non controlling interest	**16,315**	18,232
Total equity	**99,613**	101,516

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED JUNE 30, 2026

	6-month period ended	
	Jun 2026	Jun 2025
	﷼ '000	﷼ '000
Revenue	**52,890**	55,275
Operating expenses	**(50,971)**	(50,950)
Profit from operations	**1,919**	4,325
Net finance costs	**(1,379)**	(1,760)
Profit before tax	**540**	2,565
Tax	**(184)**	(467)
Profit for the period	**356**	2,098
Net loss attributable to non-controlling interests	**(1,002)**	(774)
Net profit attributable to the Shareholders of the Parent Company	**1,358**	2,872

Notes:
1) The complete accounts will be sent by mail to shareholders within 7 days of receipt of request.
2) The complete set of financial results can be accessed at www.renaissanceservices.com

SAFETY | ESG | RESPECT | VISION | INTEGRITY | CARING | EMPOWERMENT

Renaissance Services SAOG
PO Box 1676, PC 114, Muttrah, Sultanate of Oman

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

The top gainer was Oman Chlorine which closed higher by 3.45% while top loser was Al Madina Investment which closed lower 5.41%.

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,395.55 points, up by 0.37% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.06% at 587.18 points. OMINVEST, up 8.97%, was the top gainer while, Oman Flour Mills, down 2.78%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 6,996 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR46.39 million, with more than 157.91 million shares changing hands. Out of 62 traded securities, 17 advanced, 18 declined, and 27 remained unchanged.

At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR557,000 while foreign investors were net buyers for OMR333,000, followed by domestic investors for OMR224,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 13,070.84 points, up 0.82%. Prices of OMINVEST, Oman United Insurance, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Anwar Investment, Bank Dhofar were up by 8.97%, 1.28%, 1.01%, 0.53%, 0.47% respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Taageer Finance, Muscat Finance, Sohar International Bank, Al Madina Takaful were down by 10.00%, 2.61%, 1.54%, 1.10%, 0.90% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,394.55 points, down -0.50%. Prices of Jazeera Steel Products were up by 1.07% respectively. Prices of Oman Flour Mills, Galfar Engineering, Al Anwar Ceramics, Voltamp Energy were down by 2.78%, 1.89%, 1.54%, 0.58% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.20% before closing at 2,957.65 points.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev . Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	7,411.53	7,359.10	7,395.55	7,367.94	27.61	0.37 %
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,088.91	12,894.99	13,070.84	12,964.14	106.71	0.82 %
Industry Index	9,455.25	9,394.55	9,394.55	9,442.06	-47.50	-0.50 %
Services Index	2,963.26	2,950.82	2,957.65	2,951.87	5.78	0.20 %
MSX Shariah Index	589.44	586.81	587.18	586.81	0.38	0.06 %
MSX TR INDEX	11,466.50	11,385.39	11,441.77	11,399.05	42.72	0.37 %
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16,092.13	15,853.72	16,069.92	15,938.73	131.19	0.82 %
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,109.77	12,032.04	12,032.04	12,092.88	-60.84	-0.50 %
SERVICES TR IDX	3,970.21	3,953.55	3,962.69	3,954.95	7.74	0.20 %
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,253.83	1,253.83	1,253.83	1,253.83	0.00	0.00 %

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
157,918,163	46,385,472	6,996	37,913,065,182	17	18	27	62

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	339,965	131,555	21	0.366	0.425	0.366	0.425	0.390	0.035	8.974	0.425	0.400	0.425	0.100	477,212,914
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	16,119,780	7,358,676	359	0.451	0.459	0.451	0.458	0.450	0.008	1.778	0.458	0.458	0.458	0.010	3,664,000,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	256,170	80,693	18	0.315	0.316	0.314	0.316	0.312	0.004	1.282	0.316	0.315	0.316	0.100	33,180,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	26,200	22,257	16	0.846	0.850	0.846	0.850	0.841	0.009	1.070	0.850	0.838	0.850	0.100	106,163,266
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	8,936	886	2	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.001	1.010	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.100	9,000,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	18,960	2,962	6	0.156	0.157	0.155	0.157	0.156	0.001	0.641	0.157	0.151	0.159	0.100	25,120,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	100	19	1	0.191	0.191	0.191	0.191	0.190	0.001	0.526	0.191	0.190	0.191	0.100	58,734,318
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	18,250,508	3,853,974	1,136	0.212	0.213	0.210	0.213	0.212	0.001	0.472	0.213	0.216	0.213	0.100	922,422,895
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	65,000	13,975	34	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.214	0.001	0.467	0.215	0.213	0.215	0.100	653,556,684
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	27,390,898	6,818,863	1,221	0.248	0.251	0.247	0.249	0.248	0.001	0.403	0.249	0.250	0.249	0.040	861,413,222
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	151,056	40,899	25	0.271	0.272	0.270	0.271	0.270	0.001	0.370	0.271	0.270	0.275	0.100	396,364,996
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	120,000	36,625	3	0.305	0.307	0.305	0.306	0.305	0.001	0.328	0.306	0.290	0.307	0.100	61,200,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	7,811,471	2,828,024	333	0.363	0.363	0.361	0.363	0.362	0.001	0.276	0.363	0.363	0.363	0.100	279,582,600
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,025,126	468,483	5	0.457	0.457	0.457	0.457	0.457	0.000	0.000	0.457	0.455	0.457	0.100	743,057,484
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INTL DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	1,000	268	2	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.000	0.000	0.268	0.260	0.268	0.100	132,943,046
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	20,523	2,668	6	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.100	16,635,938
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	1,000	3,300	1	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	0.000	0.000	3.300	2.980	3.300	0.100	296,010,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,000	578	1	0.578	0.578	0.578	0.578	0.578	0.000	0.000	0.578	0.578	0.580	0.100	191,244,426
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	700	179	1	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.000	0.000	0.255	0.255	0.256	0.100	10,924,963
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	1,979	837	2	0.423	0.423	0.423	0.423	0.423	0.000	0.000	0.423	0.381	0.424	0.100	21,294,825
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	23,979	2,134	4	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.087	0.089	0.100	31,695,330
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	107,405	34,681	28	0.322	0.323	0.322	0.323	0.323	0.000	0.000	0.323	0.323	0.323	0.100	210,254,986
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	87,393	22,258	15	0.255	0.256	0.254	0.255	0.255	0.000	0.000	0.255	0.254	0.260	0.100	243,415,847
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	123,337	22,772	18	0.186	0.186	0.183	0.186	0.186	0.000	0.000	0.186	0.180	0.186	0.100	125,529,062
OM0000010120	ASYAD SHIPPING	2,334,873	549,232	481	0.235	0.237	0.234	0.235	0.235	0.000	0.000	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.000	1,224,054,906
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	24,927,268	9,976,233	887	0.400	0.402	0.397	0.399	0.400	-0.001	-0.250	0.399	0.400	0.399	0.100	2,995,052,428
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	122,472	34,169	5	0.279	0.279	0.278	0.278	0.279	-0.001	-0.358	0.278	0.278	0.279	0.100	65,721,980
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	2,947,923	4,096,824	70	1.392	1.392	1.387	1.387	1.392	-0.005	-0.359	1.387	1.386	1.386	0.100	1,040,250,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	81,172	15,007	7	0.184	0.186	0.184	0.185	0.186	-0.001	-0.538	0.185	0.183	0.185	0.100	132,165,173
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	80,431	13,949	25	0.172	0.175	0.172	0.173	0.174	-0.001	-0.575	0.173	0.160	0.173	0.010	173,000,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	343,769	47,106	20	0.138	0.138	0.136	0.136	0.137	-0.001	-0.730	0.136	0.136	0.137	0.100	304,225,612
OM0000003000	Al MAHA PETROLEUM PRODS MRKTNG	295	348	1	1.180	1.180	1.180	1.180	1.190	-0.010	-0.840	1.180	0.000	1.189	0.100	81,420,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	1,423,946	156,814	62	0.112	0.112	0.110	0.110	0.111	-0.001	-0.901	0.110	0.110	0.111	0.100	19,250,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	48,835,806	8,850,994	1,310	0.182	0.184	0.179	0.180	0.182	-0.002	-1.099	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.100	1,381,681,021
Total	34	153,050,441	45,488,243	6,126												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	5,300	785	6	0.150	0.150	0.145	0.149	0.139	0.010	7.194	0.149	0.126	0.145	0.100	4,470,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	15,000	1,246	3	0.082	0.084	0.082	0.083	0.080	0.003	3.750	0.083	0.075	0.085	0.100	18,445,920
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	309,000	82,538	35	0.267	0.268	0.267	0.268	0.267	0.001	0.375	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.100	536,735,213
OM0000010823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	3,600	3,636	3	1.010	1.010	1.010	1.010	1.007	0.003	0.298	1.010	1.010	1.015	0.000	27,699,090
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	1,000	69	1	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.100	1,470,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	650	41	1	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.061	0.065	0.100	15,750,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	5,502	1,458	1	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.000	0.000	0.265	0.240	0.266	0.100	14,575,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	3,000	272	2	0.091	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.091	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	14,155,086
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	5,900	431	3	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.066	0.075	0.100	14,600,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	4,300	778	3	0.181	0.181	0.181	0.181	0.181	0.000	0.000	0.181	0.178	0.181	0.100	107,050,075
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	14,400	1,496	3	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.000	0.000	0.103	0.102	0.104	0.100	17,922,000
OM0000011151	OMIFCO	3,773,922	733,401	693	0.195	0.196	0.194	0.195	0.195	0.000	0.000	0.195	0.195	0.196	0.000	1,304,428,125
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	31,746	3,394	12	0.107	0.108	0.106	0.107	0.108	-0.001	-0.926	0.107	0.107	0.108	0.100	90,064,033
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	1,920	123	1	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.065	-0.001	-1.538	0.064	0.062	0.071	0.100	19,657,365
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	114,932	14,775	33	0.129	0.129	0.128	0.128	0.130	-0.002	-1.538	0.128	0.128	0.143	0.100	28,160,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	169,961	18,403	29	0.110	0.110	0.107	0.107	0.109	-0.002	-1.835	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.100	9,095,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	23,950	3,735	9	0.157	0.157	0.155	0.156	0.159	-0.003	-1.887	0.156	0.155	0.174	0.100	31,665,886
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	9,943	1,114	1	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.115	-0.003	-2.609	0.112	0.104	0.115	0.100	31,773,368
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	3,833	2,161	3	0.565	0.565	0.560	0.560	0.576	-0.016	-2.778	0.560	0.560	0.576	0.100	97,240,500
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	18,594	1,171	7	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.070	-0.007	-10.000	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.100	2,715,300
Total	20	4,516,453	871,028	849												

BY END OF JUNE 2026

MSX trading value soars by 654.8% to OMR6.92 billion

MUSCAT: The main index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), rose by 66.8% by the end of June 2026 to reach 7,507.9 points, compared with 4,500.9 points at the end of June 2025.

The value of securities traded also increased by 654.8% to reach OMR6.92 billion, while the total number of securities traded rose by 337.4% to 23.15 securities, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The data showed that the Financial Sector Index stood at 13,085 points by the end of June 2026, while the Industrial Sector Index reached 9,757 points and the Services Sector Index stood at 3,050 points.

In terms of net investor transactions during the first half of 2026, foreign investors recorded net buying of OMR73.877 million, while Omani investors recorded net selling of OMR773,000.

GCC investors recorded net selling of OMR66.983 million, while Arab investors recorded net selling of OMR6.121 million.

NATIONAL OFFSHORE EXPLORATION SCHEME

India approves $8.8bn offshore oil and gas exploration programme

NEW DELHI: India has approved an investment programme of up to 840.84 billion rupees ($8.8 billion) to accelerate offshore oil and gas exploration over the next five years, as the country seeks to strengthen domestic energy supplies and reduce its reliance on imports.

The National Offshore Exploration Scheme will run through the end of the 2030-31 financial year and is expected to accelerate the addition of more than 600 million tonnes of discoverable oil equivalent to India's reserves.

The programme will finance seismic surveys, data processing and interpretation, and exploration drilling in deepwater and ultra-deepwater areas. It will also support scientific drilling in frontier basins, shared offshore production and evacuation infrastructure, and the establishment of an integrated oil and gas manufacturing and services zone.

The government said the initiative is designed to attract investment across the exploration and production supply chain, create long-term business opportunities and strengthen India's domestic technical capabilities.

India has opened most of its offshore acreage to exploration over the past decade while reforming its legal and contractual framework and expanding the National Data Repository for exploration data.

The programme comes as India continues efforts to reduce its dependence on imported energy. Domestic crude production currently meets only about 10% of the country's consumption, making India the world's third-largest oil importer and second-largest buyer of LPG. The government has also diversified its crude procurement sources, increasing the number of supplier countries from 27 to 41.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi first announced the offshore exploration mission in August last year.

Separately, the cabinet approved a $530 million programme for floating solar photovoltaic projects with energy storage. The initiative targets 102 GW of floating solar capacity on reservoirs, canals and industrial water bodies over five years and is expected to prevent around 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. — ANI

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Sohar International drives the energy sector dialogue to accelerate Oman's economic growth

MUSCAT: Sohar International reaffirmed its commitment to driving the energy sector and enabling sustainable economic growth through its joint symposium 'Oman's Energy Sector in a Reshaped Gulf: Driving Economic Growth, Investment, and Global Competitiveness.'

The symposium was held in collaboration with Oman Energy Association (OPAL) and brought together a distinguished group of experts, senior executives, and decision-makers from both the energy and financial sectors.

Rapid transformation

As a key pillar of Oman's economy, the energy sector is undergoing rapid transformation.

The symposium provided a platform to explore this evolution across the Sultanate of Oman and the wider Gulf region, with a focus on unlocking promising investment opportunities and strengthening the sector's role in driving GDP growth and enhancing Oman's regional and global competitiveness.

Commenting on the initiative, Abdulwahid Mohamed Al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer, Sohar International said: "At Sohar International, we see our role extending beyond banking. We are committed to being an enabler of growth in strategic sectors. The energy sector is central to Oman's future, and through platforms like this symposium, we aim to drive dialogue, mobilise investment, and forge the partnerships needed to position Oman as a globally competitive energy hub."

Throughout the discussions, participants examined emerging opportunities for capital deployment in renewables, gas, hydrogen, and energy infrastructure, while also addressing the key challenges and policy frameworks needed to accelerate the energy transition.

Eng. Mohammed Hamood Al Naabi, Chief Executive Officer, Oman Energy Association (OPAL), said: "The partnership with Sohar International reflects our shared commitment to advancing Oman's energy sector. OPAL believes that strong collaboration between industry and finance is essential to unlock investment, drive innovation, and ensure the sector continues to support Oman's economic diversification and the goals of Vision 2040."

Strategic collaboration

The symposium emphasised the importance of building strategic collaboration between financial institutions and energy companies to support large-scale projects aligned with Oman Vision 2040. It further reinforced the role of the private sector in achieving the objectives of the national vision through innovation, financing, and sustainable development.

Sohar International continues to play an active role in financing and advising projects that support energy security, diversification, and sustainability. By bringing together stakeholders from across the ecosystem, the bank aims to contribute meaningfully to a resilient and future-ready energy sector that supports long-term prosperity for Oman.

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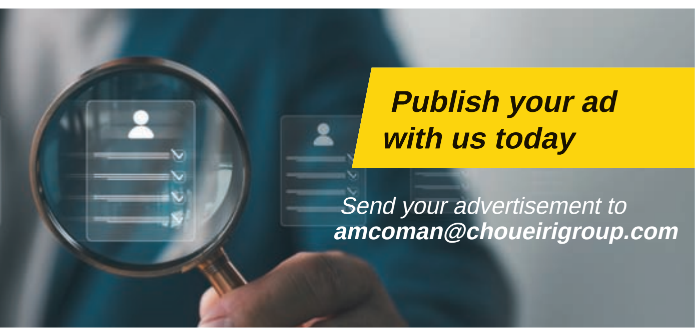
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JOB WANTED

ENGINEER
MECHANICAL ENGINEER (Indian)
B.Tech with 14 yrs of Oman experience as an Estimation Engineer, specializing in steel sheet metal fabrication. Currently in India, available for immediate joining.
WA/Call: +968 95945230, +91 7356745478
Email: arungopalakrishnan85@yahoo.com

VIDEO EDITOR
An Indian video editor with 6 months experience and proficiency in **ADOBE PREMIERE PRO** and **ADOBE AFTER EFFECTS** is looking for suitable job.
Contact: +968 97411676

PROCUREMENT
Procurement, postgraduate 15+yrs experience in Oman oil & gas, EPC, PEB & structural steel projects also has sound knowledge in import, customs clearance and freight & logistics.
Contact : 75123132

SALES & MARKETING
Seeking a suitable position in
SALES, MARKETING
having 16 yrs of experience in Oman & 25 yrs of total experience in the field of Infrastructure, Industrial and Building material products.
BE Mechanical, DIM, Valid D/L
Contact: 9497 6056

PROCUREMENT
PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY CHAIN PROFESSIONAL
18+ years' GCC experience in Procurement, Supply Chain, Warehousing & Logistics. Available for suitable positions in Oman.
Contact : 91257663

FINANCE
Experienced ICWA/CMA (India), M.Com & OACPA certified professional with 15+ years in Costing, Manufacturing Finance, Corporate Planning & Strategy, MIS and Budgeting.
Email: harindranath.7891@gmail.com
Contact : +968 96098863

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Established Diesel fuel Injection workshop for sale, well-established business, fully equipped workshop, good customer base, located in Muscat, suitable for investors or existing automobile service companies, genuine buyers only, reason for sale: owner relocating to another business.
Contact : +968 93304493

JOB VACANCY

SALES/MARKETING
Outdoor Media company requires male and female media sales executives with local experience and track record in similar roleShare CV's To Email: info@techmountains.net

JOB WANTED

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE
Indian male, well experienced in accounts including finalization and audit seek suitable positions, can join immediately. Contact: 92824146, 94953826

Indian male MBA Finance, with +8 yrs of Accounting & finance experience seeks for as audit associate position. NOC available & DL. Contact: 72420067

M.Com with 4 yrs of experience in the accounting, admin executive. Seeks a suitable job with D/L. Presently in Oman & can join immediately. Contact: +968 78585714 Email:sifath774@gmail.com

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE
Male Indian MBA finance accountant 7 yrs Oman experienced with Oman D/L looking for suitable position. Contact: 95819242, 71099237 Email: Shemeejvp@gmail.com

Indian male B.com Accountant looking for suitable job. 13 yrs experience in Oman. D/L & NOC available. Contact: 90302933.

Indian female CA inter, 3 yrs in accounts. Contact : 94863876, Email: id-j4jinuonly@gmail.com

Finance Manager, 32+ yrs expertise in accounting, taxation, financial management, and ERP implementation. Proven record in enhancing performance, ensuring compliance, and driving efficiency. Seeking suitable leadership position. Contact: 94676186

ADMINISTRATION
Business development & project management professional with 20+ yrs of experience in oil & gas trading, tendering, business systemization, planning, procurement and ISO QMS. possesses managerial and team lead skills. Contact: 91799438

DESIGNER/AUTOCAD D/MAN
Interior Designer with 15+ yrs Oman experience in Interior fit-out, AutoCAD, 3D visualization, shop drawings & site visits with sales. D/L. Contact: 95060377

DRIVER
Experienced driver heavy and light 20 yrs of driving experience. Contact: 97412505, 78385517

Bangladeshi with 10 yrs experience looking job. Contact: 78096017

EDUCATION / TRAINING
Indian male, Ph.D. in Computer Science, 15 yrs experience as an Assistant Professor in India, seeking a full-time faculty position in a college or university. Contact: +91 9789890933, Email: kalini1987@gmail.com

M.Sc. Psychology & M.A. developmental and therapeutic play with experience in child development, special education, therapeutic play and childcare. Seeking a suitable opportunity in Oman. Available to join immediately. Contact: 99866107, Email: oliviadcruz311.od@gmail.com

ENGINEER
Electrical Engineer (B.Tech) with more than 2 yrs of experience in Oman, seeking an opportunity in the Electrical or MEP field, valid Oman D/L and available to join immediately. Contact: 75220047 Email: harikrishnanmini@gmail.com

Cep electrical engineer. Contact : 94768845

ENGINEER
Civil, project engineer (Indian Male) 10 yrs Oman experience in building construction having valid D/L looking for suitable opportunity. Contact: 76423164. Email : sjn112020@gmail.com

IT
IT support engineer with 15+ yrs experience in Oman, valid Omani D/L & own visa seeking suitable position. Contact: 98315461 Email: mohdnayeem 2000 @gmail.com

Indian male, MCA, IT professional (experience as network engineer, IT support and Odoo ERP). Contact : 79701775

Indian male, IT support engineer 2 yrs of experience in India. Currently available in Muscat for immediate joining. Contact: +968 95848213

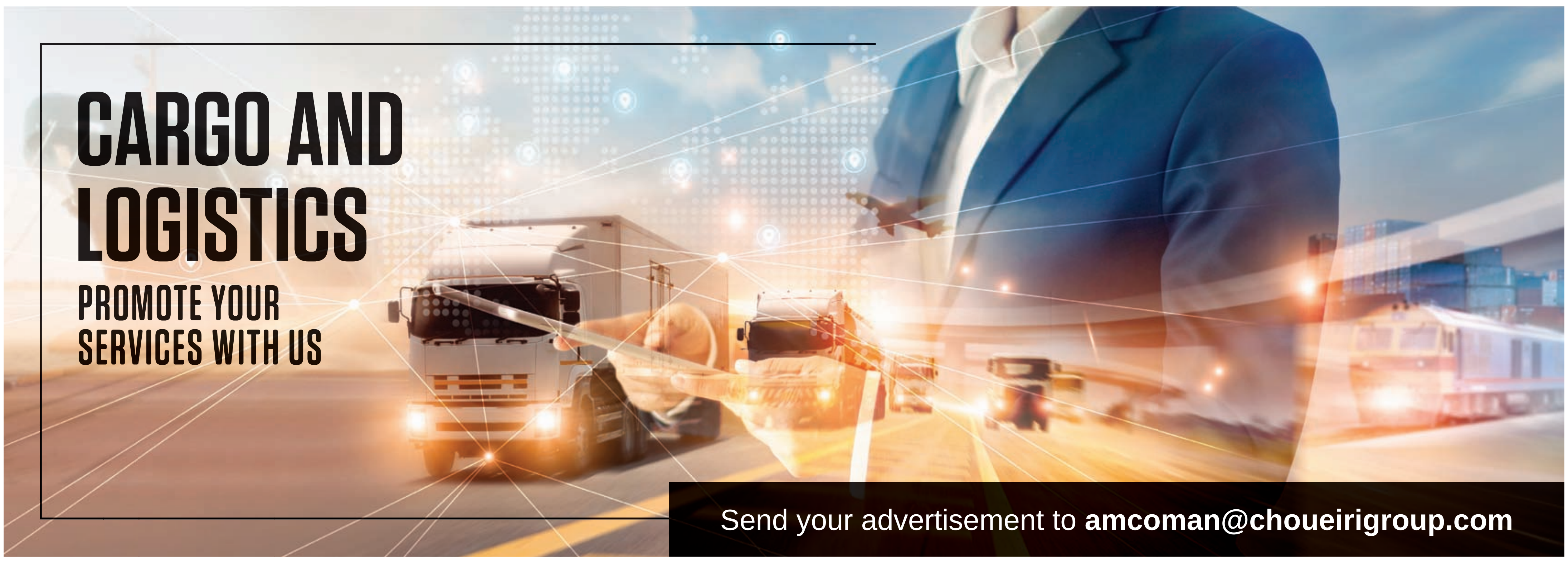
MANAGER
Project Manager with 24 yrs Gulf experience, including 12 years in Oman extensive expertise in MEP project management, project execution, electrical and mechanical installation, testing & commissioning, team leadership, and project coordination. Contact: 76925100

MANAGER
Finance Manager with 7+yrs Oman experience in accounts & finance, ERP knowledge, MIS reporting, VAT, audit, budgeting and financial management. Seeking suitable placement.92368095

PURCHASE/ PROCUREMENT
Indian male (36), MBA, 13 yrs exp in procurement & logistics, valid Oman D/L, ready to join immediately. Contact: 92536194

SALES/MARKETING
Indian Male, BBA, 20 years experience in Sales & Marketing in Oman. Holding valid Oman driving license seeks suitable placement Contact No : 93011232 Email: jitinjoshua920@gmail.com

Indian professional 11 yrs of GCC experience in sales, administration & logistics. Contact: 94536222, Email: abdullahonge5@gmail.com



WORLD

PM Modi speaks to Vance, discusses ways to deepen India-US relations

The Prime Minister also extended his congratulations to the US Vice President and the Second Lady on the birth of their son

NEW DELHI : Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a phone call from US Vice President JD Vance, during which both leaders discussed ways to deepen the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership across key areas.

On Saturday, in a post on X, PM Modi wrote, "Received a phone call from US Vice President JD Vance. We discussed ways to further deepen India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership across key areas."

The Prime Minister also extended his congratulations to the US Vice President and the Second Lady on the birth of their son.

"Warmly congratulated him and the Second Lady on the birth of their son and conveyed best wishes to the entire family," the post added.

This comes after Vance on Saturday said that Washington is working to establish a route allowing commercial ships to safely pass through the Strait of Hormuz, while continuing to pressure Iran amid ongoing tensions in the region.

Speaking to Fox News host Kayleigh McEnany on 'Saturday in America', Vance said the plan includes Iran's commitment not to fire on commercial ships, he says, adding that Tehran informed Washington it would allow the maximum flow of oil through the strait but "we don't trust it".

"We're talking to the Iranians, of course. We're trying to maximise the amount of oil and gas that is coming out of the Strait of Hormuz," Vance said.

Meanwhile, the US Senate passed a bipartisan bill on Friday that could authorise Donald Trump to levy tariffs of up to 100% on goods from countries, including India and China, that continue importing Russian oil and gas, maintaining that such trade helps sustain Moscow's economy and fund its military operations in Ukraine.

The Senate approved the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 by an overwhelming 86-11 vote. Named after the late Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, one of its principal architects, the legislation aims to escalate economic pressure on Russia and Iran while targeting nations that maintain major energy trade ties with Moscow.

Under the provisions, the US president would be granted discretionary authority to impose tariffs of up to 100% on imports from the world's top five buyers of Russian crude oil or natural gas.

Beyond targeting foreign energy buyers, the legislation outlines fresh sanctions against Russian President Vladimir Putin, senior political and military officials, financial institutions, energy developments and connected entities linked to Russia's war effort.

It further extends US sanctions to older and reflagged oil tankers allegedly utilised by Russia to circumvent global restrictions and maintain energy export revenues. The broader objective is to restrict the financial flows supporting Russia's economy and military campaign.

The legislation empowers the US president to enforce tariffs of up to 100% on goods imported from the top five purchasers of Russian oil or natural gas. India remains one of the largest buyers of Russian crude globally, alongside China.

The measure seeks to present energy-importing nations with a choice between continuing to purchase discounted Russian energy or retaining access to the lucrative US market.

India expanded its procurement of discounted Russian crude following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 to secure national energy requirements during global market turmoil.

While Russia was historically not a traditional primary supplier for India, the availability of discounted crude allowed Indian refiners to optimise raw material costs and ensure uninterrupted domestic supplies, particularly amid transit disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz.

New Delhi has consistently maintained that its energy procurement strategy is guided strictly by national interest, energy security and the imperative to guarantee affordable and reliable energy for its citizens. -ANI

CANADIAN OFFICIALS

British Columbia officials declare emergency as fires spread fast

BERLIN: Canadian officials on Saturday declared a state of emergency in British Columbia after more than 20,000 people were ordered to flee a fast-moving wildfire.

Describing the intensity of the blaze, British Columbia Premier David Eby said a fire official compared it to "a bomb going off."

"He described flames on a 100-foot (30-metre) tree, flames going 200 feet above that, and the fire creating its own weather system, which creates lightning," Eby said.

"Homes have been lost, and properties have been destroyed. Some people became trapped as conditions changed very quickly, and needed to be rescued," he added.

The fire, first reported Friday evening, grew rapidly , triggering widespread evacuation orders.

By Saturday, it had spread to about 9,500 hectares (23,500 acres), prompting all 12,000 residents of the Summerland district to evacuate.

The Summerland blaze is one of many fires challenging emergency crews across British Columbia.

The province has seen 70 new wildfires over the past week, and 105 are currently burning, according to British Columbia Minister of Forests Ravi Parmar.

Fires have scorched 4 million hectares in Canada in 2026, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center.

Blazes flared up in several regions, including Ontario and Quebec, this year as hot, dry conditions fueled fires in dense forest areas.

In recent years, Canada has faced a growing number of destructive wildfire seasons. -DW

PASSENGER AIRCRAFT

Two planes almost collide in Sydney

SYDNEY: Two passenger aircraft — a Jetstar and a Qatar Airways plane — came close to crashing into each other on the tarmac at Australia's busiest Sydney Airport on Sunday.

A crew member was injured and the incident has triggered a probe by the country's safety regulators.

What do we know about the near-miss collision?

The Jetstar A320 was taxiing for takeoff to the Gold Coast in the state of Queensland when its flight crew saw the Qatar Airways Boeing 777 — which was being towed by an aircraft tug — in close proximity on a crossing taxiway, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) said in a statement.

"Both aircraft were stopped abruptly", the statement said, leading to a Jestar cabin crew member moving through the cabin being injured and the connection between the 777 nose gear and aircraft tug suffering damage. The injured crew member was treated by paramedics.

The ATSB said that investigators were gathering data from both the planes, air traffic control, and interviewing crew and tug operators to determine the cause of the near collision. The regulator put out a call for witnesses at the airport to send in any visuals of the incident.Jetstar — which is a low-cost subsidiary of Australia's national carrier Qantas — said it was also conducting its own investigation."Our aircraft was following instructions by Air Traffic Control when the pilots were forced to brake firmly after another aircraft came in close proximity," a Jetstar spokesperson said. There was no immediate statement from Qatar Airways, which is the flag carrier of Qatar.

Meanwhile, flights at Sydney Airport were experiencing delays following the incident. -DW

ANOTHER STALEMATE

Kosovo PM Kurti egged in House

BERLIN: Kosovo's parliament was suspended on Saturday after an opposition lawmaker threw eggs at caretaker Prime Minister Albin Kurti.

Hurling eggs

"Shame on you!" Time Kadrijaj of the conservative opposition Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) party shouted in parliament before hurling eggs at Kurti.

In response, Kurti said that he was "happy to pay this price" if it was the cost of dialogue.

Kurti's left-wing VeBtevendosje (VV) party is known for its own parliamentary disruptions, with party representatives launching tear gas in the chamber in 2018 and also on multiple occasions in 2015.

What is the political situation in Kosovo?

The incident comes after days of negotiations as Kurti attempts to gain enough opposition support to elect a new president amid Kosovo's broader political crisis.

The Balkan country has held three elections in over two years.

Kurti achieved his parliamentary majority with ethnic minority MPs in a December election that followed an inconclusive vote in February 2025.

His VV party's share of the vote fell from 51% to 43% in a snap election in June, but it maintained a parliamentary majority alongside ethnic minority allies.

However, Kurti requires a two-thirds majority in parliament to elect a president.

The current negotiations seem to have ground to another stalemate, with neither side having agreed to a candidate.

A constitutional deadline to elect a speaker of parliament expired on Friday. Opposition lawmakers have threatened legal action over Kurti's request for more time to negotiate.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008 after the 1998-99 war, which ended with Serbia's withdrawal following a NATO bombing campaign.

Kosovo has been recognized by over half of the world's countries, including the United States and most European Union countries.

Belgrade considers Kosovo to be part of Serbia.-DW

DEFENCE DEPARTMENT

Pentagon asks defence firms to ramp up weapons production

WASHINGTON, DC: The US Defence Department has asked American defence contractors to urgently increase weapons production and speed up deliveries amid concerns over a shortage of critical munitions linked to the war with Iran, The Washington Post reported while citing a memo.

Deputy Defence Secretary Steve Feinberg told industry leaders on Wednesday they have up to 21 days to submit plans for "significantly faster, more aggressive delivery schedules and/or increased production for critical capabilities".

"Years-long development timelines are unacceptable," Feinberg said, calling on companies to "dramatically accelerate" output and timelines.

This comes even as a Pentagon official told Al Jazeera on Saturday that US munitions stocks remain adequate.

"We have sufficient munitions for the task at hand. The department has everything it needs today to execute a war," Al Jazeera quoted Jarred Conley, principal deputy director at the Defence Department's Defence Innovation Unit, as saying.

The interceptor shortage was said to be a key issue raised by US President Donald Trump and senior advisers before the administration decided last month to pause further escalation against Iran, Al Jazeera reported.

Meanwhile, Trump on Thursday dismissed as "fake" a report that he confronted Secretary of War Pete Hegseth over depleted US weapons stockpiles during a meeting at Camp David, insisting he has "the utmost confidence" in his Pentagon chief.

While addressing a report published by The Washington Post, Trump stated on Truth Social that he was "extremely happy" with the performance of Hegseth and accused the news outlet of disseminating "false and completely unfounded rumours".

"The Fake News, as usual, is spreading false and completely unfounded rumours. I am extremely happy with the job that Pete Hegseth is doing," Trump wrote.

He lauded the execution of military operations under Hegseth, highlighting the administration's actions in Venezuela and Iran, and noted that both missions had fulfilled their objectives.

Trump further attributed rising military recruitment figures and the removal of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programmes to Hegseth.

Labelling The Washington Post "one of the worst media outlets in the business", Trump claimed that the publication was cautioned prior to release that its story was "completely FALSE" and characterised the coverage as "treasonous".

The Washington Post, citing sources familiar with the development, stated that Trump voiced irritation towards Hegseth during a Cabinet session at Camp David last week regarding alleged deficits in key munitions, particularly long-range missiles and air-defence interceptors, which were reportedly impacting US military strategies in the Iran conflict.

As per the report, Hegseth refuted claims of misleading the president and attributed the lack of a full briefing to Deputy Secretary of War Stephen Feinberg.

The report further asserted that the interaction highlighted Trump's mounting irritation with his Pentagon chief as the ongoing Iran conflict strained US arms reserves.

Both the White House and the Pentagon refuted the claims.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt stated that the narrative "literally never happened" and reiterated that Trump maintained "the utmost confidence" in Hegseth.

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell similarly rejected the assertions, stating that Hegseth had neither misled anyone regarding US ammunition supplies nor held Feinberg responsible for potential deficits. -ANI

The Rhine and Danube have reached historic lows. Dwindling water levels are affecting shipping, agriculture and ecosystems — and raising concerns about the future of drinking water supplies


© Kai Kitschenberg/Funke Foto

EUROPE'S RIVERS ARE DRYING UP. CAN THEY BE SAVED?

Following an intense heat wave in June and severe wildfires in southern France and Spain, Europe's summer of climate-fueled crises continues with rivers across the continent running low.

Parts of the vital Rhine, Danube and Po rivers have fallen to historically low levels, threatening freight transport, the wider economy, and agriculture, with farmers warning of increased prices due to poor harvests amid the drought.

Along the Danube, cargo and cruise ships can no longer pass in some places. In Hungary, Romania and Croatia, sunken ships and cars have reemerged as riverbeds dry out.

In German cities, including Cologne and Düsseldorf, people can now walk across parts of the Rhine where strong currents normally flow. River levels could fall even more dramatically in the coming days.

The water crisis is being intensified by global warming driven by the burning of coal, oil and gas. Low water levels are also taking a growing toll on ecosystems — and could eventually drive up the cost of clean drinking water.

The impact on nature

Parched fields, millions of hectares of lost harvests and exposed riverbeds are among the most obvious consequences of the drought. But underwater ecosystems are suffering too.

As water levels fall, rivers become warmer and contain less dissolved oxygen, increasing the risk of fish die-offs, explained Jeanette Völker, a scientist with Germany's federal environment agency, the UBA.

"Especially along the Rhine, you can see how the gravel banks are drying up. These are habitats for mussels and invertebrates, which in turn serve as food for fish. This puts enormous stress on these ecosystems. Mussels cannot move away quickly enough and die off," Völker told DW.

Drought, intense sunshine, and high nutrient loads from agricultural fertilizers also encourage algal blooms harmful to fish.

These effects were seen in 2022 on the Oder River in eastern Germany. High temperatures, low water levels and elevated salinity allowed a toxic invasive algae to spread. Around 1,000 metric tonnes of fish died along parts of the German-Polish border river.

Experts do not expect a repeat of the Oder disaster on the Rhine this summer because oxygen levels remain sufficiently high. But the danger to the wider freshwater ecosystem remains.

What dwindling rivers mean for drinking water costs

The Rhine and the Danube are fed by numerous tributaries that are also running low. These tributaries are crucial because their lush, reed-filled banks act as natural filters, allowing water to slowly pass through layers of soil that help remove pollutants before water reaches underground wells.

"Much of our drinking water is what's known as 'riverbank filtration,'" said Hagen Koch, a researcher specialising in climate adaptation and resilience at Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

In other words, Germany's drinking water comes from those wells. But drought is weakening this process. Pollutant concentrations are increasing because roughly the same volume of wastewater — largely from industry and sewage works — is discharged into rivers even as water levels fall.

"If the ecosystem is damaged — that is, the animals and plants that contribute to water purification — this results in significant additional costs. Additional treatment is needed to supply clean drinking water to millions of people," Koch told DW.

German industry groups estimate water supply costs could rise by up to 30% as a result of climate change. By 2035, additional investments of up to €14 billion could be needed for improved water treatment systems, as well as deeper mains and upgraded reservoirs designed to keep water temperatures low and limit microbial growth.

The situation has drawn attention to a broader debate over water use. While households pay for the water they consume, several industries — including mining and agriculture — are exempt from water abstraction fees in many German states.

To conserve water, authorities in some German cities are currently severely restricting withdrawal from streams and rivers by private individuals. In Cologne, residents who violate the ban face fines of up to €50,000 ($58,000).

Low water levels hitting the economy

Low water levels in Germany's rivers are already taking a significant toll on the economy. Some vessels are carrying just a fifth of their usual cargo, delaying production and driving up prices. Germany's steel, chemical and petroleum industries have been hit particularly hard.

Energy supplies are also under pressure. Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Magyar has urged households and businesses to conserve electricity. He warned the country could face an unprecedented energy crisis after low water levels in the Danube forced the shutdown of the Paks nuclear power plant.

Romania blasts rocks as Europe searches for solutions

Politicians are exploring emergency measures in response to the situation. In Romania, the military blasted apart a rock formation in a branch of the Danube to secure the cooling water supply for the Cernavoda nuclear power plant and avoid a shutdown.

Germany's transport minister brought together representatives from industry, ports and inland shipping on August 6 to consider short- and long-term solutions to the crisis. One proposal under discussion was deepening parts of the Rhine's navigation channel so shipping can continue despite low water levels.

Critics warn that further dredging and deepening of shipping channels would accelerate water runoff, lower groundwater levels, and cause floodplains to dry out more quickly, ultimately do little to solve the problem in the long-term.

Instead, they're calling for the expanded use of low-water vessels, as well as a shift from freight transport to rail. Koch supports the development of ships with shallower drafts, but notes such changes require significant time and investment.

For Jeanette Völker, the solution lies in restoring parts of Europe's heavily modified rivers. Reconnecting floodplains, protecting wetlands and restoring peatlands would help landscapes retain more water and improve resilience during future droughts.

Reservoirs and dams may also play a role where they are environmentally acceptable. But experts warn adaptation alone will not be enough. Without climate protection and a rapid reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, any investments are little more than a drop in a fast-flowing river. - DW

SPORTS

SEVERANCE PAYMENT

FIFA criticises campaign to oust president Infantino

LAUSANNE: FIFA has strongly criticised what it calls a “concerted and ongoing effort” to “undermine” the organisation and its president Gianni Infantino.

The statement follows a report by British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, which claimed Infantino's alleged lover was given a severance payment by UEFA after he had an affair while he was its general secretary.

A FIFA spokesperson told the *Telegraph*, Infantino “strongly denies” the allegations and that they are “categorically untrue”.

FIFA has now itself hit out at “unsubstantiated assertions and demonstrably false claims”, adding that “speculation and insinuation should not be presented as fact”.

Infantino has come under increasing pressure from UEFA and European football associations over his aborted FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) proposal.

FFE would have meant a new company being created to manage commercial and ticketing rights, with 21% sold off to a private investment company.

UEFA has said it has lost confidence in Infantino, while Norwegian Football Federation (NFF) president Lise Klaveness on Friday called on the Swiss-Italian to resign. European football's governing body says its threat to boycott FIFA events remains on the table, adding that assurances the FFE

plan could not be revived have not been received.

“The FIFA president was democratically elected by FIFA's Member Associations and continues to serve with their mandate,” FIFA said in its statement on Saturday.

“It is increasingly evident that there is a concerted and ongoing effort by some to undermine FIFA and its president.

“Those who do not have the support of FIFA's member associations should not seek to achieve through allegation, insinuation or misinformation what they cannot achieve through FIFA's established democratic processes.”

Opposition to Infantino is largely from within Europe.

The Mexican Football Federation broke ranks with its regional governing body CONCACAF to come out in support of Infantino.

It echoed a statement from CONMEBOL - South America's governing body - in saying it would reject any attempt to remove Infantino without a vote involving all 211 Fifa member countries.

Infantino is also unanimously backed by the 54 nations of the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

Infantino called members of the FIFA management board to a meeting in Rabat, Morocco on Wednesday.

FIFA issued a statement on behalf of Infantino and secretary general Mattias Grafstrom which apologised for the FFE proposal, but also said it would “no longer tolerate any attacks on its integrity, good governance and due process”.

The statement released late on Saturday evening was similarly defensive about the criticism the organisation has faced.

“Change inevitably challenges established interests, but disagreement with that change cannot justify efforts to undermine the democratic mandate of FIFA's president or the institution he was elected to lead,” it added.

“FIFA welcomes legitimate scrutiny. But scrutiny is not a licence to distort facts, amplify unsubstantiated allegations or manufacture distractions designed to undermine progress.

“Where reporting is inaccurate or misleading, FIFA will challenge it directly and vigorously.” - Agencies

MONTREAL OPEN

Darderi sets up last 8 clash with Nakashima

MONTREAL: Italian Luciano Darderi fuelled himself with an espresso shot during a mid-match changeover in a 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 victory over Nuno Borges on Saturday to reach the Montreal Masters quarter-finals.

It was not the first time Darderi had downed his national rocket fuel to fire up the afterburners in a tight situation on court.

Darderi will bid for the semis against Brandon Nakashima, whose match with Arthur Rinderknech was interrupted for nearly two hours with the final set level at 4-4.

Players were taken off court due to rain and the threat of lightning, returning to finish after almost two hours.

Nakashima withstood a love game from his French opponent but broke serve a game later before finishing a 7-6 (7/4), 5-7, 7-5 victory on his first match point thanks to 22 unforced errors from Rinderknech.

“Coming out after the break I knew I had to fire at the beginning,” the American said after reaching his first Masters quarter-finals.

“This happened pretty quickly. I needed to stay focused and go for it when I had opportunities. My level is growing with each match and I'm trying to make the most of it.”

ATP No.22 Darderi will be playing in an ATP-leading 10th quarter-finals of the season after earning his 30th victory of 2026.

Darderi will be playing in his second Masters last-eight of the season after achieving the quarters last May at home in Rome.

The 24-year-old overcame more than 40 winners off the racquet of his Portuguese opponent, starting his comeback in the second set with a 5-2 lead and carrying momentum into the third.

Darderi broke for 4-3 as Borges double-faulted but lost his own serve moments later for 4-all.

The Italian got an insurance break for 6-5 as a net cord bounced out for Borges, then served out the triumph with an ace on match point a game later.

“This is my first Masters quarter-final on hardcourt so I'm very pleased,” the winner said. “I like the conditions here and the crowd helped me in the third set.

“I deserved this win. I've improved my hardcourt game a lot. I try to play every match at full power. Paying well on hard is good for me after starting (my career) on clay.”

Jodar ousts eighth seed Lehecka

Spanish teen Rafael Jodar defeated Czech eighth seed Jiri Lehecka 6-3, 6-3 to reach the quarter-finals. Jodar dominated the night match after an afternoon rain delay in the Masters 1000 hardcourt event.

The 19-year-old Spaniard, runner-up last week in Washington, never let Lehecka into their fourth-round match in collecting his 33rd victory of the season.

World No.15 Jodar has reached the last eight in seven of his past eight events and a Montreal title would send the youngster to a top-10 ranking for the first time.

Jodar will play for a semi-final berth against French 18th seed Arthur Fils, who defeated Britain's Cameron Norrie 6-2, 7-6 (8).

Fils, who lost to Jodar last week in Washington, will play in his fourth Masters quarter-final of the year.

“It was a very nice battle,” Fils said. “The second set was back and forth. He really raised his level. I got a bit tight but I'm happy to get out in two sets. I'm confident with how I'm playing right now.” - Agencies

Sabalenka stunned by Alexandrova in Toronto

The Russian sixth seed defeated the four-time Grand Slam winner and world No.1 from Belarus in 2 hours and 29 minutes to book a berth in the quarters

TORONTO: World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka was eliminated by Russian 16th seed Ekaterina Alexandrova on Saturday in a fourth-round match at the WTA Toronto Masters tournament.

Alexandrova defeated the four-time Grand Slam winner from Belarus 7-6 (7/3), 4-6, 6-4 in 2 hours and 29 minutes to book a berth in the quarter-finals.

Sabalenka, who will seek her third consecutive US Open title next month, fell to 5-5 in her career WTA rivalry with Alexandrova, who will meet Ukraine's Elina Svitolina in the quarter-finals after the latter dispatched American eighth seed Amanda Anisimova 6-2, 6-4 in 78 minutes.

Sabalenka broke for a 2-0 lead in the opening set, dropped the next four games, then held and broke back to 4-4 on a forehand drop volley winner.

Double faults by Sabalenka in the 11th game and Alexandrova in the 12th surrendered breaks leading to a tie-break.

The Russian took five of the last six points to seal the first set when Sabalenka swatted a crosscourt forehand wide.

In the second set, Alexandrova hit a forehand long to surrender a break and give Sabalenka a 4-3 lead. The top seed then held serve twice to force a decider.

Sabalenka was broken when she netted a forehand to give Alexandrova a 3-1 edge, but the Russian double-faulted away a break in the seventh game.

In the 10th game, Sabalenka made three unforced errors to give Alexandrova break and match points.

Sabalenka saved the first on a service winner and the second on an ace. But after sending a backhand beyond the baseline, the Belarusian made her sixth and final double fault to lose the match.

“I didn't have any expectations before the match,” Alexandrova said. “I knew it was going to be super difficult when I walked on the court. “I was trying to risk as much as possible because it felt like it was the only way to create some chances. It caused many more mistakes but at the same time I created many more opportunities.”

Pegula upset

Also, Diana Shnaider upset world No.3 Jessica Pegula 6-3, 6-3 on Saturday to reach quarter-finals, where the 15th-seeded Russian will face Poland's Iga Swiatek.

The 22-year-old left-hander took only 73 minutes to dispatch Pegula and improve to 3-3 in WTA career matches against top-five rivals. “I feel like this week I've been very comfortable on both defending and just firing some winners,” Shnaider said.

“I feel like it was working well. I was choosing a bigger target today but sometimes ripping the ball.”

Shnaider, a semi-finalist at this year's French Open, battled through breezy conditions in search of her sixth career WTA title and first since last August at Monterrey. Former world No.1 Swiatek, the seventh seed, rallied to defeat Ukraine's 10th-seeded Marta Kostyuk 3-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Swiatek, a four-time French Open champion who also won Grand Slam titles at the 2022 US Open and 2025 Wimbledon tournaments, snapped a seven-match losing streak in three-setters to top-20 opponents dating to last September.

Swiatek saved nine break points in the last two sets without dropping serve, saying she played “more brave” after losing the first set and knowing she “could play better” against Kostyuk. - Agencies

FORMER OLYMPIC CHAMPION

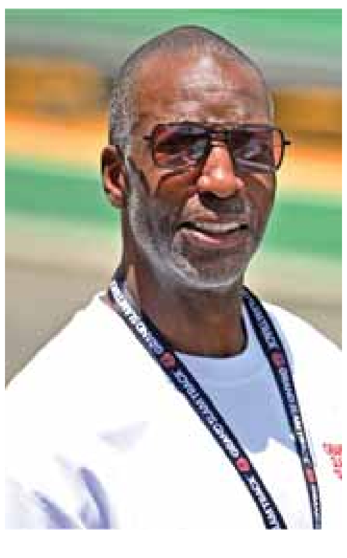
Athletes from bankrupt Grand Slam Track have now been paid: Johnson

LOS ANGELES: Four-time Olympic champion Michael Johnson has spoken publicly for the first time since Grand Slam Track (GST) went bankrupt, and has clarified details of payments to himself and competing athletes.

Contracted runners were promised lucrative prize money and salaries in the competition's inaugural season last year, but the final event in Los Angeles was cancelled and organisers voluntarily filed for bankruptcy in the US in December 2025.

Several high-profile athletes were owed payments over £100,000, including British former world 1,500m champion Josh Kerr and 2024 Olympic 400m silver medallist Matthew Hudson-Smith.

In an interview with the *Telegraph*, published on Saturday, Johnson said he has now “got the athletes paid”, after a “catastroph-



ic capital issue” was caused by investors pulling out.

The Association of Athletics Managers, which represents a number of competitors, said in January that GST had debts of more than $30m (£22.5m).

In March 2026, a legal filing by GST's creditors accused Johnson of “secretly” paying himself $500,000 (£375,000) days before the season collapsed, a claim a GST representative said at the time was “unfounded and false”.

“I'm happy to clear it up, because it's the most hurtful thing and the exact opposite of what was reported,” Johnson told The Telegraph.

“Our credit card was full at Grand Slam Track, because we were facing significant cash-flow issues.

“We had 96 athletes, plus companions, whom we needed to fly to Miami and Philadelphia. We had 170 people to house in hotels in both cities, and the credit card had no room left.

“I instructed our travel team to put it on my credit card, and I would be reimbursed for it. So, what I received was reimbursement.

“I also loaned the company $2m to make sure we took care of the athletes. I decided to forgo my own salary.”

Johnson said in March he would repay the $500,000 GST.

“I definitely had nights where I didn't sleep, where I would be awake thinking: ‘This is on me. This headline just came out - do the athletes believe that?’,” Johnson said.

“Those things weighed on me very heavily, and on my family as well. I was asking myself: ‘Are you stupid? Why did you do this? This is not what you need.’

“That was the most difficult part of this. Questioning my motivation for doing this, questioning my integrity, questioning my character.” - Agencies

Kenya Commonwealth Games silver medallist suspended over doping

NAIROBI: Kenya's Commonwealth Games 10,000m race walk silver medallist Stephen Ndangiri Kihu has been provisionally suspended for a doping violation, the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK) said. Kihu, 20, broke the national 10,000m race walk record when he won silver behind Australia's Isaac Beacroft at the recently concluded Commonwealth Games, with Canada's Evan Dunfee taking bronze.

ADAK said Kihu tested positive for erythropoietin (EPO), a banned blood-boosting substance that increases red blood cell production and oxygen delivery to muscles.

The tests were conducted on June 30 while the Kenyan team was training for the July 23-August 2 event. The provisional suspension took effect on August 5, and he could face a four-year ban if found guilty.

Kenya has provisionally suspended about 21 athletes for doping-related offences in 2026 alone, according to a list published by ADAK.

More than 140 Kenyan athletes, mainly long-distance runners, have been suspended by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) since 2017 - more than those from any other country. - Agencies

Martin soars to Silverstone title as Aprilia clinch first Sprint 1-2-3

The Spaniard earlier set a new lap record on the Silverstone circuit with 1:56.160 on his way to pole position for both Saturday's sprint race and Sunday's main race.

SILVERSTONE: MotoGP World Championship leader Jorge Martin soared to victory in Saturday's sprint race at the British Grand Prix. The Spaniard earlier set a new lap record on the Silverstone circuit with 1:56.160 on his way to pole position for both Saturday's sprint race and Sunday's main race. It was the second time in two days that the record fell after Martin's Aprilia team-mate Marco Bezzecchi blitzed to 1:56.280 in practice on Friday despite fracturing a collarbone at the German MotoGP last time out.

On Saturday, Martin clocked 19:49.066 for the 10-lap race, hitting speeds of up to 330 km/h.

Japan's Ai Ogura was second at 1.530sec on another Aprilia from the Trackhouse team with Bezzecchi third 3.974sec off the pace. Spaniard Raul Fernandez of Aprilia Trackhouse started second on the grid behind Martin but was forced to abandon the race after a fall. The youngest of the Marquez brothers, Alex, finished fourth on his Ducati-Gresini with Italian Fabio Di Giannantonio on another Ducati completing the top five.

Reigning world champion Marc Marquez was ninth on his Ducati.

Martin later branded the result as "important", but admitted that this victory doesn't mean "everything is alright".

"For sure, it was nice to get an amazing feeling this weekend; this was the most important thing for me, more than my result, was to get my feeling, to have my speed again," he told the media.

"We are out a bit of the hole that we were in, and for sure this gives us a lot of motivation. "We have full trust in ourselves. I have full confidence in my team, in myself.

"I knew it was a matter of time to get out of that situation. "But it's not that now at Silverstone we won and everything is alright. "We will need to reconfirm in the next races. But for sure we have a great opportunity also tomorrow." "I was in trouble after four laps"

The 10-lap sprint saw almost every rider struggle with extreme tyre graining, with the issue hitting the Ducatis hard.

Martin admitted he was "in really big trouble" after just four laps, but soon realised he was managing the situation better than everyone else. "I was managing from the first lap, even if I was pulling away," Martin, who won by 1.5s, said.

"And then when I was in trouble after four laps, I thought Ai [Ogura] was going to catch me.

"But then I saw that even if I was in really big trouble, I was able to keep that distance or even increase it. "At that point I thought, 'Okay, they are even worse than me'.

"So I did a great job in that term. Tomorrow is another story with the medium. "Everything will be more slow, more constant, and maybe easier to manage than today was with the soft." - Agencies

LEAGUES CUP

Messi-less Inter Miami go down to Monterrey

MIAMI: Lionel Messi was missing following the death of his father as Inter Miami lost 2-1 to visiting Monterrey on Saturday in a Leagues Cup match.

Teams observed a minute of silence before the match for Jorge Messi, who died at age 68 in Argentina, where the Inter Miami captain Lionel Messi arrived on Saturday night.

"Our hearts are with our captain, Leo, and the entire Messi family," Inter Miami said in a statement. Argentine midfielder Rodrigo De Paul scored in the 32nd minute to give Miami a 1-0 half-time lead in the group match against the Mexican side.

Belgian striker Hugo Cuypers levelled in the 47th minute before Uruguayan striker Diego Rossi scored a 90th-minute winner.

Major League Soccer champions Miami won their first group match 4-2 against Atletico San Luis and next faces Leon on Wednesday. - Agencies

PRE-SEASON FRIENDLIES

Dimarco stars as Inter down Juventus

PERTH: Star Federico Dimarco continued his strong pre-season form and Frenchman Andy Diouf hit the target as Serie A champions Inter Milan defeated Juventus 2-1 in Perth on Saturday.

Dimarco opened the scoring in the 20th minute in front of 50,325 fans in brisk conditions, before 23-year-old Diouf doubled Inter's advantage in the second half.

Francisco Conceicao produced a late highlight for Juventus when he finished superbly in the 85th minute.

The 28-year-old Dimarco is rounding into top gear, having also scored Inter's only goal in its 1-1 draw with rival AC Milan on the same ground on Wednesday.

Having impressed in goal against AC Milan, new signing Ivan Provedel kept a clean sheet before being substituted midway through the second half.

Juventus rued sloppy finishing and their methodical style of play did not trouble Inter, who bagged the Italian domestic double last season.

Juventus, who finished sixth in last season's Serie A, entered unbeaten in the pre-season, having beaten Chelsea 1-0 in Hong Kong on Wednesday.

Rising Turkish winger Kenan Yildiz started, having come off the bench against Chelsea amid reports that he has been battling a knee injury.

Juventus round out the Perth friendlies against Serie B team Palermo on August 11, while Inter wrap up their pre-season against Real Betis in Bari on August 15.

The Serie A season starts on August 22.

Spurs held

Elsewhere in London, Tottenham came from behind to draw 1-1 against La Liga side Getafe in a pre-season friendly.

The match, which took place behind closed doors at Tottenham's training ground, was shortened to 70 minutes.

Getafe took the lead in the 66th minute when Alberto Risco volleyed past Spurs goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky.

Spurs responded minutes later with Conor Gallagher's neat finish following a good run.

The home side were close to winning the match late on but Richarlison's header was saved by goalkeeper David Soria.

Both sides had chances in a goalless first half with Lucas Bergvall's shot the best of the efforts for Spurs, while Andy Gray did well to block Ebrahima Drammeh's drive.

Spurs remain unbeaten so far, winning four and drawing one of their five matches.

Tottenham conclude their preseason fixtures with a double header against Bundesliga side Hoffenheim next Saturday at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and a Sunday match at the training ground. They begin their Premier League campaign against Brentford on August 22. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Gunners sign Guimarães from Newcastle ahead of title defence

LONDON: Arsenal completed the signing of Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimarães from Newcastle on Saturday.

The Premier League champions paid a reported 75 million pounds ($101 million) for Guimarães, who signed a long-term deal at the Emirates.

"I'm very excited," Guimarães said. "I'm at the point of my life where I need a challenge like this. I want to win trophies, I want to make history and I think I'm in the right place to do it."

Newcastle did not want to sell their captain, but the 28-year-old Guimarães had told the club he wanted to leave.

Newcastle signed Guimarães from Ligue 1 club Lyon in January 2022 and he swiftly established himself as a talisman for the team, as well as one of the most influential midfielders in the Premier League. Guimarães helped Newcastle win the English League Cup in 2025 — the club's first major domestic trophy in 70 years — and also played a pivotal role in the team twice qualifying for the Champions League.

He joins an Arsenal midfield anchored by Declan Rice as the team bids for back-to-back Premier League titles.

Guimarães has made 48 appearances for Brazil, including at the recent World Cup. He won a gold medal at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

"It's massive what I have done so far, but I want more. I want to win for Arsenal. I want to win more trophies in my career, and I think I'm in the right place, at my peak at 28 years old," Guimarães said.

"I want to put my name in the club history. Someday, when I leave, I want players to come here and say I want to do exactly what Bruno did for the club."

Guimarães' departure is a further blow to Newcastle after star players Anthony Gordon and Sandro Tonali also left during this transfer window.

Eddie Howe stepped down as coach at the end of last month after nearly five years in charge.

Howe was replaced by Matthias Jaissle.

"This is one of the toughest decisions of my life," Guimarães said in a statement on Newcastle's website. "When I arrived, the club was in a challenging position and I am incredibly proud of what we achieved together. I fell in love with this place. I really mean that.

"This move is very tough because Newcastle means so much to me, but I wanted to experience something new in my life. I feel ready for a new challenge for myself and my family. I had a very positive conversation with Matthias Jaissle, and I leave knowing the club is in very good hands."

Guimarães will continue his tradition of wearing shirt No 39 — the dispatch number of his father's taxi in Rio de Janeiro.

"It means everything to me. I have the tattoo of the 39 as well," Guimarães said. "My father was a taxi driver in Brazil for more than 20 years.

"The taxi, of course, gave me everything for my family, the place we live, the food, my clothes, everything.

"So when I got the chance to sign to a top club in Brazil, I asked my father which number I should take and he said 39. I was upset a little bit because I wanted to take the 97. He said: 'No, no, take the 39. The 39 gave you everything.'"

Bank Muscat strengthens its regional presence with a financial markets seminar in Saudi Arabia

Through this seminar, Bank Muscat sought to provide attendees with in-depth insights into the evolving global economic landscape, highlighting the key shifts, emerging opportunities and mounting challenges shaping the world economy

MUSCAT: As part of its growing portfolio of initiatives aimed at strengthening engagement with its customers across the region's various markets, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, organized a dedicated seminar for a group of officials representing various institutions and companies in Al Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, shedding light on the latest developments in global financial markets and their impact on the business environment.

This event builds on a series of seminars recently held by the Bank in the Sultanate of Oman, reflecting its commitment to deepening ties with its customers wherever they are based.

Such events provide a valuable platform for discussing the dynamics of global markets and their direct implications for day-to-day business operations, thereby strengthening customers' ability to make clearer and more informed financial decisions.

Through this seminar, Bank Muscat sought to provide attendees with in-depth insights into the evolving global economic landscape, highlighting the key shifts, emerging opportunities and mounting challenges shaping the world economy.

Discussions covered a wide range of topics centered on the latest regional and global developments, economic transformations and future outlooks for international financial markets.

The seminar also served as an engaging platform for the Bank's customers and counterparts in the Kingdom to understand and analyse the economic implications of recent geopolitical events, supporting well-informed decision-making across their respective business fields.

In keeping with its commitment to delivering an exceptional banking experience to customers across the region, Bank Muscat continues to develop its products and services in line with the latest trends in the banking sector and the evolving expectations of its customers.

These sustained efforts, spanning four decades of service, have cultivated a growing customer base and firmly established trust across Oman, which continues to gradually extend into promising regional markets, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Bank Muscat offers a comprehensive suite of treasury products and services around the clock, with extensive geographic coverage spanning East Asian markets as well as certain regions aligned with New York trading hours, covering both international business days and GCC working days.

These services include advanced foreign exchange solutions, alongside effective hedging tools against interest rate, currency and commodity risks, positioning Bank Muscat among select regional banks offering its customers comprehensive hedging solutions.

Guided by its firmly held customer-centric vision, and powered by its vision to be "Better Every-day" Bank Muscat continues to deepen its understanding of customer needs across the region's markets, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and deliver innovative financial solutions aligned to customer needs, in line with global best practices.

CREATING MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Dhofar Foods takes 'The Joy of Khareef' to new heights through first-of-its-kind paragliding experience in Taqah

SALALAH: As part of its "The Joy of Khareef" campaign, Dhofar Foods & Investment SAOG (Dhofar Foods) has introduced one of the season's most unique consumer experiences by sponsoring the paragliding attraction in Taqah during the Khareef season.

Running from 25 July to 25 August 2026, the activation transforms one of Dhofar's most popular tourist attractions into an immersive brand experience, combining adventure, product discovery, and social engagement. More than a sponsorship, the initiative reflects Dhofar Foods' commitment to creating memorable moments that celebrate the beauty of Khareef while bringing consumers closer to its brands in meaningful and innovative ways.

As the first FMCG company in Oman to activate a paragliding experience as part of a seasonal marketing campaign, Dhofar Foods is introducing a fresh approach to consumer engagement that extends beyond traditional advertising. By integrating the brand into a real-life adventure enjoyed by thousands of visitors, the company is creating experiences that people remember, share, and associate with the spirit of Khareef.

Commenting on the initiative, Vipul Bahl, Chief Executive Officer of Dhofar Foods & Investment SAOG, said: "The Joy of Khareef campaign was created to celebrate everything that makes this season special and to create memorable experiences for families and visitors. Our paragliding partnership perfectly reflects this vision by combining adventure, the breathtaking landscapes of Dhofar, and our brands in a way that encourages people to participate, create memories, and share their experiences. As a company that was born in Dhofar, we are proud to continue investing in initiatives that support tourism, strengthen community engagement, and celebrate the unique spirit of the Khareef season."

Paragliding site

The Taqah paragliding site was selected for its popularity and strategic location during the Khareef season. The flights are operated by Muscat Fly Team—part of the Oman Air Sports Committee—comprising highly skilled professional pilots who maintain the highest safety standards to guarantee a secure and enjoyable experience for all.

Approximately 40 to 50 participants take flight every day, while the site welcomes around 200 additional visitors daily. Located close to Hawana, Darbat, Jabal Samhan, and along the main road connecting Taqah and Mirbat, it provides excellent visibility to both local residents and tourists visiting Dhofar.

Dr. Ahmed bin Zaher Al-Alawi, Chairman of the Omani Air Sports Committee, stated: 'We deeply appreciate the participation and support of Dhofar Foods & Investment Company for air sports activities and events during the Dhofar Khareef Season 2026.

This collaboration exemplifies a true partnership between the private sector and sports and tourism institutions, directly contributing to the development of these events and delivering a unique and safe experience for visitors to the governorate.

Another visitor added: 'Watching paragliding amidst the green nature and beautiful weather in Dhofar is a wonderful and unique experience, especially for families and children. Events like these make the Khareef season more diverse and encourage visitors to stay longer and enjoy new experiences.'

As part of the activation, every pilot carries a Dhofar Foods branded flag during each flight, creating spectacular aerial visuals against the green landscapes of Dhofar. The experience naturally generates engaging photography and video content shared by participants, spectators, and content creators across social media, significantly extending the campaign's reach.

At the ground activation area, visitors are invited to sample a selection of Dhofar Foods products, providing consumers with the opportunity to experience the company's locally produced dairy and beverage portfolio while enjoying one of the region's most exciting attractions. The combination of live product sampling with an unforgettable adventure creates a unique brand experience that reinforces Dhofar Foods' commitment to quality, innovation, and consumer engagement.

The paragliding activation forms a key pillar of Asafwah's "The Joy of Khareef" campaign, which celebrates the unique atmosphere, culture, and experiences of the Khareef season. Through the campaign, Dhofar Foods encourages families and visitors to create lasting memories while discovering the freshness and quality of its products. Visitors are encouraged to capture and share their experiences using the campaign's social media platforms, helping spread the joy of Khareef to audiences across Oman.

The paragliding sponsorship is one of several activations planned under The Joy of Khareef campaign, reflecting Dhofar Foods' continued commitment to celebrating Oman's heritage, supporting local tourism, engaging communities, and creating innovative experiences that strengthen the connection between its brands and consumers.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Maal
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