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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
Efforts continue to contain oil spill

1 The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology continues its salvage and oil spill containment operations involving the tanker 'Caroline Bezengi', which is stranded near Al Qibliyah Island in the Al Hallaniyat Islands archipelago in Dhofar. >A3

OMAN
CEPA creates new avenues for trade

2 An awareness workshop on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Oman and India, held in the Wilayat of Salalah, examined the opportunities available to the Omani private sector under the agreement. >A7

MARKET
Contract inked for chemical mixing plant

3 Nizwa Industrial City, affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates "Madayn", signed a long-term investment usufruct contract to establish a project specialised in chemical mixing and oilfield equipment maintenance, with an investment exceeding OMR4 million. >B1

HIS MAJESTY, PRESIDENT OF UAE DISCUSS BILATERAL RELATIONS

HM the Sultan pays fraternal visit to UAE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik paid a private fraternal visit on Monday to the United Arab Emirates, during which he held a meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, at Al Shati Palace in Abu Dhabi.

During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the course of historic bilateral relations and the shared ties between the two fraternal countries, as well as ways to enhance and develop them across various fields to serve mutual interests and fulfill the aspirations of the peoples of both countries.

The two leaders also exchanged views on various matters of mutual interest and discussed regional and international developments, along with ways to achieve security and stability.

Alongside His Majesty the Sultan, the meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, 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. Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Dr. Sultan bin Yarub Al Busaidi, Advisor at the Private Office and Sayyid Dr. Ahmed bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Ambassador of Oman to the UAE.

Meanwhile, it was attended from the Emirati side by Sheikh Suroor bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of finance, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Court for Special Affairs, Sheikh Zayed bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nayan, Sheikh Mohammed bin Maktoum Al Maktoum, envoy of the UAE to Oman and several officials.

The UAE President led the welcoming and farewell party for His Majesty at the Presidential Airport in Abu Dhabi, accompanied by a number of senior officials. -ONA

See also >A2

ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

Oman highlights the ecological importance of barn owl

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority of Oman has highlighted the important role played by the barn owl (Tyto alba) in the Sultanate's natural environment, drawing attention to the species' distinctive characteristics, habitat and contribution to maintaining ecological balance.

As part of its environmental awareness efforts, the authority presented the barn owl as a valuable component of Oman's biodiversity. The bird is primarily active after sunset and is well adapted to a nocturnal lifestyle, using its exceptional senses to locate prey in darkness.

The barn owl can be found in a variety of environments, including caves, old structures and areas around trees, where it seeks suitable locations for shelter and nesting.

Its presence in these habitats reflects the species' ability to adapt to different surroundings while remaining closely connected to the natural ecosystem.

One of the most important characteristics of the barn owl is its role as a natural predator of rodents. By feeding on mice, rats and other small prey, the bird helps regulate their populations naturally. This makes the species an important contributor to the balance of local ecosystems and reduces the need for other forms of pest control in areas where barn owls are present.

The Environment Authority also highlighted the owl's remarkable hunting abilities.

Its highly developed hearing and vision enable it to detect and locate prey with considerable accuracy, even under low-light conditions. These adaptations make the barn owl an effective nocturnal hunter.

The bird is primarily active after sunset and is well adapted to a nocturnal lifestyle, using its exceptional senses to locate prey in darkness.

Another distinctive feature is its exceptionally quiet flight. The structure of the barn owl's feathers allows it to fly with minimal noise, helping it approach prey without being easily detected. This silent movement is one of the species' most notable adaptations and gives it a significant advantage during nighttime hunting.

Beyond its biological characteristics, the barn owl serves as an example of the importance of protecting wildlife and preserving natural habitats in Oman. The continued presence of native and migratory bird species contributes to the Sultanate's biodiversity and reflects the health and diversity of its ecosystems.

The authority's awareness message encourages greater appreciation of wildlife and recognition of the role individual species play within the wider environment. Protecting birds such as the barn owl, along with their habitats, supports Oman's broader efforts to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable environmental practices.

Through such awareness initiatives, the Environment Authority seeks to strengthen public understanding of Oman's wildlife and encourage communities to coexist responsibly with the country's diverse range of species.

T OMAN

HM pays fraternal visit to UAE

NEW REGULATION

TRA introduces tighter rules for promotional calls and messages

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has issued a new Regulation on Promotional Calls, Service Messages and Value-Added Services under Decision No. (1511/25/2/36/2026).

The regulation aims to strengthen consumer protection, regulate promotional and service communications, and curb intrusive and fraudulent telecommunications practices.

The new framework introduces comprehensive requirements for licensed operators, businesses and service providers, enhancing transparency, protecting customer data and improving trust in telecommunications services across the Sultanate.

Key provisions of the regulation

Protection of Customer Data: The regulation prohibits the sharing of customer information with local subscribers, international subscribers or international intermediaries without prior approval from the Authority. Licensed operators are also required to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to safeguard user data.

Regulation of promotional communications: Businesses sending promotional messages must use identifiers that clearly reflect their legal or trade names. Promotional messages must also be distinguishable from other communications, enabling recipients to easily identify marketing content.

Controls on Value-Added Services: The regulation establishes clear rules governing value-added services and recurring subscription services. Providers are required to obtain the necessary approvals and ensure that such services are used only for authorised purposes.

Oversight of international messaging traffic: Licensed operators must obtain TRA approval before contracting with international intermediaries for the exchange of messaging traffic. The regulation also requires verification of sender identities and introduces measures to prevent spoofing, impersonation and fraudulent message transmission.

Consumer right to opt out: Service providers are required to offer clear and accessible mechanisms allowing users to block or stop receiving promotional calls, messages and value-added service communications. Consumers must also be able to report cases where communications continue despite opting out.

Permitted communication hours: Promotional calls and messages may only be made or sent between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Oman time, helping to protect consumers from unwanted disturbances outside permitted hours.

Combating fraud and spam: The regulation obliges operators to develop technical systems capable of detecting and preventing fraudulent and intrusive calls and messages.

It also encourages data-sharing and cooperation among operators and provides unified reporting mechanisms for consumers.

Enforcement and penalties: The regulation also introduces a framework of financial penalties for violations, with fines ranging from OMR500 to OMR30,000, depending on the nature and severity of the offence.

The Authority may also impose higher penalties in cases of repeated violations, reinforcing compliance and strengthening the protection of consumers against unsolicited, intrusive, and fraudulent communications.

The new regulation reflects the TRA's ongoing efforts to enhance the regulatory environment of Oman's telecommunications sector while balancing commercial communication needs with the rights of consumers to privacy, security and protection from unsolicited communications.

COMMENTARY

Who Has the Right to Exist?

A few nights ago, I was preparing for an interview with an international broadcaster. The subject of the interview was entirely unrelated to what follows. But as minds often do in preparation for such conversations, mine wandered beyond the subject at hand. Somewhere along the way, I found myself puzzling over a question we hear repeatedly in contemporary political discourse, particularly in Western media discussions about Israel: Does Israel have a right to exist?

It is usually presented as a simple yes-or-no question. But the more one considers the wording, the trickier it becomes because of what the framing itself does. A moment of hesitation to answer, or even choosing not to, can lead others to make assumptions about a person's political or moral position. Yet sometimes the problem is not in finding an answer, but in making sense of the question in the first place.

Consider the question for a moment: what does it actually mean for a state to have a right to exist?

Perhaps the place to begin is with the words themselves: right and exist. To exist simply means to be — to be present, to have being. A right to exist says something more: it suggests that existence itself is an inherent entitlement.

For a human being, this makes sense. It is self-evident in the word itself: a human being. To be is to exist. A person's existence does not depend upon recognition, approval or permission from another. The right to life and dignity belongs to the human being by virtue of being human. Therefore, peoples — groups of human beings — have rights, too. International law recognizes, among other principles, the right of peoples to self-determination.

A state belongs to a different category. A state is a political and legal institution. It organizes authority over territory and provides a structure through which societies govern themselves. States possess rights and obligations under international law; sovereignty and territorial integrity, for example, are fundamental principles of the international order. This, however, is distinct from the idea of an inherent right to existence.

Consider the same question outside the language of geopolitics. Does a company have a right to exist? Does a university?

These institutions certainly exist, but their existence is simply a fact: people created them, and people continue to sustain them. We would not normally say that a university exists because it has an inherent right to do so. We can value it, protect it by law, give it legal rights and impose obligations upon it, but none of this means that its existence itself is an inherent right.

A state is, of course, far more consequential than a company or university. But the underlying distinction remains: a human being's existence carries an inherent claim to life; an institution's existence is something human beings create, organize and sustain. History illustrates this well. States have emerged and disappeared, divided and united, and assumed new political forms. And while states may change, the people who live within them do not lose their right to life, dignity or security.

Seen in this light, philosophically, the original question risks what is known as a category error: attributing to one kind of thing a quality that belongs to another. There is also a broader lesson here. Questions are not always neutral. They can carry assumptions of their own, and when repeated often enough, those assumptions can begin to pass unnoticed. A question can become a political litmus test – a single, decisive question used to judge whether someone meets a particular political or ideological standard. It can also become a tool of propaganda when its framing advances a specific idea, while hesitation or an attempt to question it can be treated as a sign of prejudice.

This matters especially in political discourse, where an answer can carry significant consequences for the person giving it and for what that answer could be understood to represent. It is, therefore, worth being conscious not only of the answers we are asked to give, but of the questions we are expected to accept.

Transport ministry continues efforts to contain oil spill from stranded ship

The salvage efforts are being carried out amid extremely challenging weather conditions, with wind speeds reaching around 40 knots and sea waves rising to approximately four metres

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology continues its salvage and oil spill containment operations involving the tanker 'Caroline Bezengi', which is stranded on a rocky outcrop near Al Qibliyah Island in the Al Hallaniyat Islands archipelago in Dhofar Governorate.

These efforts are exerted in cooperation with the relevant national authorities and international experts from the British company Ambrey.

These efforts are being carried out amid extremely challenging weather conditions, with wind speeds at times reaching around 40 knots and sea waves rising to approximately four metres, making it extremely difficult and complex to approach the vessel by sea or air.

Mohammed Abdullah Al Rawahi, Director General of Maritime Affairs at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, said that the Ministry has, from the outset, intensified its efforts to mitigate the potential environmental impacts resulting from the vessel's grounding.

In coordination with the British company Ambrey, the Ministry appointed specialised companies in oil spill response and pollution control, including the international company Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) and the national company OMAN PESCO, to participate in pollution response operations and the clean-up of affected areas. He added that the Ministry coordinated with Ambrey to import and prepare pollution-control materials and equipment, including rubber booms, response equipment and materials, and chemical dispersants, in addition to providing a specialised vessel to transport and operate this equipment and these materials at the incident site.

The Ministry continues to coordinate with Ambrey and the specialised companies appointed by it, in cooperation with the Environment Authority and the relevant national authorities, to ensure the readiness of the necessary resources and equipment and their deployment whenever weather and sea conditions permit, in accordance with the approved environmental and technical assessments and requirements.

He explained that the difficult weather conditions during the Khareef (monsoon) season, accompanied by strong winds and high sea waves, have created exceptional technical and operational challenges that have made it extremely difficult to approach the vessel safely and have limited the implementation of the required marine operations.

In addition, the waters surrounding the vessel's grounding site are shallow and rocky, with limited precise marine and hydrographic data available to determine water depths and safe approach routes.

He stressed that this has posed an additional challenge for support vessels, whose operation near the grounded vessel requires a high degree of precision to ensure safety. Accordingly, bringing salvage vessels and marine equipment close to the incident site under the current conditions entails operational and navigational risks, which has necessitated exploring alternative means of reaching the vessel and supporting the teams working on board.

He added that the challenges are not limited to the conditions surrounding the vessel, but also extend to the technical condition of the vessel itself, as it is grounded on a rocky area and listing at approximately 17 degrees, resulting in a large part of one side being submerged and making movement and work on board more difficult.

He noted that the presence of oil and seawater on the vessel's deck, combined with strong waves and winds, has made some work areas slippery and unsafe, while there is no reliable operational power source on board to operate the equipment required for salvage operations.

Under these conditions, cargo transfer operations or heavy work cannot begin before minimum safety requirements are met and work areas on board the vessel are secured.

He stated that the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, in coordination with the relevant national authorities, engaged the international company Ambrey, given its extensive experience and expertise in handling marine salvage operations involving incidents of this nature.

A large number of these experts described the task of dealing with the difficult and complex situation of the oil tanker stranded at Al Qibliyah Islands as one of the most difficult and complex cases.

Technical teams from the Ministry and the relevant national authorities, together with international experts, are developing realistic, phased plans suited to the exceptional condition of the vessel and the surrounding marine conditions.

The Director General of Maritime Affairs at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology added that the current priority is to secure a suitable and safe working environment for the technical teams by cleaning and preparing work areas, conducting safety inspections and gas and oxygen measurements, identifying suitable locations for installing equipment, and preparing and transporting generators, technical equipment and the necessary salvage equipment to enable the teams to carry out subsequent operations. He pointed out that, as some of this equipment cannot be transported by sea under the current conditions, aerial support is being used to transport experts and equipment onto the vessel's deck, allowing technical and preparatory work to continue until sea conditions improve and support vessels are able to approach safely.

He noted that, in parallel with securing the working environment, the technical teams are assessing and implementing possible solutions to limit the continued leakage and maintain, as far as possible, the stability of the vessel and its cargo.

Among the technical options being pursued is the internal transfer of oil from damaged tanks to intact and safe tanks within the vessel, whenever the vessel's condition and safety requirements permit, with the aim of reducing the quantity of oil exposed to leakage and limiting the pressures and risks associated with the damaged tanks.

He explained that this process requires the preparation of power equipment, pumps and supporting equipment, in addition to continuous verification of the vessel's stability, the integrity of the tanks and the operational conditions before any internal transfer operation is carried out.

He also explained that marine and hydrographic surveys are being conducted in the areas surrounding the vessel and along the routes approaching it, with the aim of providing accurate data on water depths, the nature of the seabed and navigational hazards, and identifying safe routes and locations that can be used by salvage and support vessels during the upcoming stages.

He said these surveys represent an essential step before vessels with a deep draught are allowed to enter the vicinity of the grounded vessel, particularly given the rocky and shallow nature of the area. He indicated that these measures collectively aim to create the conditions necessary to move safely to the main phase of the operation, namely transferring the oil cargo from the grounded vessel to another vessel equipped for this purpose.

Reaching this stage requires completing the process of securing the working environment on board the vessel, providing power sources and equipment, addressing the risks associated with the damaged tanks, completing the marine surveys, identifying safe locations and approach routes for support vessels, and selecting a suitable offshore location for carrying out the operation.

He stressed that the phased implementation of these operations is based on safety considerations and the continuous technical assessment of the situation, with the safety of the teams, protection of the marine environment and prevention of any deterioration in the vessel's condition remaining key priorities.

Mohammed Abdullah Al Rawahi, Director General of Maritime Affairs at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, indicated that the Ministry, in coordination with the relevant national authorities, Ambrey and international experts, continues to follow up on the implementation of these operations and to work on providing the necessary technical and logistical requirements, with the aim of carrying out the cargo transfer operation and handling the vessel with the highest possible level of safety and efficiency when weather conditions permit. -ONA

Meeting held on grounding incident of Caroline Bezengi

MUSCAT: The Media and Public Awareness Sector of the National Committee for Emergency Management held yesterday a meeting chaired by Mohammed Said Al Balushi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information and Head of the Sector, to follow up on the media and public awareness aspects pertaining to the grounding incident of the vessel Caroline Bezengi off the coast of Al Hallaniyat Islands.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of Information, reviewed the latest developments of the incident, the frameworks and mechanisms for media engagement and the ongoing efforts to monitor its evolution. It also examined the role of media outlets in conveying accurate and reliable information to the public, as well as addressing rumors and misinformation.

Furthermore, the meeting discussed a number of topics related to media, awareness and guidance work, alongside ways to enhance coordination among relevant authorities.

This aims to contribute to raising community awareness and ensuring that information and updates are handled strictly through official sources and channels in Oman. -ONA

TIMES OF OMAN

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COMMENTARY

The Hormuz Connectivity Doctrine

Beyond Chokepoints, Bypasses and Strategic Vulnerability

1 Reframing the Hormuz Question

The Strait of Hormuz, situated between Oman and Iran, is one of the world's most consequential maritime passages. It connects the Arabian Gulf with the Sea of Oman, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the wider global trading system.

For decades, strategic discussion has tended to frame Hormuz principally as a vulnerability: how can oil and gas bypass it, how much alternative capacity exists outside it, and what routes could be developed if passage through the Strait were interrupted?

The recent war unleashed by the United States and Israel against Iran, and the disruption that followed, have given these questions new urgency. Before the war, Hormuz was open and functioning as the principal maritime artery of the Gulf. The crisis demonstrated both the extraordinary consequences of disruption and the limitations of treating bypass infrastructure as a substitute for the Strait.

This paper, therefore, reframes the question. It asks not simply how Hormuz can be bypassed, but how the economic system centred upon Hormuz can be made more resilient.

That distinction changes the analysis. Pipelines, ports, railways, storage facilities and logistics corridors remain important, but they become components of a larger network rather than substitutes competing to replace the Strait. The proposition advanced here is that the strategic future of Hormuz lies in transforming the concept of a vulnerable chokepoint into that of a protected, diversified and interconnected network.

2 Hormuz: From chokepoint to connector

Hormuz is commonly described through energy statistics. In the first half of 2025, approximately 20.9 million barrels per day of petroleum liquids passed through the Strait, while LNG flows averaged about 11.4 billion cubic feet per day. This represented roughly one-quarter of globally traded maritime oil and more than one-fifth of global LNG trade.

Those figures describe only part of Hormuz's function. The Strait carries hydrocarbons outward, but it also carries food, machinery, vehicles, industrial inputs and manufactured goods inward. Petrochemicals, metals, fertilizers and increasingly diversified Gulf exports move in the opposite direction. Hormuz is consequently not merely an oil-export passage; it is a two-way commercial connector.

This distinction becomes more important as Gulf economies diversify. The strategic importance of Hormuz can no longer adequately be measured only in barrels of oil. The 2026 disruption has demonstrated how widely the consequences can spread, extending beyond energy into freight, insurance, fertilizers, food prices, inflation and public finances, with particularly serious consequences for vulnerable economies.

The appropriate strategic unit of analysis is therefore not the Strait alone, but the economic network that converges upon it.

3 Why Hormuz cannot be replaced

Alternative infrastructure can reduce exposure to disruption, but no presently credible combination of bypass routes can reproduce the scale, flexibility and commercial breadth of Hormuz.

Oil pipelines can redirect particular volumes. Railways can shift some merchandise trade. Alternative ports can provide additional gateways. Storage can absorb temporary shocks. None individually reproduces the integrated maritime system represented by Hormuz.

The 2026 crisis illustrates the scale of the problem. In August, Saudi Aramco President and CEO Amin Nasser estimated that more than 2.6 billion barrels of oil had effectively been lost from the global market since the outbreak of the war and that, even if Hormuz reopened immediately, rebuilding inventories could take approximately eighteen months.

This demonstrates an important distinction between buffers and flows. Strategic inventories can cushion disruption for a period; only functioning infrastructure can maintain sustained movement of energy and merchandise. The objective should therefore be neither dependent upon Hormuz nor the illusion that it can be replaced, but redundancy around an indispensable maritime artery.

This limitation was stated particularly starkly by Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, Deputy Chairman and CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, who observed during CERAWeek 2026 that "there is no alternative to the Strait of Hormuz." His point is especially significant for Kuwait, which lacks an independent maritime export outlet outside the Gulf. The practical implication is not that alternative infrastructure is unnecessary, but that it should be understood as redundancy and resilience—not replacement.

Recent claims that the Strait could soon become strategically "irrelevant" require much more careful scrutiny. U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has argued that within roughly two years the Strait could become "just another body of water," with 50–70 per cent of the energy now moving through it redirected through underground pipelines. The proposition confuses the ability to reroute some crude oil with the replacement of Hormuz as an energy and commercial system. The International Energy Agency reports that only Saudi Arabia and the UAE presently possess operational crude-oil bypass pipelines, with roughly 3.5–5.5 million barrels per day of available rerouting capacity. More decisively, it states that there are no alternative routes capable of bringing Qatar's and the UAE's LNG volumes to the global market outside their existing liquefaction-and-shipping system; those LNG flows alone account for almost one-fifth of global LNG trade. A pipeline forecast therefore cannot credibly make Hormuz irrelevant to energy, still less to the two-way merchandise trade that pipelines do not carry.

The widely cited Goldman Sachs estimate should likewise be treated as a conditional scenario rather than as demonstrated future capacity. Public reporting attributes to Goldman an estimate that more than 45 per cent of pre-war Gulf oil exports could gain bypass capacity by the end of 2027 and more than 60 per cent by the end of 2028, based on a portfolio of seven projects that includes infrastructure under construction, planned projects and possible revivals of older corridors. Such a figure is not equivalent to dependable operating throughput. It depends on projects being completed on schedule, feeder systems being able to supply them, pumping and storage capacity being available, terminals being able to load the volumes, cross-border political and security arrangements remaining reliable, and sufficient tanker and downstream logistics being in place. The IEA itself cautions that the logistics and supply chains required to reroute substantial Gulf flows have not been robustly tested.

The distinction is fundamental: gross or theoretical bypass capacity is not the same as net, dependable and market-usable substitution capacity. Even if the Goldman scenario were fully achieved for crude oil, it would still leave LNG, petroleum products, inward merchandise trade, fertilizers, food, machinery, vehicles and other commercial flows dependent on maritime connectivity through and around Hormuz. These projections are therefore useful as measures of possible redundancy; they do not substantiate the stronger claim that Hormuz can be engineered out of regional geography.

4 What the alternatives actually provide

Comparisons of alternative routes become misleading when operating infrastructure, projects under construction and speculative proposals are presented as though they represented equivalent capacity. Alternatives should therefore be classified consistently as operating infrastructure; committed or under-construction infrastructure; proposed projects; or conceptual possibilities.

4.1 Saudi Arabia — An Alternative Export Route

Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline provides access from the Kingdom's eastern producing regions to the Red Sea. It represents substantial strategic infrastructure because it allows significant Saudi crude volumes to reach an alternative coast without transiting Hormuz. Its strategic function should nevertheless be defined accurately: it is principally a Saudi national export-diversification route, not a replacement for Hormuz as the Gulf's wider commercial gateway.

4.2 UAE (Abu Dhabi–Fujairah) — A Bypass Asset

The UAE's Abu Dhabi–Fujairah crude-oil pipeline terminates at Fujairah outside Hormuz and represents perhaps the clearest existing example of a dedicated bypass asset. The existing line has capacity of about 1.8 million barrels per day. ADNOC is constructing a second line of about 1.5 million barrels per day, expected to become operational in 2027, while Fujairah also provides major crude-storage capacity. This materially strengthens the UAE's national resilience and demonstrates the value of investment in redundancy. Yet its function remains specific to particular crude flows: it cannot reproduce Hormuz's LNG role, its wider petroleum-product movements or its two-way merchandise connectivity.

4.3 Iraq–Türkiye — An Operating Mediterranean Outlet

The Iraq–Türkiye pipeline to Ceyhan is fundamentally different from many proposed alternatives because it constitutes established infrastructure linking northern Iraq to the Mediterranean. Its strategic relevance lies in giving Iraq access to a second maritime geography, although actual flows, infrastructure condition, political arrangements and the much longer onward voyage to Asian markets remain important when comparing nominal capacity with dependable operating capacity. It is an important Iraqi national diversification mechanism rather than a substitute for Hormuz for the Gulf system as a whole.

4.4 Iraq–Syria — The Kirkuk–Baniyas Possibility

Iraq is also developing the Basra–Haditha corridor, on which work began in 2026 with a planned capacity of about 2.5 million barrels per day. This is strategically important because it could connect southern production toward possible western or northern outlets. But Haditha is an internal junction, not itself a seaborne export terminal: onward access toward Ceyhan, Baniyas or Aqaba would require additional infrastructure, cross-border agreements, financing, security and terminal capacity. The historic Kirkuk–Baniyas line remains a separate rehabilitation possibility; it has been out of operation after serious damage. These projects strengthen Iraq's diversification options, but their announced design capacities should not be counted as immediately available Hormuz-bypass capacity.

4.5 Yemen and the Red Sea

Geography suggests possible corridors through Yemen toward the Arabian Sea or Red Sea, but geography alone does not make viable infrastructure. Yemen's fragmented political authority, damaged infrastructure and persistent security problems make a large-scale dependable transit corridor unrealistic in the foreseeable future. Any theoretical savings from bypassing Hormuz must also be weighed against construction, security and continuing operating costs.

4.6 Pakistan–India Land Connections

Pakistan and India are major Asian energy markets, but land-based connections from the Arabian Gulf toward South Asia face a basic geographic complication. Routes would normally have to cross or involve Iran, potentially reintroducing the geopolitical dependence that a Hormuz bypass is intended to reduce. They would also require cross-border agreements, rights-of-way, pumping and storage infrastructure, and dependable security across several jurisdictions. Such connections may have value as longer-term regional integration projects, but they cannot presently be treated as independent substitutes for Hormuz.

4.7 Deep-Water Undersea Pipelines

Deep-water pipelines should not be dismissed as technically impossible. The proposed Middle East–India Deepwater Pipeline (MEI-DP), designed to carry gas from Oman to India at depths approaching 3,450 metres, shows that advances in offshore engineering make such connections increasingly feasible. They nevertheless remain exceptionally demanding: long distances, difficult seabed and seismic conditions, high capital cost, and specialised inspection and repair requirements.

Their more fundamental limitation is strategic. A subsea pipeline is a fixed point-to-point system carrying a particular commodity; it lacks the destination flexibility of shipping and cannot reproduce Hormuz's simultaneous movement of crude oil, LNG, petroleum products and two-way merchandise trade. Deep-water pipelines may therefore add valuable redundancy for selected energy flows, but they cannot substitute for the Strait. Technical feasibility does not establish strategic substitutability.

4.8 What the Alternatives Tell Us

The pattern is consistent.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE possess valuable working alternatives, but neither replicates the full function of Hormuz. Iraqi corridors primarily diversify Iraq's own exports. Yemen is not presently feasible. Pakistan–India land routes encounter Iranian transit and cross-border dependencies, while deep-water pipelines, although technically conceivable, remain fixed, commodity-specific and capital-intensive. Diversification can reduce concentration risk; it does not eliminate geographic dependence. The proper test is not whether an asset can bypass the Strait for one flow, but whether it can reproduce the scale, flexibility and two-way commercial connectivity that Hormuz provides.

5 From route diversification to network resilience

The traditional approach asks which route can replace Hormuz. A more useful question is: how many independent connections can remain functional when one component of the system is disrupted? That moves strategic planning from route diversification to network resilience.

A resilient network combines maritime routes, pipelines, ports, railways, storage, refining, LNG facilities, digital logistics and, increasingly, future hydrogen and ammonia supply chains. Its strength depends not merely on how many alternatives exist but on their capacity, reliability, independence and interoperability.

LNG exposes the limits of an oil-pipeline-centred bypass strategy particularly clearly. Qatar's LNG exports depend on large, location-specific liquefaction, storage and loading complexes and specialised carriers; the IEA states that there is presently no alternative route capable of bringing Qatari and Emirati LNG volumes to the global market. Reproducing such an export system outside the Gulf would require not merely a pipeline but an entire parallel industrial chain. Geography also matters after a bypass is reached: Mediterranean or Red Sea outlets may diversify origin risk, but for cargoes whose principal customers are in Asia they can lengthen voyages, add handling and transport costs, and in some cases introduce exposure to other strategic passages such as Bab el-Mandeb or Suez. Diversification can therefore reduce concentration risk while simultaneously creating new costs and vulnerabilities.

Diversification can merely relocate vulnerability. A pipeline bypassing Hormuz but terminating at another exposed location may redistribute rather than eliminate risk. A corridor traversing unstable jurisdictions may exchange maritime risk for geopolitical risk on land. Redirecting trade through another narrow maritime passage may create a new concentration of risk while adding substantial capital and operating costs. The purpose of resilience is therefore to create a network in which the failure of any one component does not disable the whole.

Network resilience also depends on the less visible infrastructure of maritime commerce: safe navigation, functioning ports, insurance and finance, search and rescue, environmental response, emergency communications and incident notification. Technology can strengthen this system through AI, digital twins and satellite monitoring, while greater digitisation also creates cyber risks that must be managed.

6 Oman — A geographic-economic ecosystem

Oman's greatest strategic contribution may not be any single pipeline, railway or port. It is geography itself.

Unlike states whose diversification strategies principally involve constructing a bypass around a particular chokepoint, Oman possesses optionality across several interconnected maritime geographies: Hormuz, the Sea of Oman, the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean. Through its historical and commercial connections with East Africa, that geography can potentially reach still farther toward African continental corridors and ultimately the Atlantic.

This produces an important strategic distinction: the UAE has developed a bypass asset; Saudi Arabia has developed an alternative export route; Oman possesses a connectivity geography.

Oman's ports should consequently not be viewed as a list of separate facilities. They constitute a geographic-economic ecosystem.

Khasab anchors Oman directly on the Strait of Hormuz and gives the Sultanate a physical presence at one of the world's most important maritime passages. Its potential extends beyond conventional port operations. Its location gives Khasab scope to develop a stronger marine-services role for vessels transiting Hormuz, complementing Oman's responsibilities and opportunities as one of the Strait's two littoral states.

Sohar combines industrial, maritime and increasingly rail connectivity. Hafeet Rail substantially strengthens this position. The project's official description provides for a 238-kilometre railway from Sohar Port into the UAE national rail network toward Abu Dhabi. Sohar can therefore become a significant land-maritime interface linking Oman's ocean-facing geography with the economic centres of the UAE.

Suwaiq adds another node along the Batinah coast, contributing flexibility and redundancy within Oman's northern maritime network. Muscat/Sultan Qaboos occupies a central position on the Sea of Oman; although the commercial role of Port Sultan Qaboos has evolved, Muscat remains geographically important within the chain connecting northern Oman with the Arabian Sea.

Duqm provides deep-water access directly to the Arabian Sea, extensive land for industrial and logistics development, and substantial distance from the immediate concentration of risk around Hormuz. Its port, industrial zone, refinery and future-energy potential give it a particularly important role.

Salalah provides the southern anchor. As one of the world's major container transshipment ports, positioned close to the principal East-West shipping routes of the Indian Ocean, it connects Oman naturally with Asia, East Africa, the Red Sea approaches and wider global shipping networks.

Taken together, Khasab, Sohar, Suwaiq, Muscat/Sultan Qaboos, Duqm and Salalah form a geographic-economic ecosystem extending from Hormuz through the Sea of Oman and Arabian Sea into the Indian Ocean, combining maritime access with industrial, logistics, rail and future-energy capabilities.

The western Indian Ocean also opens Oman's strategic horizon toward East Africa. African infrastructure such as the TAZARA Railway and Lobito Corridor illustrates the potential for Indian Ocean maritime access to connect with continental African transport networks and, ultimately, Atlantic-facing trade routes. This does not mean that Oman itself possesses or controls those corridors. It means that its maritime geography gives it potential to become an interconnector between Gulf, Asian, East African and wider African logistics systems.

7 Asia and the eastward reorientation of Hormuz

Perhaps the most consequential transformation in the strategic geography of Hormuz is the movement of its economic centre of gravity eastward.

The US Energy Information Administration estimates that in the first half of 2025 approximately 89 per cent of crude oil and condensate passing through Hormuz went to Asian markets. China, India, Japan and South Korea together accounted for approximately 74 per cent of those flows. This is more than an energy statistic; it changes the geopolitical geometry of Hormuz.

The traditional conceptual map was broadly Gulf West. The emerging economic reality is increasingly Gulf Asia. The double arrow is crucial. Asian economies import Gulf energy, while Gulf economies import Asian machinery, technology, vehicles, electronics, industrial equipment and manufactured goods. The relationship is therefore not simply one of producers supplying consumers, but an increasingly integrated two-way commercial system.

That leads to a strategic question: if Asia bears an increasing share of the economic consequences of disruption in Hormuz, should Asia also bear an increasing share of the investment required for Hormuz resilience? Such participation need not be conceived primarily in military terms.

It could be economic and infrastructural: investment in ports, strategic storage, refining, LNG, rail and logistics systems, digital trade infrastructure, industrial zones, hydrogen, ammonia and other future-energy networks.

Major Asian economies would thereby move from being predominantly customers of Gulf hydrocarbons toward becoming stakeholders in Gulf-Asian connectivity resilience.

Infrastructure whose benefits extend simultaneously to Gulf producers and Asian consumers need not necessarily be financed by the country in which the physical asset happens to be located.

8 Iran — inclusion without dependence

No durable architecture for Hormuz can ignore Iran. Iran is, together with Oman, one of the Strait's two littoral states.

Its Gulf and Sea of Oman coastline and its geographical position make it an unavoidable participant in any durable regional system.

Diversification should therefore not become a disguised policy of containment.

An infrastructure architecture deliberately designed around Iran's permanent exclusion could reinforce geopolitical division rather than resilience. But inclusion is not the same as dependence.

Interdependence does not automatically create security. Where infrastructure becomes excessively concentrated, interdependence itself can create coercive leverage. The more sophisticated principle is therefore inclusion without dependence.

Iran should have opportunities to participate in regional trade, energy and connectivity arrangements, while the wider system should contain sufficient independent routes, ports, storage and infrastructure to ensure that no single participant can disable it. The principle should apply equally to every participating state, not only Iran.

This approach rejects two potentially dangerous extremes: exclusion that turns diversification into containment, and dependence that allows interconnection to become strategic vulnerability. The objective is resilient interdependence.

9 The economics of resilience

Redundancy is expensive. Pipelines require substantial capital. Ports require terminals, storage and hinterland connections. Railways require cross-border coordination and sufficient freight. Strategic inventories immobilize capital. Spare capacity may appear commercially inefficient during periods of stability.

But resilience should not be evaluated only against the cost of normal operations. Its relevant comparator is the economic cost of systemic disruption. The 2026 experience has provided an unusually powerful demonstration, while UNCTAD's analysis shows how the effects propagate beyond oil through freight, insurance, fertilizer, food prices, inflation, financial conditions and government budgets.

Infrastructure that appears redundant in normal times can therefore possess substantial strategic option value. A pipeline operating below maximum capacity may still be economically valuable if its availability prevents catastrophic losses during a crisis. The same applies to spare port capacity, storage and alternative railway connections.

This suggests a broader approach to project appraisal. Resilience infrastructure should be evaluated not solely according to its normal commercial utilization but also according to the economic losses it can prevent during disruption. Where the benefits accrue to Gulf producers, Asian consumers and the wider global economy, the costs of resilience need not fall exclusively on Gulf governments.

10 The Hormuz connectivity doctrine — principles and implementation, 2026–2035

The Hormuz Connectivity Doctrine is based not on defending dependence upon Hormuz, nor on attempting to engineer Hormuz out of regional geography, but on building sufficient connectivity around it that disruption of one component does not paralyse the whole. In practical terms, the doctrine seeks to keep Hormuz open while building enough independent connections around it to prevent disruption at one point from becoming a systemic economic crisis.

First, protect the Strait and preserve freedom of navigation while strengthening the infrastructure that reduces the consequences of temporary disruption. This requires more than naval security alone: dependable navigation, search and rescue, emergency communications, environmental response, functioning insurance and finance, and agreed mechanisms for rapid incident notification should form part of a standing regional resilience architecture. The objective is to prevent a local incident from escalating into a prolonged interruption of global trade.

Second, multiply independent connections through pipelines, ports, railways, storage, refining and logistics rather than searching for a single substitute for Hormuz. Redundancy should be deliberately diversified across modes and geography so that the failure of one route does not disable the system as a whole. Existing infrastructure should be used more effectively before costly new corridors are built, and every major investment should be tested against capacity, cost, security, commercial utility and the resilience it provides in an emergency. Diversification reduces concentration risk; it does not eliminate geographic dependence. Technical feasibility does not establish strategic substitutability: a project should be credited for the flows it can reliably divert, not treated as a replacement for the wider system it cannot reproduce.

Third, develop Oman's geographic-economic ecosystem as an integrated network extending from Hormuz through the Sea of Oman and Arabian Sea into the Indian Ocean and toward East Africa. Khasab, Sohar, Suwaiq, Muscat/Sultan Qaboos, Duqm and Salalah should be planned as complementary nodes linked to industrial zones, storage, road and rail networks and international shipping routes. Hafeet Rail strengthens the northern land connection, while Salalah's position on East-West shipping lanes and links toward East Africa give the network a wider Indian Ocean dimension.

Fourth, recognize Asia as both a major stakeholder and a potential investor in the resilience of Gulf-Asian trade and energy connectivity. Asian economies are not merely purchasers of Gulf hydrocarbons: they are also major suppliers of manufactured goods, machinery, vehicles, technology and investment to the Gulf. Their direct interest in continuity therefore justifies deeper participation in strategic storage, refining, LNG facilities, ports, logistics, digital infrastructure and future-energy projects, turning dependence into shared investment in resilience.

Fifth, include Iran in regional connectivity while ensuring that neither Iran nor any other single participant can acquire disabling leverage over the wider network. Iran is one of the Strait's two littoral states and cannot realistically be engineered out of Hormuz's geography. Commercial inclusion, communication and practical cooperation can create incentives for stability, but the network should remain sufficiently diversified that no state, route or facility becomes indispensable enough to hold the wider system hostage.

Sixth, evaluate resilience infrastructure partly according to the economic losses it can prevent during disruption, rather than solely according to normal commercial utilization. A pipeline, storage terminal, railway or reserve facility may appear underused in normal conditions yet possess substantial strategic value if it prevents even a fraction of the losses caused by a prolonged interruption. Project appraisal should therefore incorporate an explicit resilience value alongside conventional financial returns, while still demanding technical feasibility, disciplined cost control and useful commercial application in normal times.

Implementation between 2026 and 2035 should follow these principles pragmatically. Existing Saudi, UAE, Omani and Iraqi infrastructure should be assessed according to dependable operating capacity rather than theoretical maximum capacity, and projects should be consistently classified as operating, committed or under construction, proposed, or conceptual.

Cross-border connectivity should receive particular attention. Hafeet Rail illustrates how a port becomes strategically more valuable when its hinterland extends across national boundaries. Similar opportunities may arise through railways, roads, pipelines, electricity networks, storage and digital logistics.

Oman could increasingly plan Khasab, Sohar, Suwaiq, Muscat/Sultan Qaboos, Duqm and Salalah as complementary parts of one national connectivity ecosystem rather than as isolated facilities. Gulf and Asian economies could, meanwhile, establish structured mechanisms for co-investment in strategic storage, refining, LNG, ports, logistics and future-energy infrastructure.

The doctrine would thus replace the false choice between dependence and bypass with the more durable objective of resilient interdependence.

11 Conclusion — from vulnerability to resilient interdependence

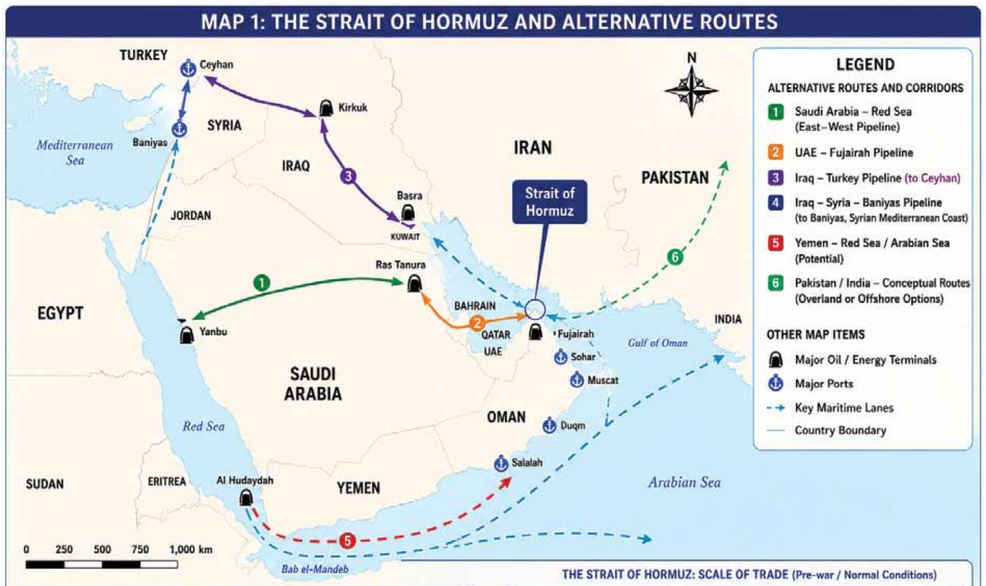
The debate surrounding Hormuz has too often been framed as a search for escape routes. Saudi Arabia's western infrastructure provides substantial national redundancy. The UAE's Abu Dhabi–Fujairah connection provides a significant bypass capability. Iraq's northern outlet through Türkiye and potentially its western connection through Syria provide diversification opportunities. Other concepts may eventually add further options.

But the alternatives do not collectively eliminate the strategic importance of Hormuz. They demonstrate something more useful: resilience comes from networks.

Oman's geography provides an unusually important foundation for such a network. Asia's growing dependence on Gulf energy—and the Gulf's growing integration with Asian production and trade—provides its economic logic. Iran's unavoidable geography requires inclusion, while the dangers of concentrated dependence require redundancy.

Hormuz should therefore ultimately be viewed not simply as a chokepoint to be avoided, but as the principal maritime connector between the Arabian Gulf and the global economy. The strategic objective should not be to make Hormuz irrelevant. It should be to make disruption of Hormuz progressively less capable of disrupting the economic system built around it.

The strategic future of Hormuz lies neither in dependence nor avoidance. It lies in transforming a chokepoint into a network: protecting the Strait, multiplying the connections around it, and making the prosperity created by its openness greater than the leverage created by its disruption.



ENERGY FLOWS (First Half 2025)

Oil & Condensate	104.4 million barrels per day ~20% of global petroleum liquids consumption
LNG	11.4 billion cubic feet per day

THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ: SCALE OF TRADE (Pre-war / Normal Conditions)

NON-ENERGY TRADE (Pre-war / Normal Conditions)

All Maritime Trade (by volume)	~11% of global maritime trade
Seaborne Container Trade	~38% of global container trade
Dry Bulk Trade	~29% of global dry bulk trade
Container Vessels (mid-2025)	~17% of daily transits (alongside bulk carriers and others)

COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

Table 1. Comparative Assessment of Alternative Bypass Corridors

No.	Alternative	Status	Principal Function	Main Advantage	Principal Limitation
1	Saudi Arabia — East–West Pipeline	Operating	Saudi crude export diversification to Red Sea	Large existing capacity outside Hormuz	Primarily a Saudi national route
2	UAE (Abu Dhabi–Fujairah)	Operating / expanding	UAE crude bypass to Fujairah; second line due 2027	Direct outlet outside Hormuz; storage support	Crude-specific; does not solve LNG or wider Gulf trade
3	Iraq–Türkiye / Ceyhan	Operating / constrained	Northern Iraqi access to Mediterranean	Established alternative maritime outlet	Political, operational and capacity constraints
4	Iraq — Basra–Haditha / western outlets	Under construction / proposed extensions	Link southern crude toward possible Ceyhan, Baniyas or Aqaba outlets	Potential large-scale Iraqi diversification	Haditha is not a seaport; onward links, security, cost and transit dependence remain
5	Yemen / Red Sea–Arabian Sea	Conceptual	Possible southern export/transit route	Potential geographic avoidance of Hormuz	State fragmentation, security and high cost
6	Pakistan–India land connections	Conceptual	Potential South Asian energy corridor	Closer access toward major Asian markets	Iran transit, cross-border dependence and infrastructure cost
7	Deep-water undersea pipelines	Conceptual / technically feasible	Fixed point-to-point oil or gas transport	Avoids land transit and Hormuz for selected flows	Extreme depth/terrain, high capital and repair demands; commodity-specific and inflexible

The comparison shows that these routes are principally national diversification mechanisms rather than substitutes for Hormuz. Announced design capacity should not be confused with dependable operating bypass capacity, and oil-pipeline figures do not capture LNG or the Strait's wider two-way commercial function. Oman is treated separately in Section 6 because its strategic significance is broader: it constitutes a geographic-economic connectivity ecosystem rather than a mere bypass alternative.

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T OMAN

COMMENTARY

Remembering Mr. Hakimi: The Humble Heart Behind Oman's Cleopatra Shop

MOHAMED ISSA AL ZADJALI
Chairman, Muscat Media Group

In every community, there are places that become landmarks—not just because of what they sell, but because of who runs them. Ever since opening its doors back in 1975, the Cleopatra shop became one such iconic place in Oman. At its centre was Mr. Hakimi: A man whose humility, warmth, and quiet generosity left a lasting mark on everyone who crossed his threshold.

Hakimi's story in Oman began in the early 1970s when he arrived from Iran, bringing with him a strong work ethic, deep values, and a gentle spirit. It did not take long for him to plant his roots in Omani soil and build a life grounded in community and hard work.

In 1975, he visited the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to register a new company. That time his friend told him to register the company as Cleopatra Trading and Contracting, which would give him good business and income. By the time I visited him in his shop in the 1990s, Mr. Hakimi had established himself not just as a businessman, but as a genuine friend to everyone. Whether you were a first-time visitor or a daily regular, he greeted you with open arms and a humble spirit that instantly made you feel like family. Stepping into his shop meant slowing down for a warm smile and a sincere chat.

A Final Farewell: A Life Well Lived

When Mr. Hakimi passed away on August 7, 2026, the true measure of his impact became profoundly clear. At his funeral, a vast crowd gathered to pay their respects—a moving testament to the countless lives he touched over more than five decades.

People from all walks of life came together to stand with his grieving family.

Mr. Hakimi is survived by his loving wife and his two sons, Ahmed and Hameed, who carry forward his noble values and precious memory. Amidst their grief, his family expressed deep gratitude to everyone who showed up to offer comfort and support during those difficult days. Seeing the community rally around them was a powerful reminder of the deep love and respect Mr. Hakimi had earned throughout his remarkable life.

Mr. Hakimi's legacy lives on in the hearts of all who knew him. He proved that true success is built on kindness, integrity, and genuine human connection. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ (To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return.)

MONASTIR

UTAS branch in Ibri bags awards at University Theatre Festival in Tunisia

TUNIS: The branch of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in the Wilayat of Ibri, Governorate of Al Dhahirah, made a global accomplishment in the field of 'University Theatre', during its participation in the activities of the 20th edition of the International University Theatre Festival, held in the city of Monastir in the Republic of Tunisia from 8 to 17 August 2026.

The festival brought together about 350 students and innovators from 15 Arab and foreign countries. It was attended by Dr. Hilal bin Abdullah Al Sinani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Tunisia.

The UTAS student theatre group bagged a number of awards, including first place in the Best Scenography Award contest and second place in the Best Actor Award contest (through the contributions of student Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al Ghafri), in addition to an 'Encouragement Award' for the Best Play Script (awarded to writer Maram Ali Al Muqbali). The UTAS also received an award from the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

The Omani envoy commended the participation of Omani students, noting that such a festival offered an opportunity for their students to exchange experiences and ideas with their counterparts from different countries. -ONA

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OCA

Charity golf event to support cancer patients at Lavie course on Oct 3

CHARITY: The tournament is scheduled to take place on October 3 at the Lavie Golf Course, Tivoli Hotel, with participation from golfers, corporates, sponsors, media partners, and community members. -ONA

MUSCAT: Oman Cancer Association (OCA) held a press conference on Monday to announce the details of a charity golf tournament, organised as part of the Association's ongoing efforts to support cancer patients and their families, while raising public awareness about the disease and the critical importance of early detection.

The tournament is scheduled to take place on October 3 at the Lavie Golf Course, Tivoli Hotel, with participation from golfers, corporates, sponsors, media partners, and community members. All proceeds will be allocated to support the Association's programs and services for cancer patients and their families.

The tournament is held within the framework of October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month activities, and aims to synergize sports and charitable work while fostering community engagement in the fight against cancer and promoting awareness of prevention and early detection. -ONA

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NCSI

General import price index in Oman rises by 5.8% in Q1 2026

Muscat: The general import price index in the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 5.8% during the first quarter of 2026, compared with the corresponding quarter of 2025, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The statistics showed that the miscellaneous manufactured articles group recorded the highest increase, rising by 11.2%, followed by the machinery and transport equipment group at 9.2%, and the beverages and tobacco group at 7.8%.

The animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes group also rose by 4.1%, while chemicals and related products increased by 1.7%. The food and live animals group recorded a rise of 1.3%.

In contrast, some groups recorded declines, led by crude materials, inedible, except fuels, which fell by 14.6%, followed by mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials, down by 10.7%, and manufactured goods classified chiefly by material, which decreased by 2.5%.

On a quarterly comparison basis, the general import price index rose by 0.5% compared with the fourth quarter of 2025.

This increase was driven by a 26.1% rise in the prices of the mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials group, followed by the beverages and tobacco group at 4.0%, and the machinery and transport equipment group at 2.2%.

The food and live animals group also increased by 0.2%.

In contrast, prices of the miscellaneous manufactured articles group declined by 11.7%, while animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes fell by 7.8%. Chemicals and related products decreased by 4.8%, crude materials, inedible, except fuels, declined by 4.0%, and manufactured goods classified chiefly by material fell by 1.5%.

– ONA

CEPA creates new avenues for trade, investment

Oman's commitments cover 98.08% of tariff lines, representing 99.38% of the value of Indian exports to Oman, while India's commitments cover 77.79% of its tariff lines, representing 94.81% of the value of its imports

SALALAH: An awareness workshop on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of India, held on Monday in the Wilayat of Salalah, examined the opportunities available to the Omani private sector under the agreement, along with the requirements for market access to India, mechanisms for utilizing tariff reductions and exemptions, and rules of origin.

The workshop, organised by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), addressed the agreement's components and advantages, related customs procedures, as well as export financing and insurance opportunities, and the challenges Omani enterprises may face when entering the Indian market, alongside strategies to overcome them.

Faisal Abdullah Al Rowas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, affirmed that the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement represents a new economic dimension in the trajectory of Omani-Indian relations, opening broader horizons for cooperation, growth, and investment.

This, he noted, will strengthen trade ties between the two nations and elevate them to deeper and more sustainable levels.

On his turn, Shri Prashant Pise, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Sultanate of Oman, emphasised in a statement the importance of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in advancing Omani-Indian relations. He noted that the agreement reflects the shared commitment to elevate economic, trade, and investment cooperation to broader levels, thereby reinforcing mutual interests and opening new avenues for collaboration between the two countries.

The workshop featured a presentation titled "An Overview of Export Potential for Omani Products Under the Agreement," which addressed key pathways for the Omani private sector to benefit from the agreement, emphasising the importance of studying the Indian market, understanding demand patterns, and identifying opportunities available for Omani products.

It also covered enhancing the competitiveness of local enterprises and leveraging trade and investment partnerships to expand the base of Omani exporters and open new markets for national products.

Another presentation during the workshop focused on the economic benefits of the agreement, highlighting that it enhances bilateral trade in goods. Oman's commitments cover 98.08% of tariff lines, representing 99.38% of the value of Indian exports to Oman, while India's commitments cover 77.79% of its tariff lines, representing 94.81% of the value of its imports from Oman.

The workshop also included a visual presentation by the Indian side on Indian customs procedures, import documentation, and facilitation measures under the agreement, along with an overview of the procedures and requirements that Omani companies need to be familiar with when entering the Indian market.

A panel discussion entitled "From Agreement to Market: Opportunities and Challenges for the Omani Private Sector in the Indian Market" was held as part of the workshop. It addressed promising sectors, export and investment opportunities, market access requirements, rules of origin, and customs procedures, in addition to challenges facing Omani enterprises and ways to enhance their readiness to leverage the agreement.

This workshop is part of the strategic direction of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry to improve the business environment, expand the economic diversification base, and empower the private sector to benefit from trade and economic agreements.

It also aligns with efforts to strengthen the private sector's capacity to access foreign markets, support the diversification of Omani exports, and open new horizons for small and medium enterprises and Omani companies seeking to expand into international markets.

-ONA

SECOND EDITION

Salalah to host Dhofar International Film Festival

SALALAH: The Wilayat of Salalah, Governorate of Dhofar, will host the second edition of Dhofar International Film Festival from 6 to 9 September 2026.

Organised by Oman Film Society (OFS), the festival reflects an ongoing strategic partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Dhofar Municipality.

The forthcoming edition of the festival will feature 32 films from 16 countries: Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, Iran, South Korea, England, Spain, Russia and Portugal.

Dhofar International Film Festival seeks to enhance the presence of the Sultanate of Oman in the Arab and international arena, support the film industry and promote national talents.

The second edition of the festival will see the felicitation of artistic and media persons from Oman and the Arab world, including Haya Abdul Salam from the State of Kuwait and Bushra Ahmed Razza from Egypt, in addition to Omani artistic and media persons Hilal bin Abdullah Al Araimi, Abdullah Al Sabbah, Salah bin Suleiman Beit Obaid and Salim Al Amri. - ONA

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tenders:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/2026/080	UPGRADING OF EXISTING 33/11KV AL SAAN PRIMARY SUBSTATION FROM 1 X 6 MVA TO 2 X 6 MVA AND ASSOCIATED WORKS	01-September -2026	14-September -2026	525.000
DISC/2026/082	Replacement of Transmission line in Qashroob	01-September -2026	10-September -2026	52.500
DISC/2026/083	Construction of 33/11kV, 2 x 20MVA, Primary Substation designated as Al Sharouq PSS	01-September -2026	14-September -2026	525.000
DISC/2026/084	SUPPLY OF TRANSFORMER 6MVA 33/11KV FOR (NAMA DHOFAR SERVICE (Tanweer	01-September -2026	10-September -2026	52.500

- To purchase the tender document website via the link or the Barcode below: https://isupplier.nama.om:4443/OA_HTML/OA.jsp?OAFunc=XXTEN_TENDER_FLOAT_DISC_F
- Every company wishing to participate in this tender must attach with its bid a bid bond in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman. Any bid that does not contain the bid bond will be disqualified.
- The original bid bond must be submitted in an envelope sealed with red wax and addressed to the chairperson of the minor tender committee and written on outside the Tender name and the Tender number and it should be paced in the tender box in Nama Dhofar Services in Salalah before 03:00 pm of the last day for submitting Bids.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "isupplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The Tender fees are not refundable. However, Tenderers who are holding "Riyada" card issued from public authority for SME development will be exempted from providing the tender fee and the Bid bond.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.

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ص.ب ٢٦٠٩ الرمز البريدي ٢١١ ، صلالة - محافظة ظفار
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مطاحن صلالة
Salalah Mills

SALALAH MILLS COMPANY SAOG

Salalah-Sultanate of Oman

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Shareholders,

The Group delivered a resilient performance during the first half of 2026 despite a challenging operating environment. The Parent Company reported a net profit after tax of ﷼ 1.28 million, while Group total comprehensive income reached ﷼ 2.09 million, supported by positive fair value gains recognized through Other Comprehensive Income.

Performance during the period was impacted by higher wheat procurement costs, weaker export demand, regional supply chain disruptions and the planned start-up losses of our newly established subsidiaries. Despite these challenges, several business units, including Pasta, Packaging, Trading and Laboratory, recorded encouraging operational progress.

Management remains focused on improving operational efficiency, protecting margins, strengthening working capital and accelerating the growth of our new businesses. While market conditions remain challenging, we are confident that the Group is well positioned to deliver sustainable long-term value.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our shareholders, employees, customers and business partners for their continued trust and support.

Warm regards,
Ahmed bin Abdullah Saeed Al Rawas
Chairman, Board of Directors
Salalah Mills Co. SAOG

SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 June 2026 (Expressed in ﷼)

	Group		Parent Company	
	30 June 2026	30 June 2025	30 June 2026	30 June 2025
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	**43,582,569**	44,818,597	**20,160,626**	44,175,029
Right of use assets	**3,200,348**	3,329,234	**2,771,867**	3,329,234
Investment in subsidiaries	**-**	-	**1,940,240**	55,240
Sub-ordinated loan to a subsidiary	**-**	-	**8,050,491**	-
Investment in associates	**2,783,630**	2,496,814	**2,783,630**	2,496,814
Loan given to associate non-current	**2,413,040**	2,457,420	**2,413,040**	2,457,420
Due from related parties non-current	**(0)**	-	**676,141**	1,181,997
Total non-current assets	**51,979,586**	53,102,065	**38,796,036**	53,695,734
Current assets				
Inventories	**19,087,270**	14,371,977	**18,460,155**	14,368,391
Loan given to associate	**61,436**	17,056	**61,436**	17,056
Trade and other receivables	**13,302,088**	15,008,122	**13,080,145**	14,810,682
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	**389,246**	389,246	**389,246**	389,246
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)	**7,632,168**	10,261,659	**7,632,168**	10,261,659
Due from related parties	**463,889**	530,405	**747,194**	844,431
Cash and cash equivalents	**3,260,038**	2,822,629	**2,679,118**	2,425,009
Total current assets	**44,196,135**	43,401,094	**43,049,462**	43,116,474
TOTAL ASSETS	**96,175,722**	96,503,160	**81,845,498**	96,812,208
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Capital and reserves				
Share capital	**17,496,306**	17,496,306	**17,496,306**	17,496,306
Share premium	**3,587,782**	3,587,782	**3,587,782**	3,587,782
legal reserve	**2,487,139**	2,227,975	**2,487,139**	2,227,975
General reserve	**2,891,826**	2,891,826	**2,891,826**	2,891,826
Investment fair value reserve	**936,472**	(2,205,776)	**936,472**	(2,205,776)
Retained earning	**17,475,455**	20,217,687	**19,357,836**	20,583,046
Total capital and reserves	**44,874,980**	44,215,799	**46,757,362**	44,581,158
Non-current liabilities				
Lease liability	**3,227,464**	3,241,731	**3,227,464**	3,241,731
Borrowings non-current	**17,679,292**	19,679,627	**2,489,642**	19,679,627
Staff terminal benefits	**851,198**	758,786	**800,007**	744,755
Deferred tax	**856,246**	932,211	**856,246**	932,683
Total non-current liabilities	**22,614,201**	24,612,355	**7,373,360**	24,598,796
Current liabilities				
Lease liability	**186,191**	182,226	**186,191**	182,226
Borrowings	**23,094,262**	22,617,903	**22,557,811**	22,617,903
Trade and other payables	**5,000,103**	4,570,498	**4,564,789**	4,527,748
Due to related parties	**220,086**	41,996	**220,086**	41,996
Provision for tax	**185,899**	262,383	**185,899**	262,383
Total current liabilities	**28,686,541**	27,675,006	**27,714,776**	27,632,255
Total liabilities	**51,300,742**	52,287,361	**35,088,136**	52,231,051
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	**96,175,722**	96,503,160	**81,845,498**	96,812,209
Net assets per share	**0.718**	0.708	**0.749**	0.714

SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 June 2026 (Expressed in ﷼)

	Group		Parent Company	
	30 June 2026	30 June 2025	30 June 2026	30 June 2025
Revenue	**43,785,168**	45,117,465	**37,108,612**	45,101,180
Cost of sales	**(40,016,809)**	(40,197,940)	**(32,840,842)**	(40,146,977)
Gross profit	**3,768,359**	4,919,524	**4,267,770**	4,954,203
Other income	**677,245**	506,691	**690,693**	507,840
General and administrative expenses	**(3,338,526)**	(2,960,097)	**(2,959,107)**	(2,829,332)
Selling and distribution expenses	**(184,060)**	(98,821)	**(62,533)**	(95,518)
Operating profit for the year	**923,019**	2,367,297	**1,936,823**	2,537,193
Finance expense	**(992,582)**	(754,773)	**(472,450)**	(754,599)
Net profit before tax for the year	**(69,563)**	1,612,524	**1,464,373**	1,782,594
Income tax expense	**(185,899)**	(245,182)	**(185,899)**	(245,182)
Net profit after tax	**(255,462)**	1,367,342	**1,278,474**	1,537,412
Unrealised Fair value gain/loss on investments at fair value through OCI	**1,895,506**	(511,484)	**1,895,506**	(511,484)
Realised Fair value gain/loss on investments at fair value through OCI	**449,038**		**449,038**	
Net profit after tax/Other Comprehensive Income	**2,089,082**	855,858	**3,623,018**	1,025,928
Earning per Share	**(0.004)**	0.022	**0.020**	0.025

SPORTS

Suthar and Jadeja share seven as India take big 178-run lead

Sri Lanka's resistance came in the form of Dinusha's 100 and a 146-run stand with Dickwella in response to the visitors' total of 462

GALLE: Manav Suthar landed in Sri Lanka with big promise, delivered with a wicket first ball, and took three more to help India bowl Sri Lanka out for 284, which gave them a formidable first-innings lead of 178 at stumps on day three of the first Test on Monday.

With three wickets, Ravindra Jadeja provided a good helping hand, as did the other three bowlers with a wicket each.

India might have entertained thoughts of enforcing a follow-on in this rain-curtailed Test when they had the hosts down at 90 for 5. But Sonal Dinusha and Niroshan Dickwella took that decision out of India's hands with a 146-run stand for the sixth wicket as the older and softer ball became less dangerous.

Dinusha brought up his maiden Test century, but Dickwella was still saddled with the unwanted record of most Test half-centuries without a hundred when Prasidh Krishna produced a beauty with a 62-over old ball to dismiss him for 80.

Suthar arrived at the bowling crease in earnestness even though India did waste the equivalent of three overs by coming out to bat at nine down and lasting just four balls. By the time Suthar came on in the eighth over, Mohammed Siraj had made one breakthrough in the first over.

Nishan Madushka ended up playing at one just short of a length as it seamed away to offer first slip an easy catch.

Suthar then rattled Sri Lanka with overspin and sharp turn with the new ball. The first ball was perfect, landing on a good length on middle and off, turning and bouncing, and taking the glove of the experienced Dinesh Chandimal. Suthar kept going past the bat with such regularity that it ended up forcing Lahiru Udara to try to manufacture a cut shot, hitting an easy catch to backward point.

Kuldeep Yadav needed an early wicket for the sake of his confidence, and he did do his bit by beating a charging Kamindu Mendis in flight, but Shubman Gill's assist can't be forgotten.

He dived full length to his left at short cover, and took it one-handed inches above the ground and behind his body.

Jadeja soon joined the party with the ball. Dhananjaya de Silva fell to him soon.

Post lunch, Dickwella and Dinusha rode their luck a little bit at the start of the partnership with a couple of edges falling short and a couple of top-edged sweeps not going to hand. However, once they got in and the ball became soft, they swept India to distraction.

The middle session produced four runs an over and no wicket. It featured a testing spell of reverse swing from Siraj. Post tea, India came out wanting to bowl steady, but Dickwella started with a four first ball off Prasidh, and Dinusha with a six first ball off Jadeja. However, Prasidh mixed it up with a wobble-seam ball, which actually seamed away to take the outside edge of a distraught Dickwella, who lasted hundred balls for the first time in 21 Test innings.

A lucky break followed when a sweetly-timed cover drive from Keshara Nuwantha hit silly point Yashasvi Jaiswal's knee and lobbed up for an easy catch to make Jadeja only the ninth spinner to have taken 350 wickets.

Sri Lanka still needed 20 runs to go past the follow-on mark, and Dinusha was nearing a hundred as well. A resolute Prabath Jayasuriya made sure he was there when both the milestones were reached, but top-edged a slog sweep off Suthar immediately after Dinusha's hundred.

Jadeja came back to trap Dinusha with a quick delivery on the crease, and Lahiru Kumara was stumped to give Suthar a fourth.

Bad light denied India 13 overs of batting, leaving them with a possible 196 overs in the Test to force a result.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 284 (Dinusha 100, Dickwella 80, Suthar 4-76, Jadeja 3-57) trail India 462 (Padikkal 167, Rahul 82, Jurel 51, Jayasuriya 4-109) by 178 runs. - **Agencies**

PORTUGAL SUPERSTAR

'This is probably my last year in football': Ronaldo

RIYADH: Cristiano Ronaldo on Sunday said that this Saudi Pro League (SPL) season is likely to be the last of his professional career.

The 41-year-old superstar's contract with Riyadh club Al Nassr, signed in December 2022, expires next June, and he has told *Vogue* magazine that another is unlikely.

"This is probably my last year of football, and I want to leave a spectacular legacy," Ronaldo said.

The Portugal forward, who has scored 976 career goals, married long-time partner, Georgina Rodriguez, earlier this month.

"I have my future all mapped out," he said. "I have so many things to keep me busy that to tell you just one thing is hard. Because football could leave a big hole, you have to fill your time in various ways, not just one.

"And also have more fun, travel more, watch and play padel, which I really like, and continue to enjoy what I've earned — what we've earned. Because after all, it's been 25 years with a lot of sacrifice."

The 2026-27 SPL season is Ronaldo's 25th as a professional. During his career, he has won five Ballon d'Or awards and five UEFA Champions League titles.

Ronaldo's 28 league goals last season helped Al Nassr become champion of Saudi Arabia in May to secure his first trophy since arriving in Riyadh, and a first league title for the club since 2019.

After returning from his wedding, he missed Al Nassr's first game of its title defense on Saturday, watching from the sidelines as it opened with a 3-0 win over Al Fateh.

"Cristiano is here today, and he is always present with us," Al Nassr coach Ange Postecoglou said after the game.

Ronaldo could play against Al-Diriyah in the King's Cup on Tuesday.

"The most important thing now is recovery, especially as we have only two days after this match," former Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest coach Postecoglou said.

Ronaldo's comments came days after long-time rival Lionel Messi revealed that, following his father's death, he may soon retire.

"I don't know how to carry on," Messi, 39, said. "I used to just play football, and now I'm really not sure if I'll carry on doing it for much longer." - **Agencies**

OMAN OIL PRICE RISES

MUSCAT: The official price of Oman crude oil for October delivery rose by 93 cents and settled at $87.76 per barrel on Monday. The monthly average price of Omani crude oil for August delivery stood at $79.09 per barrel, a decrease of $22.91 compared to the July delivery price.

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 7,540.83 points, up by 0.08% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.41% at 601.46 points. Oman Chromite, up 4.76%, was the top gainer while, Al Anwar Ceramics, down 5.59%, was the top loser. >B2

OMR4mn contract inked to set up a project in Nizwa Industrial City

The project will contribute to enhancing industrial activities associated with the oil and gas sectors, localising specialised services and projects

NIZWA: Nizwa Industrial City, affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), signed on Monday a long-term investment usufruct contract to establish a project specialised in chemical mixing and oilfield equipment maintenance, with an investment exceeding OMR4 million.

The project will be built on an area exceeding 25,000 square metres and is expected to contribute to enhancing industrial activities associated with the oil and gas sectors, localising specialised services and projects in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, alongside supporting in-country value and economic and industrial activity in the governorate.

The project comes within the framework of Madayn's efforts to attract qualitative investments to industrial cities in the Sultanate of Oman and provide an integrated industrial environment supporting economic diversification and the growth of the industrial sector.

The contract was signed by Abdullah Said Al Balushi, Director General of Nizwa Industrial City, and Mohammed Hamad Al Junaibi signed on behalf of Rabou Haima Trading and Contracting Company (the executing company for the project).

The Director General of Nizwa Industrial City said that the project represents a qualitative addition to existing activities in the city due to the added value it provides to the region, contributing to creating job opportunities and diversifying industrial activities, noting that the chemical mixing and oilfield equipment maintenance project is considered one of the specialised and rare projects in the governorate.

He explained that during the first half of this year, Nizwa Industrial City signed more than 17 investment contracts over an area exceeding 50,000 square metres, with total investments exceeding OMR12 million, encompassing projects in the sectors of medical supplies, oil and gas equipment maintenance, plastic industries, iron, metals, and chemicals.

He added that the Omanisation rate in Nizwa Industrial City exceeded 45 percent of the total workforce, which numbers more than 6,100 workers. – ONA

REPORT

India could reach $20 trillion by 2036 with 14.2% rupee growth

NEW DELHI: India could reach a $20 trillion economy by 2036 if it can raise underlying rupee growth to around 14.2 per cent and achieve sustained annual rupee appreciation of about 3-3.6 per cent, according to a research report by domestic brokerage firm Equirus that lays out a 20-step reform agenda.

Equiris estimated that these measures could lift India's growth trajectory while strengthening the external balance, creating the conditions required for the ambitious dollar-denominated target.

India has already accelerated sharply, taking 67 years from independence to build its first $2 trillion of GDP before nearly doubling the economy in the decade after 2014. Reaching $20 trillion from the current base of about $3.7 trillion, however, would require the economy to expand roughly 5.5 times and sustain nominal dollar growth of around 18 per cent annually, well above its historical 10-11 per cent trend.

The brokerage noted that the composition of growth will be as important as its pace, with services expected to become the principal engine of expansion. Services currently account for about 54 per cent of GDP and would need to rise beyond 65 per cent, expanding from roughly $2 trillion to more than $11 trillion. Manufacturing is seen as constrained by a more protectionist global environment, while agriculture's share is expected to decline as urbanisation accelerates.

The proposed reforms span the real economy, capital markets, human capital, services and urban governance. – ANI

ISSUE MANAGER

Central Bank of Oman raises OMR48mn through treasury bills

MUSCAT: Oman's central bank raised OMR48 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Monday. The value of the allotted Treasury bills include OMR22 million for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.050 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.050 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.80953% and 3.84606%, respectively.

Additionally, treasury bills amounting to OMR26 million, for a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.069 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.065 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.87195% and 3.94818%, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 4.25% while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 4.75%.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the Government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures.

INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

Bank Muscat's Khareef Portal activities mark successful run with strong turnout and vibrant public engagement

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has successfully concluded the Khareef Portal activities held at the Mall of Oman in Muscat and Uptown Salalah, drawing large crowds and generating strong engagement among visitors and customers. The activities featured a diverse range of interactive experiences, entertainment, and exclusive banking offers. They also provided an innovative platform for strengthening community connections and bringing visitors in Muscat and Salalah together, while showcasing the tourism, natural and cultural attractions that make Dhofar a distinctive destination during the Khareef season.

The innovative interactive experience offered through the "Khareef Portal" screens in the two cities enabled visitors to communicate and interact with each other in real time. The experience brought the atmosphere of Khareef Dhofar to visitors in Muscat in a unique and engaging way. It attracted considerable interest from people of all ages, particularly families and children, who enjoyed taking part in digital experiences, competitions and accompanying entertainment activities.

The activities also provided an opportunity for visitors to learn more about Bank Muscat's banking solutions and exclusive offers. The Bank's respective team was on hand to introduce visitors to its range of banking products and services, answer their questions, and explain the benefits and special promotions launched to coincide with the Khareef season.

These included the Bank Muscat Rewards programme, which enables customers to earn double reward points when using their Bank Muscat credit cards at restaurants and cafés in Dhofar Governorate until 31 August 2026.

The Bank is also continuing to offer customers the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win valuable prizes, including an Apple Watch or iPhone, when they apply for a new credit card and meet the specified spending requirements. This offer is valid until 30th of September 2026. The Bank's electric vehicle financing offer also attracted considerable interest from visitors. The offer features a reduced interest rate, a special "Khareef Dhofar" vehicle number plate issued in cooperation with the Royal Oman Police, and a waiver of the first-year credit card fee when customers apply for financing for an electric vehicle. The offer is available until 15th of September 2026 and forms part of the Bank's efforts to encourage the adoption of sustainable mobility solutions and support Oman's national sustainability priorities.

Several visitors and winners in the raffle draw expressed their delight with the experience and their interaction with the "Khareef Portal." Sarah Abu-Bakr Al Balushi, one of the winners of the cash prize draw, said that the Khareef Portal experience was one of the most memorable surprises of the event. She described the direct connection between Muscat and Salalah as an innovative and enjoyable concept that gave visitors the opportunity to experience the atmosphere of Khareef Dhofar and interact with people at the other location in a unique and engaging way.

Waqas Ahmed Yaman said that the Khareef Portal was a highly enjoyable and distinctive experience, particularly that it provided the opportunity to communicate directly with visitors in Salalah while being in Muscat. He also noted that the experience made participants feel as though they were part of the Khareef Dhofar atmosphere and provided families with a wonderful opportunity to enjoy an event that brought together technology, entertainment and social interaction.

Al Moatasim Rashid Al Zadjali also praised the interactive screen, noting that it enabled a direct connection between the two locations and effectively brought Muscat and Salalah closer together. He said the initiative created an atmosphere of excitement and engagement among visitors, and expressed his appreciation to Bank Muscat for its continued efforts to support the Khareef season through engaging and pioneering initiatives.

The success of Bank Muscat's Khareef Dhofar activities reaffirms the Bank's role as an active national partner in supporting initiatives that contribute to the growth of the tourism sector and advance the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. The event offered visitors a distinctive experience while highlighting Dhofar's rich natural, cultural and tourism assets. It also encouraged greater community engagement with the Khareef season and supported national efforts to attract more visitors to the Sultanate. The success of the initiative further demonstrates the Bank's commitment to harnessing modern technology to create innovative experiences and deliver engaging solutions that respond to the aspirations of its customers and the wider community. Through the interactive "Khareef Portal," the direct connection between Muscat and Salalah created an experience that went beyond the traditional event format, allowing visitors to share in the atmosphere of the season and strengthening the sense of connection between the two cities.

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Oman Chromite, up 4.76%, was the top gainer while, Al Anwar Ceramics, down 5.59%, was the top loser, at the close of trading session

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,540.83 points, up by 0.08% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.41% at 601.46 points. Oman Chromite, up 4.76%, was the top gainer while, Al Anwar Ceramics, down 5.59%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 9,721 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR61.56 million, with more than 210.11 million shares changing hands. Out of 63 traded securities, 22 advanced, 19 declined, and 22 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR383,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR266,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR117,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 13,166.71 points, up 0.18%. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Bank Dhofar, United Finance, Bank Nizwa, Oman United Insurance were up by 3.08%, 1.40%, 1.14%, 0.72%, 0.64% respectively. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Muscat Finance, DIDIC, Oman Qatar Insurance were down by 5.19%, 3.13%, 1.83%, 1.16% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,490.78 points, down -0.49%. Prices of Oman Chromite, Oman Fisheries, A'Saffa Foods, Jazeera Steel Products, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 4.76%, 4.76%, 3.47%, 1.15%, 0.23% respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Ceramics, Voltamp Energy, Oman Cement were down by 5.59%, 1.14%, 0.35% respectively.

Services Index was down by -0.04% before closing at 3,022.61 points.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	7,545.93	7,505.07	7,540.83	7,534.98	5.85	0.08 %
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,178.27	13,135.31	13,166.71	13,143.01	23.71	0.18 %
Industry Index	9,537.58	9,490.78	9,490.78	9,537.58	-46.79	-0.49 %
Services Index	3,026.32	3,003.14	3,022.61	3,023.87	-1.26	-0.04 %
MSX Shariah Index	604.43	599.69	601.46	603.96	-2.50	-0.41 %
MSX TR INDEX	11,674.43	11,611.20	11,666.54	11,657.49	9.05	0.08 %
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16,202.00	16,149.18	16,187.79	16,158.64	29.15	0.18 %
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,215.22	12,155.29	12,155.29	12,215.22	-59.93	-0.49 %
SERVICES TR IDX	4,054.70	4,023.63	4,049.73	4,051.41	-1.68	-0.04 %
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
210,112,889	61,562,805	9,721	38,316,853,858	22	19	22	63

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 17

REGULAR MARKET

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
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	2,600	1,937	4	0.745	0.745	0.745	0.745	0.720	0.025	3.472	0.745	0.740	0.745	0.100	89,400,000
OM0000010120	ASYAD SHIPPING	11,898,901	2,793,109	886	0.234	0.240	0.230	0.238	0.234	0.004	1.709	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.000	1,239,681,139
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	83,262	17,889	42	0.214	0.218	0.214	0.218	0.215	0.003	1.395	0.218	0.214	0.218	0.100	662,676,080
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	1,830	1,610	1	0.880	0.880	0.880	0.880	0.870	0.010	1.149	0.880	0.860	0.889	0.100	109,910,205
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	13,000	1,157	2	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.088	0.001	1.136	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.100	31,695,330
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	5,487	6,640	5	1.211	1.211	1.210	1.210	1.200	0.010	0.833	1.210	1.210	1.210	0.100	74,142,750
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	30,526	4,244	14	0.140	0.140	0.139	0.140	0.139	0.001	0.719	0.140	0.137	0.140	0.100	313,173,424
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	8,456	2,664	4	0.315	0.315	0.315	0.315	0.313	0.002	0.639	0.315	0.313	0.318	0.100	33,075,000
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	21,359,392	10,145,097	361	0.475	0.478	0.472	0.478	0.475	0.003	0.632	0.478	0.478	0.478	0.010	3,824,000,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	43,730,662	7,910,771	1,605	0.181	0.183	0.180	0.182	0.181	0.001	0.552	0.182	0.179	0.182	0.100	1,397,033,032
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	654,844	120,590	39	0.184	0.185	0.183	0.185	0.184	0.001	0.543	0.185	0.185	0.188	0.100	124,854,175
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	673,356	124,008	48	0.184	0.185	0.183	0.185	0.184	0.001	0.543	0.185	0.183	0.186	0.100	132,165,173
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	26,281,294	5,818,883	1,742	0.222	0.224	0.219	0.223	0.222	0.001	0.450	0.223	0.220	0.223	0.100	965,729,134
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	29,446	12,606	7	0.427	0.430	0.427	0.430	0.429	0.001	0.233	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.100	21,647,222
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	2,500	8,250	1	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	0.000	0.000	3.300	3.100	3.300	0.100	296,010,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	23,905,496	9,372,929	1,101	0.393	0.394	0.391	0.393	0.393	0.000	0.000	0.393	0.395	0.393	0.100	2,950,014,045
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	75,200	20,755	4	0.276	0.277	0.276	0.277	0.277	0.000	0.000	0.277	0.275	0.299	0.100	65,485,570
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	775,137	197,694	22	0.256	0.256	0.255	0.255	0.255	0.000	0.000	0.255	0.253	0.255	0.100	243,415,847
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	117,000	13,104	14	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.112	0.113	0.100	19,600,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	964,077	270,957	54	0.283	0.283	0.271	0.282	0.282	0.000	0.000	0.282	0.282	0.282	0.100	412,453,612
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	3,525	2,044	3	0.580	0.580	0.578	0.578	0.580	-0.002	-0.345	0.578	0.578	0.580	0.100	191,244,426
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	4,556,811	6,458,255	152	1.424	1.424	1.412	1.412	1.424	-0.012	-0.843	1.412	1.412	1.282	0.100	1,059,000,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,273,190	500,981	409	0.398	0.398	0.391	0.394	0.398	-0.004	-1.005	0.394	0.391	0.394	0.100	303,458,800
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	5,000	950	1	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.192	-0.002	-1.042	0.190	0.190	0.199	0.100	37,930,764
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	194,437	33,775	27	0.175	0.175	0.173	0.173	0.175	-0.002	-1.143	0.173	0.173	0.174	0.010	173,000,000
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	55,944,179	14,499,977	1,925	0.260	0.261	0.257	0.257	0.260	-0.003	-1.154	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.040	889,089,148
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	904,870	288,736	78	0.321	0.321	0.315	0.318	0.322	-0.004	-1.242	0.318	0.315	0.318	0.100	207,000,265
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENG'G & INVESTMENT	6,760	1,017	10	0.152	0.152	0.150	0.150	0.152	-0.002	-1.316	0.150	0.146	0.150	0.100	22,500,000
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INT'L DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	53,370	14,415	14	0.270	0.273	0.268	0.268	0.273	-0.005	-1.832	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.100	132,943,046
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	500	64	1	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.135	-0.007	-5.185	0.128	0.128	0.148	0.100	16,380,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	34,100	5,134	8	0.155	0.155	0.145	0.145	0.158	-0.013	-8.228	0.145	0.145	0.158	0.100	23,200,000
Total	31	193,589,208	58,650,242	8,584												

Parallel Market

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
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	111	366	1	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.150	0.150	4.762	3.300	3.200	3.465	1.000	11,979,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	138,559	9,230	21	0.066	0.067	0.064	0.067	0.065	0.002	3.077	0.067	0.065	0.067	0.100	2,887,700
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	100	14	1	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.135	0.004	2.963	0.139	0.131	0.136	0.100	13,761,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	57,248	10,461	8	0.181	0.183	0.181	0.183	0.181	0.002	1.105	0.183	0.182	0.183	0.100	108,232,949
OM0000011151	OMIFCO	10,491,273	2,128,736	705	0.202	0.205	0.200	0.204	0.202	0.002	0.990	0.204	0.204	0.204	0.000	1,364,632,500
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	45,520	4,916	14	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.107	0.001	0.935	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	90,905,753
OM0000010823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	2,810	2,903	5	1.030	1.035	1.030	1.035	1.026	0.009	0.877	1.030	1.030	1.035	0.000	28,384,711
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	15,122	968	4	0.062	0.065	0.062	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.062	0.065	0.100	4,062,500
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	100	16	1	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.000	0.000	0.157	0.153	0.157	0.100	11,226,888
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	15,800	2,433	2	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.000	0.000	0.154	0.153	0.156	0.100	31,259,913
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	1,150	72	2	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.060	0.069	0.100	15,750,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	480,000	126,720	48	0.264	0.264	0.264	0.264	0.264	0.000	0.000	0.264	0.250	0.264	0.100	528,724,240
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	251,222	26,127	12	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.102	0.104	0.100	18,096,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	10,819	957	10	0.089	0.089	0.088	0.088	0.089	-0.001	-1.124	0.088	0.088	0.089	0.100	13,688,435
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSURANCE	758	133	2	0.180	0.180	0.170	0.170	0.172	-0.002	-1.163	0.170	0.170	0.180	0.100	27,407,157
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	18,000	1,440	2	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.081	-0.001	-1.235	0.080	0.079	0.089	0.100	17,779,200
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	3,500	259	2	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.070	0.074	0.100	14,800,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	1,870,456	198,154	32	0.106	0.108	0.105	0.105	0.108	-0.003	-2.778	0.105	0.105	0.106	0.100	8,925,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	1,600	99	1	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.064	-0.002	-3.125	0.062	0.062	0.070	0.100	19,043,072
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,709,252	235,859	199	0.142	0.143	0.135	0.135	0.143	-0.008	-5.594	0.135	0.135	0.139	0.100	29,700,000
Total	20	15,113,400	2,749,864	1,072												

SOPHISTICATED CHOICE

Ford Taurus: The smart fusion of everyday efficiency & modern comfort a balanced drive

MUSCAT: The Ford Taurus stands out as a practical yet sophisticated choice for motorists seeking a reliable blend of performance, space and modern technology. Engineered to handle everything from daily urban commuting to extended highway travel, the Taurus delivers a balanced drive supported by thoughtful engineering and dependable everyday utility.

Performance and efficiency

At the core of the Taurus is a responsive 2.0-litre EcoBoost engine delivering 239 horsepower and 382 Nm of torque.

Working in tandem with an 8-speed automatic transmission, the vehicle offers three selectable drive modes—Normal, Sport and Eco—allowing drivers to tailor responsiveness to changing road conditions. Furthermore, its impressive fuel efficiency of up to 15.5 km/l ensures that long-term driving remains economical without sacrificing capability.

Comfort and cabin practicality

Inside the cabin, the Taurus prioritises comfort and an accommodating environment for all occupants. The interior features a 10-way power-adjustable driver seat and a 6-way passenger seat, complemented by dual-zone climate control and ambient lighting in seven distinct hues.

Advanced sound-deadening materials minimiSe outside disturbances, while the panoramic dual-panel moonroof introduces natural light, creating an open and restful atmosphere during every journey.

Connectivity and technology

Technology integration is central to the Taurus experience, anchored by a prominent 13.2-inch touchscreen powered by Ford's SYNC 4 infotainment system. Drivers benefit from voice-activated controls, seamless smartphone integration, and wireless charging pads. Combined with a crisp six-speaker audio system, the vehicle ensures that navigation, communication, and media management remain straightforward and distraction-free on the road.

Safety is heavily emphasised through a complete suite of driver-assist technologies designed to protect occupants in diverse traffic scenarios.

Proactive features such as the Blind Spot Information System (BLIS), adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, and collision mitigation technology work continuously to assist the driver. Additionally, front and rear cameras, parking sensors, six airbags, and the SOS Post-Crash Alert System provide an extra layer of security.

Visually, the Taurus commands attention with a refined silhouette featuring 19-inch polished alloy wheels, a dynamic chrome-accented grille, dual exhausts, and a two-piece headlamp design complete with signature LED auto high beams and power-deployable door handles. The Ford Taurus is available in two refined variants—Ambiente and Titanium—each crafted to suit individual lifestyle preferences.

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GOLDMAN SACHS REPORT

US corporate AI spending accelerates

NEW DELHI: The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) adoption on US corporate earnings is expected to become more visible in the coming quarters as companies accelerate enterprise AI spending, although measurable productivity gains remain at an early stage, according to a Goldman Sachs report.

The brokerage's analysis of S&P 500 companies' Q2 2026 earnings showed that AI infrastructure firms are already benefiting significantly, while the broader corporate sector has yet to see a material earnings boost.

S&P 500 earnings growth

S&P 500 earnings growth in Q2 2026 is tracking at 31 per cent year-on-year, excluding "other income" linked to certain private investment stakes. Earnings of hyperscalers and AI infrastructure companies benefiting from their capital expenditure rose 54 per cent year-on-year, accounting for around half of the S&P 500's earnings growth during the quarter. At the same time, earnings growth across the rest of the market remained strong, with S&P 500 earnings excluding energy rising 14 per cent year-on-year.

— ANI

SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

BankDhofar empowers SMEs with Mastercard Business Cards offering smarter payments and exclusive savings

MUSCAT: BankDhofar is strengthening its support for Oman's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with its SME Debit Card and SME Credit Card, powered by Mastercard, offering business owners a smarter, more secure and rewarding way to manage everyday business spending while unlocking exclusive savings and value-added benefits.

Designed specifically for SMEs, entrepreneurs, self-employed professionals, start-ups and growing businesses, BankDhofar's Business Cards combine the convenience of cashless payments with enhanced financial control and access to a suite of Mastercard business privileges that help businesses reduce operating costs and improve efficiency.

Accurate record of purchases

By replacing cash transactions with card payments, businesses can simplify day-to-day operations, maintain better oversight of expenditure and keep an accurate record of purchases, making expense management easier and more transparent. Whether paying suppliers, purchasing office equipment, booking business travel or subscribing to digital services, BankDhofar's Business Cards provide a secure and efficient payment solution.

A key advantage of the cards is access to Mastercard's Easy Savings programme, which enables businesses to benefit from valuable savings across a broad range of products and services. Through Easy Savings Always On, eligible cardholders receive automatic rebates at more than 50,000 participating merchants and brands worldwide, allowing businesses to save effortlessly on everyday purchases without the need for registration or coupon codes.

Cardholders can also take advantage of Easy Savings Specials, a dedicated platform featuring curated offers on essential business solutions, including cloud computing, software subscriptions, productivity tools, digital marketing services, logistics, business travel and much more. These offers are designed to help SMEs invest in growth while keeping operating costs under control.

In addition, BankDhofar Business Mastercard holders gain access to Mastercard's Business Subscription Portal, where they can explore exclusive offers on leading digital platforms and business applications that support productivity, collaboration and business expansion.

The initiative forms part of BankDhofar's ongoing commitment to equipping SMEs with practical financial solutions that extend beyond traditional banking. By combining flexible payment capabilities with global business benefits, the Bank aims to help enterprises operate more efficiently, improve cash flow management and capture new opportunities for growth.

Whether an established SME seeking greater control over business finances or a start-up looking for smarter ways to manage expenses, BankDhofar's SME Debit and Credit Cards provide a comprehensive package of convenience, security and savings tailored to the evolving needs of modern businesses.

Business owners interested in learning more about BankDhofar's SME Business Cards are encouraged to visit their nearest BankDhofar branch, contact an SME Centre or Relationship Manager, or register their interest through the Bank's website. Existing Business Mastercard holders can also discover automatic rebates through Mastercard Easy Savings and unlock additional offers by exploring the Easy Savings Specials platform, helping their business save more while achieving more.

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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

48 yrs male Manager in Accounts (23 yrs exp). Contact : 91410602

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

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

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Cleaning supervisor, 18 yrs GCC experience with UAE licence. Contact : 96332056

Indian male graduate with 20 yrs experience seeks job for executive secretary, admin or any other suitable post. Presently available in Muscat. Contact 91410074.

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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

Driver with 12 yrs experience looking for job. Contact: 76383815

Bangladeshi with 10 yrs experience looking job. Contact: 78096017

ENGINEER
Indian male, 35yrs old Mechanical engineer, PMV fleet engineer with 10 yrs of experience in Oman & valid D/L. Contact : +96894002909

Mechanical engineer 11+ yrs experience in Oman HVAC /MEP, projects, facility management. Ready to join immediately. Contact: 91690765

Mechanical HVAC Engineer 4+ yrs Oman experience. Design, execution, commissioning for oil & gas and commercial projects. ASHRAE associate member. with valid D/L Seeking a suitable job. Contact: +968-75020107

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Indian male, MCA, experience in network admin, IT support, website and Odoo ERP.Contact : 79701775

Indian male B.Sc., 20+ yrs Oman IT exp, seeks IT specialist, system administrator position. Immediate joining. Contact: 93642216

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Indian male looking for job, building watchman, office boy, personal driver(house,office). Currently in Oman, speak English & Hindi.Contact 96781899

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

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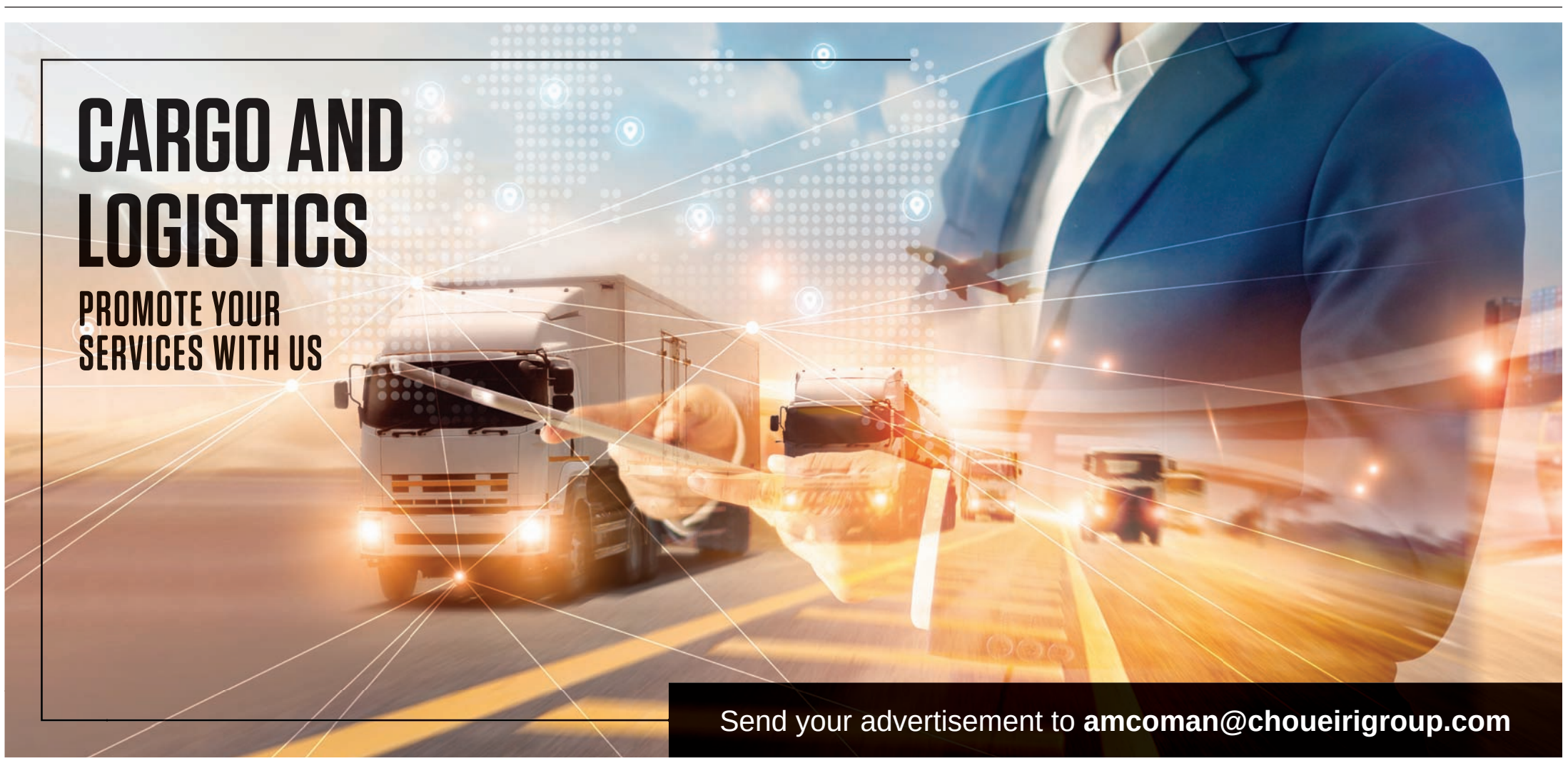

WORLD

TARIFF DISCUSSIONS

South Korea, US seek to resolve outstanding issues over investment plan

SEOUL: South Korea and the United States must address unresolved matters concerning a $200 billion investment initiative established during their bilateral tariff discussions, South Korean Industry Minister Kim Jung-kwan stated.

Kim Jung-kwan shared these remarks upon landing in Dallas, Texas, on Sunday (local time) as Seoul navigates ongoing tariff demands from Washington alongside several pending bilateral trade disputes, Yonhap news agency reported.

Trade agreement

Under a trade agreement reached last year, South Korea committed to investing $350 billion in the US, a move that reduced the US tariff on South Korean goods from 25 per cent to 15 per cent.

From the total $350 billion, $150 billion was designated for joint efforts in the shipbuilding industry, while both nations continue to negotiate the specifics for executing the remaining $200 billion investment.

"We had previously said we were considering announcing the projects around the end of August or early September, but as we approach the final stage, various specific issues are emerging at the working level," Kim informed reporters, according to Yonhap news agency.

"Various issues are emerging, more than we had anticipated," Kim said, as quoted by Yonhap. "Please understand that I came here with the goal of resolving them somehow so that we can meet the end-of-August target."

— ANI

Trump welcomes Saudi-Turkiye-Pak defence pact

Commenting on the shift in regional defence dynamics, the US President noted that "It shows how the Middle East is coming together, and how Countries will finally be able to defend themselves in a more meaningful way", while calling the pact a "BIG, BOLD, IMPORTANT FIRST STEP"

WASHINGTON, DC: US President Donald Trump welcomed the recently signed Mecca Joint Defence Agreement between Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Pakistan, describing the trilateral security arrangement as a major move towards enhanced security and self-reliance in the region.

In a post on his Truth Social platform on Sunday, Trump stated that he was "very happy" to see Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan had "recently, and finally" signed the agreement.

Commenting on the shift in regional defence dynamics, the US President noted that "It shows how the Middle East is coming together, and how Countries will finally be able to defend themselves in a more meaningful way", while calling the pact a "BIG, BOLD, IMPORTANT FIRST STEP."

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement was formally executed in Mecca on August 7 by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The pact establishes a structured framework for collective defence alongside expanded military and security cooperation.

Increased military coordination

Under the provisions of the accord, an armed attack against any one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack against all three. The terms also outline increased military coordination, joint tactical exercises, and collaboration in defence technology and military industrial capabilities.

The development unfolds against the backdrop of escalating regional friction and heightened security anxieties. Addressing international concerns over the alliance, the three nations maintained that the framework is defensive in nature and is not aimed at forming a military or sectarian bloc.

Additionally, under the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Pakistan have committed to aiding diplomatic initiatives to resolve tensions between Iran and the United States.

Indicating a potential expansion of the framework, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan suggested that Egypt could join the arrangement, calling Cairo's participation "possible" and pointing out that the pact can accommodate further members.

Commenting on the diplomatic impact of the deal, Erdogan asserted that "This agreement has sent an important message to the world."

Following the joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, nearly all Gulf states with military ties to the United States found themselves drawn into the conflict.

Canan Tercan, a scholar at Istanbul Aydin University, said the conflict demonstrated that the United States could not fully protect the Middle East.

"Yes, there are U.S. bases here, but how much did they protect? It is a massive question mark. Regional countries had to overcome this vulnerability with new partnerships. We can essentially summarize this as one of the main reasons for the Makkah agreement," she told Xinhua. — Xinhua

POWER OUTAGES

Tropical storm Lala begins to exit Hawaii

HONOLULU: Tropical Storm Lala, which caused flooding, strong winds and widespread power outages across Hawaii, began moving away from the islands on Sunday as its eye pulled away from Kauai, according media report.

More than 200,000 customers remained without electricity across Hawaii, with nearly 70 per cent of the Big Island experiencing power outages, according to CNN.

Hurricane-force wind gusts were reported across Hawaii, Honolulu and Maui counties, while the islands' mountainous terrain intensified winds at higher elevations.

At least 100 homes were damaged or destroyed by the storm, Hawaii Governor Josh Green said during a news conference on Sunday.

The effects of Tropical Storm Lala are expected to move out of the Hawaiian Islands by around 8 am on Monday, CNN reported.

Tropical storm warnings remained in effect for Kauai, Oahu, Molokai, Lanai and Maui. Heavy rainfall continued across parts of the islands but was becoming more sporadic as the storm's outer rainbands moved through.

Green noted that a person died in a car accident; however, it remained unclear whether the incident was connected to Tropical Storm Lala.

According to the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA), the storm's centre was passing south of Kauai and Niihau with maximum sustained winds of 65 miles per hour at 11 am on Sunday, and the system was moving west-northwest at 16 miles per hour.

In a statement, it urged people to exercise caution in damaged areas, as numerous safety hazards exist, including dangerous debris, contamination risks and electrical hazards.

The agency said that the people on Oahu and Kauai should remain careful and in safe shelter until tropical storm effects pass these islands. "Do not travel unnecessarily, as roads will be hazardous and visibility limited. Get tips on emergency preparedness and be ready to operate without electricity if high winds cause power outages," HIEMA said.

Pointing to 1992's Hurricane Iniki as a tale of warning

The last hurricane to make landfall on the archipelago was Iniki, a category 4 storm, in 1992 — also an El Nino year.

On Friday, Governor Green reminded residents that Iniki made landfall after changing its path, "so we just can never know if a storm is going to turn."

While urging vigilance, Green said: "It did $3 billion (€2.6 billion) in damage. It destroyed thousands of homes and it did kill six people."

Green implored residents: "If you feel now that your house doesn't have a great roof or might not be able to withstand hurricane force winds, then first things first you go to a family or friend's house and you kind of hunker down there."

The southern end of Hawaii is remote and rural but its affordability has attracted a growing population, some of whom live off-grid in unpermitted structures. — Agencies

UNITED NATIONS

Natural disasters affected more than 92,000 people across Afghanistan in 2026, killed 97

KABUL: Natural disasters have affected more than 92,000 people across all 34 provinces of Afghanistan since the beginning of 2026, killing at least 97 people and injuring 331 others, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Khaama Press reported.

In a report released on Sunday, OCHA said nearly 10,000 homes had been damaged, while more than 2,100 houses were completely destroyed. Overall, nearly 13,000 families have been affected by natural disasters across the country since the start of the year.

Floods and flash floods have been the primary drivers of humanitarian needs, affecting nearly 88,000 people and placing additional pressure on communities already grappling with poverty, displacement and limited access to basic services.

Between July 20 and August 3 alone, nearly 5,000 people across 10 provinces were affected by natural disasters, including Nuristan, Kabul, Ghazni, Kapisa and Parwan, Khamma Press said, citing the OCHA report.

Eastern Afghanistan recorded the highest number of people affected, with more than 51,000 people impacted by natural disasters. Southern and western regions have also reported significant damage.

The destruction has extended beyond residential areas, with agricultural land, roads and other essential infrastructure damaged in several areas. The loss of homes and farmland has disrupted livelihoods and increased the risk of food and income insecurity for families dependent on agriculture.

OCHA warned that the repeated impact of natural disasters is increasing vulnerable households' dependence on humanitarian assistance, particularly among communities with limited resources to rebuild homes, restore farmland and replace damaged assets.

Afghanistan is already facing a severe humanitarian situation, with millions of people dependent on humanitarian assistance. Recurrent floods, droughts, earthquakes and other natural hazards are compounding existing economic and social challenges and making recovery more difficult.

Humanitarian agencies have stressed the importance of adequate funding and early preparedness measures to reduce the impact of disasters and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities across Afghanistan.

— ANI

TWO MAJOR PROGRAMMES

India launches $12 billion plan for 60 transport, 150 jet trainer aircraft

NEW DELHI: India has launched two major programmes to strengthen the Indian Air Force's transport and pilot-training capabilities, with plans to acquire 60 medium transport aircraft and 150 advanced jet trainers in deals estimated at around $12 billion.

The programmes are aimed at replacing ageing aircraft fleets while expanding domestic defence manufacturing under the government's "Make in India" initiative.

The larger programme covers 60 medium transport aircraft capable of carrying between 18 and 30 tonnes.

The project is estimated to be worth about $10.5 billion. India's Defence Procurement Board had earlier recommended moving ahead with the acquisition, with 12 aircraft expected to be delivered in fly-away condition and the remaining aircraft manufactured in India.

The competition includes Brazil's Embraer, which has partnered with Mahindra Defence to offer the C-390 Millennium, and Lockheed Martin, which is working with Tata Advanced Systems to offer the C-130J Super Hercules. Airbus has also participated in the programme with its A400M aircraft.

The C-390 can carry up to 26 tonnes, placing it near the middle of the Indian Air Force's specified payload range. Embraer and Mahindra have already announced plans to develop local manufacturing and maintenance, repair and overhaul capabilities in India if the aircraft is selected.

The second programme involves 150 Stage-III (F) jet trainers at an estimated cost of about $1.8 billion. The aircraft will replace the ageing Hawk Mk132 fleet and serve as the final training platform for fighter pilots before they transition to frontline aircraft such as the Rafale, Tejas and Su-30MKI.

— ANI

LIFESTYLE

A LAB FOR CROPS, A CITY CLIMATE EXPERIMENT AND BUSY BEAVERS

Dutch crops hit the "climate gym," a German city is preparing for more extreme weather, and beavers are restoring rivers across Europe. This week's eco wins are all about building and adapting to a changing climate

How will the world feed 10 billion people with less land, less water and more unpredictable weather? The Netherlands, also known as the "Silicon Valley" of agriculture and seeds, knows a thing or two about it.

It's already the world's second-largest exporter of agricultural products after the United States, despite being a fraction of the size.

Now, in some of the country's greenhouses, scientists are using high-tech means, as well as reams of data, to figure out which crops will be most resilient in a changing climate.

A German city is reinventing itself amid a new climate reality

In October 2023, the northern German city of Kiel saw the worst storm surge in more than 150 years, which destroyed dikes, collapsed coastal cliffs and devastated marinas.

The storm shocked city officials into reimagining infrastructure to cope with more frequent and intense weather extremes linked to human-caused climate change.

Ideas range from cool city corridors and green facades to flooding soccer pitches at certain times of the year and adapting daily schedules to heat. Find out more about what Kiel is doing, alongside other cities worldwide.

Turtles getting ready for their close-up

Ever dreamed of becoming a wildlife photographer? Destinations in Egypt are getting tourists to snap photos of sea turtles to help with conservation efforts.

These underwater creatures have unique markings on their faces — almost like human fingerprints. Researchers use them to identify individual turtles and even track injuries. If they spot a turtle that's recovering, they can alert authorities to steer boat traffic away from that area.

Beavers make a comeback to help fight wildfires, droughts and floods

After being hunted to near extinction for their fur, meat and scent glands in the early 20th century in Europe, beavers are so back.

Thanks to major long-term rewilding efforts across the continent, populations have skyrocketed from about 1,500 wild Eurasian beavers in 1900 to 1.5 million today.

Beavers are the engineers of the animal world. They build dams that help filter water pollutants, reduce the impacts of flooding, wildfire and drought, and recharge underground aquifers. And they're fixing wetlands and rivers across Europe — from Spain to Russia. - DW

SPORTS

NATIONAL CRICKET TEAM FOR TRI-NATION EVENT

Oman women eye ranking rise at Belt & Road T20Is in Hangzhou

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's women cricketers travel to Hangzhou, China, with a clear target — test themselves against stronger opposition and push up the international rankings at the Belt & Road Women's T20I tournament.

The tournament runs from August 20 to 24, with Oman, captained by Fiza, facing hosts China and higher-ranked Indonesia in a double round-robin format. The top two teams will advance to the final. Head coach Damith Warusavithana said the tournament offers Oman a valuable opportunity to measure its progress against quality opposition.

"This is an important tournament for Oman women. We know the challenge ahead, particularly with Indonesia being a higher-ranked team, but that is exactly the kind of challenge we want. These opportunities can help us move up the world rankings and measure ourselves against stronger opposition."

Youngsters earn senior call-ups

Oman Cricket's development programme will also come under the spotlight, with Under-19 performers Pia Sharma and Aneeka Ashik earning their first senior international call-ups.

Warusavithana said the youngsters earned their places through their performances and would

be given the opportunity to take greater responsibility.

The coach also acknowledged the absence of experienced players Priyanka Mendonca and Jayadhanya Gunasekar, noting it creates an opportunity for others in the squad to step up.

"We want the players to believe they belong at this level, play without fear and take every opportunity to move women's cricket forward," he said.

Rather than focusing solely on results, Warusavithana said Oman's priority would be to build consistency, mental strength and the ability to compete at a higher level.

All matches will be played at the Zhejiang University of Technology Cricket Field in Hangzhou.

Oman squad: Fiza (captain), Sameera Khan, Nitya Joshi, Amanda Dcosta, Trupti Pawde, Cynthia Saldanha, Afida Aftab, Hina Javed, Sushanthka Ashok, Lujaina, Pia Sharma, Aneeka Ashik, Kuchi Cherish Egodagamage and Alifiya Asif Sayed.

Support staff: Damith Warusavithana (head coach), Nadeera Muneer (physiotherapist).

Oman's fixtures (all Oman time): August 20: China vs Oman (9am); August 21: Oman vs Indonesia (5:30pm); August 22: China vs Oman (8:30am); August 23: Oman vs Indonesia (5:30pm); August 24: Final.

Hunt wins record fourth gold; Duplantis clinches vault title

The Britain sprinter had already won two individual titles and added a third on Saturday before taking a fourth in the mixed 4x100 relay

BIRMINGHAM: Amy Hunt won a record fourth gold medal in a single edition of the European Athletics Championships when Britain clinched victory in the mixed 4x100 relay on Sunday.

Hunt had already won two individual titles — the 100 and 200 — and added a third gold Saturday in the women's 4x100 relay at Alexander Stadium. The team of Jeremiah Azu, Dina Asher-Smith, Zharnel Hughes and Hunt won Sunday in a time of 39.97 seconds. Germany was second in 40.11 and Spain third in 40.42.

On the anchor leg, Hunt pulled away from Gina Lückenkemper to cross the line for gold.

"Oh my gosh, I'm over the moon," Hunt told the BBC. "To finish it off with some of my best friends in the sport ... to do it all together is incredible."

Asher-Smith won her career eighth European championships gold and became the competition's most decorated athlete with her 11th medal, moving one ahead of the late Polish sprinter Irena Szewinska. This was the debut of the mixed 4x100 relay in the European championships.

Swedish pole vaulter Armand "Mondo" Duplantis earned his fourth consecutive European championship title by clearing 6.15 metres.

Duplantis is the world record holder — he vaulted 6.31m in March. That was his 15th world record. He first broke it in 2020 and has eclipsed his mark by 1 centimetre each time since.

The two-time reigning Olympic champion watched on as Greek rival Emmanouil Karalis (6.00) lost momentum after getting over 6.10 but knocking the bar off on his way down. Karalis took his second straight silver at the championships. France's Baptiste Thiery (5.85) earned bronze.

Bragging rights were on the line in the last event of the week-long championships when Britain and Italy were tied at nine golds each atop the medal table.

The Italians pulled out the victory in the men's 4x400 relay final, and the home team settled for silver. That means Italy topped the table with 10 golds and an overall 22 medals, three more than Britain's total.

In the penultimate event of the championships, the Dutch women's 4x400 relay team won gold. Winning team member Broeders-Bol took sixth career gold at the championships.

In the women's 1,500 final, Britain's Georgia Hunter Bell improved on her silver medal from two years ago by crossing the line first in 4:07.78. Larissa Iapichino had added to Italy's gold tally by winning the women's long jump, leaping 7.00m for the title.

Amanal Petros of Germany won the men's marathon on Sunday morning by a whopping 7 seconds.

Petros crossed the finish line in Birmingham in 2 hours, 9 minutes, 11 seconds — breaking the championships record in the process. Italy's Pietro Riva took silver with his 2:09:18, three seconds better than Israel's Gashau Ayale.

In the women's marathon on Sunday, Finland's Alisa Vainio dominated the field to finish in 2:22:26, nearly five minutes ahead of silver medalist Lili Anna Vindics-Toth of Hungary. - Agencies

CINCINNATI OPEN

Faria shocks Shelton; Tsitsipas goes down to Auger-Aliassime

CINCINNATI: American Ben Shelton — up to sixth in the world rankings after his Montreal Masters triumph last week — was sent packing by 79th ranked Jaime Faria of Portugal on Sunday.

Shelton fell victim to a surge from Faria, who rallied from 4-1 down in the second set to post his first top-10 win with a 6-4, 6-4 triumph over the American.

"These moments, you got to take it all in and just enjoy it," Faria said. "It's a very emotional moment for me and my team, to do it here in front of an amazing crowd and against the home player at night at an amazing venue just makes it a little more special."

Men's second seed Felix Auger-Aliassime was aiming to kickstart his US Open preparations after pulling out of his home Masters with back pain.

Auger-Aliassime, playing for the first time since a five-set quarter-final loss to Novak Djokovic at

Wimbledon, defeated 2022 Cincy finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 7-5.

Auger-Aliassime looked fully recovered as he throttled Tsitsipas in 88 minutes, breaking the 49th-ranked Greek three times in the second set and firing his seventh ace on match point.

Auger-Aliassime said that a late break of his serve could be blamed partly on the windy conditions.

"It was a tricky ending, but luckily I was able to get the break back," he said. "I'm happy to be back with a win like this."

Fourth-seeded Russian Daniil Medvedev opened his campaign with a business-like 6-4, 7-5 defeat of Argentine Marco Trungelliti. US sixth seed Taylor Fritz smashed a racquet in anger just five minutes into his match with compatriot Alex Michelsen but recovered his poise in the swirling winds to earn a 6-3, 6-4 win. - Agencies

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Sabalenka claims nervy win; Swiatek, Rybakina advance

CINCINNATI: World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka needed six match points to subdue Talia Gibson on Sunday and join reigning Grand Slam champions Elena Rybakina and Mirra Andreeva in the third round of the Cincinnati Masters.

Australia's Gibson saved five match points in the 12th game of the second set before Sabalenka came through in the tie-breaker, managing a final winner to get the job done 6-2, 7-6 (2) in just under two hours on a windswept Grandstand Court.

"I'm super tired, this is crazy weather," Sabalenka said. "Talia played great tennis and was more aggressive in the second set. "She put more pressure on my service games. I'm glad I stayed calm and pulled it out in straight sets."

Sabalenka won Cincinnati in 2024 and is hoping for a deep run to carry her into the US Open, where she'll be seeking her first Grand Slam title of the year.

The Belarusian has won three

titles in 2026, but none since Miami in March.

She advanced along with Australian Open winner Rybakina and Roland Garros champion Andreeva, who powered on in convincing style. US hope Coco Gauff, seeded fourth, had to work harder for a 2-6, 6-4, 6-1 victory over 43rd-ranked Russian Liudmila Samsonova.

World No.2 Rybakina, coming off a runner-up finish to Iga Swiatek in Toronto and inching closer to Sabalenka in the rankings, defeated Taylor Townsend 6-3, 6-4. Andreeva crushed c with the loss of just one game, breaking five times and saving all seven break points she faced in a 6-1, 6-0 rout.

Seventh seed Swiatek, the defending champion who bagged her first title of a rocky season in Toronto, hammered Emiliana Arango of Colombia 6-3, 6-0. - Agencies

ST. JUDE CHAMPIONSHIPS

World No.1 Scheffler opens PGA Tour postseason with 8-shot victory

MEMPHIS: World No.1 Scottie Scheffler shot a 4-under 66 for an eight-shot victory at the FedEx St. Jude Championship, the largest margin in 68 years at the TPC Southwind on Sunday.

"I felt like I had some close calls this year, so it was nice to finish the tournament off," Scheffler said.

It helped to post a 61 in the second round and keep the lead going into Sunday. This was his 11th straight time he converted a 54-hole lead into a win.

This victory was the 21st of his career — all since 2022 — and it ended nearly seven months without a title during a season that has been marked by astonishing consistency but only one trophy to show for it from his season opener

at The American Express in the California desert.

"I felt like a week like this was coming," Scheffler said. "I felt like I was on repeat all year just being like, 'Hey, I'm playing solid. I'm close.' It feels good to be answering some different questions at the end of this week."

He finished at 17-under 263, eight shots clear of his Dallas neighbour Si Woo Kim, who closed with a 68 to finish eight shots behind. The previous record was John Cook winning at TPC Southwind by seven shots in 1996.

Scheffler has now won 10 of his 21 tour titles by four shots or more.

Sam Burns, one of Scheffler's best friends in golf, played with him in the final group and took double bogey on the par-5 third hole. He shot 73 and tied for third with Alex Noren (69). "I don't think it would have mattered if I played well," Burns said. "He was going to be tough to beat today."

Scheffler won $3.6 million from the prize fund, and he clinched an additional $23 million in bonus money for being No. 1 in the FedEx Cup through next week's BMW Championship. No one can catch him. No one is particularly close in the game at the moment, even when he's not piling up trophies.

Scheffler now has two victories, five runner-up finishes and five other top 4s in another stellar year that until Sunday was marked by his lack of winning compared with previous years. The TPC Southwind was the course he had played the most times without winning, and the FedEx Cup playoffs opener had been the only postseason tournament he had yet to win. All that changed.

Im wound up with a 75 to tie for fifth, but it was enough for the South Korean to move from No. 53 into the top 50 who advance to the BMW Championship next week in St. Louis. Im kept alive his chances of reaching the Tour Championship every year since he was a rookie in 2019.

Jordan Spieth, who needed to close with four pars to reach the BMW Championship for the first time since 2023, finished with a bogey from the water on No. 15 and three pars for a 70. - Agencies

SPORTS

Arsenal outplay Man City to lift first trophy of the season

The Gunners took the lead just 24 seconds into the match through Ricardo Calafiori, while Kai Havertz and captain Martin Odegaard also found the back of the net

CARDIFF: Enzo Maresca endured a nightmarish first competitive match in charge of Manchester City as Arsenal scored inside 24 seconds before powering to a 3-0 victory in the Community Shield on Sunday.

English football's annual season curtain-raiser between the reigning Premier League (Arsenal) and FA Cup (City) champions offered a chance for an early assessment of the two teams most likely to challenge for the big trophies this campaign.

While Arsenal delivered a statement performance — not least by scoring after 23 seconds through Riccardo Calafiori — at Cardiff's Principality Stadium, there might be some early concerns for City and Maresca at the start of the post-Pep Guardiola era.

Kai Havertz headed home the second goal in the 28th through the grasp of City goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and Martin Odegaard ran unchallenged into City's area before sitting down Donnarumma with an outrageous dummy and slotting a finish into an unguarded net in the 48th.

Playful chants of "You're getting sacked in the morning" came from Arsenal's jubilant supporters toward Maresca for part of the game in which City rarely threatened opposition goalkeeper David Raya, with Erling Haaland — only just back in training after the World Cup — substituted in the 53rd minute.

It was the perfect preparations for Arsenal ahead of the beginning of their Premier League title defence — at home to Coventry on Friday.

City launch their league campaign two days later at home to Bournemouth and it remains to be seen if Maresca reacts to this defeat by changing his team around.

Calafiori ran on to Myles Lewis-Skelly's threaded throughball to give Arsenal an explosive start and score the first goal in the opening minute of the Community Shield since 1968.

On that occasion, Bobby Owen netted for City against West Bromwich Albion. - Agencies

'Gunners want to win everything'

CARDIFF: Martin Odegaard warned Arsenal's rivals that the Premier League champion wants to "win everything" after starting their season by sweeping aside Manchester City in the Community Shield.

Arsenal captain Odegaard delivered a Player of the Match performance, capped by the final goal in his team's dominant 3-0 victory in Cardiff on Sunday.

Just four months ago, Odegaard lifted Arsenal's first Premier League crown since 2004 after they finished seven points ahead of second-placed City.

The Norway midfielder believes the dynamic display against City, now managed by Enzo Maresca instead of Pep Guardiola, showed that the north London side has not lost its hunger for silverware.

"We played some brilliant football. Great performance and a great way to start the season," he said.

"We showed our level today. We showed we're ready. We're serious and we want to do it again. We want to attack it. We want to do it again.

"When you get a taste of how nice it is, you want to do it again. We want to win everything." - Agencies

ITALIAN CUP

Gattuso's Lazio tenure begins with shock exit

ROME: Gennaro Gattuso's reign as Lazio coach got off to a miserable start on Sunday as last season's finalist exited the Italian Cup with a 2-0 home defeat by second-tier Mantova.

The 48-year-old took charge of Lazio in July, four months after leaving his post as Italy coach after the national team missed out on a third consecutive World Cup.

As an AC Milan player between 1999 and 2012, Gattuso won two Serie A titles and two Champions League trophies, but he has yet to reach similar heights as a coach.

The 2006 World Cup-winner has also managed Fiorentina, Valencia, Napoli and Marseille.

Lazio were the only one of the 12 Serie A clubs competing in the last 64 of the tournament to be knocked out.

Seven-time Italian Cup winner, Lazio lost last season's final to Inter Milan in May. - Agencies

REPLACES STEVE CLARK

Pocognoli named new Scotland manager

LONDON: Former Monaco coach Sebastien Pocognoli was named as the new manager of the Scotland national team on Sunday, replacing Steve Clarke who stood down following the World Cup.

The Scottish Football Association said the 39-year-old Belgian had signed an initial two-year contract and would lead Scotland into the forthcoming UEFA Nations League campaign.

Pocognoli takes over from Clarke, who resigned after Scotland's group-stage elimination from the World Cup in June.

Pocognoli, a former Belgium international, led Union Saint-Gilloise to the 2024/25 Belgian title in his first season as a head coach.

"When I first heard of the interest, I was immediately excited about the opportunity," he told the SFA website. "Scotland's supporters are famous for their passion -- most recently at the World Cup in the USA -- and I have experienced it myself as a player for Belgium when we played in 2013. "Along with my coaching staff, I will do everything I can to give them a team to be proud of and build on the success that has been achieved already by my predecessor."

Pocognoli is the second foreign coach to manage Scotland, after Germany's Berti Vogts from 2002-04.

The former West Brom and Brighton left-back will now aim to build on Clarke's record of leading Scotland to their first three major tournaments of this century.

"Since negotiations began, I have been doing a lot of research, asking a lot of questions and looking at areas that we can build on," said Pocognoli.

"I am hugely excited by the prospect and look forward to working with the players to achieve even more success."

After leading Union SG to their first Belgian title in 90 years, Pocognoli joined Monaco in October last year. He took them into the Champions League knockout phase, where they lost narrowly to eventual winners Paris Saint-Germain.

But he was sacked in June following a seventh-placed finish in Ligue 1 that meant Monaco missed out on a place in this season's Champions League.

"He was the standout candidate from a thorough process: a very impressive individual, with a real desire to take on the role and a clear vision for how he wants to go about it," said SFA chief executive Ian Maxwell. Pocognoli's reign as Scotland boss will begin with a Nations League opener away to Slovenia in Ljubljana on September 26. - Agencies

PRE-SEASON FRIENDLIES

Frenchman Jacquet scores on debut as Liverpool defeat Como

LIVERPOOL: Jeremy Jacquet scored on his Liverpool debut as Andoni Iraola's Reds ended their pre-season campaign with a 2-0 win over Serie A side Como at Anfield on Sunday. After agreeing a reported £60 million transfer for Jacquet in January, the 21-year-old Frenchman's move was confirmed on July 1.

But a niggling knee injury had kept him on the sidelines until the visit of Cesc Fabregas's Como.

The centre-back impressed in the early stages with some well-timed challenges and rounded off a fine first appearance for Liverpool with a tap-in from Cody Gakpo's cross that gave the Merseysiders a 2-0 lead in the 44th minute.

France Under-21 international Jacquet was replaced by another debutant, Ronald Araujo, at half-time, with Gakpo having given Liverpool the lead in the 23rd minute after good work from Jeremie Frimpong. "I think Jeremy played really well," Iraola said.

"Also Ronald played really well when he came in. When you have two new faces, first game for both, they do so well.

"It was also a very good performance of Jeremie Frimpong, playing 90 minutes as a right-back, helping us offensively but closing very well his side also. So some good performances at the back."

Ryan Gravenberch came closest to scoring in a lacklustre second half when he clipped the top of the crossbar following fine play by Victor Munoz.

"I think we need a little bit this feeling of finishing with a clean sheet, winning the game," said former Bournemouth boss Iraola, who has succeeded the sacked Arne Slot.

"Still, the first half has been better than the second, but at least we kept our organisation, our composure and we found a way to finish with a clean sheet, 2-0. I think we needed this feeling before we start."

Liverpool begins their Premier League campaign away to Newcastle a week on Sunday

Bisiwu brace powers Barcelona against Basel

In Basel, Barcelona recorded an entertaining 5-2 victory at Basel in a friendly as summer signing Anthony Gordon played for the first time since his switch from Newcastle. Another new arrival, Karim Adeyemi, put the Catalans ahead after being teed up by Raphinha, but youngster Jean Doucoure slammed home before the break to level for the Swiss.

Egyptian forward Hamza Abdelkarim restored Barca's advantage early in the second half.

Lamine Yamal, making his first appearance since winning the World Cup with Spain, tucked home a penalty for the third after Jules Kounde was fouled. Kazeem Olaigbe netted from the spot for Basel before Barca substitute Jesse Bisiwu, signed from Club Brugge, hit a brace in a late but electric cameo.

Barcelona have one more friendly to play, at home against Al Ahly on Wednesday. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Sohar International and Omantel sign major strategic collaboration programme to advance innovation and digital economy in Oman

Through this collaboration, the two organisations will explore opportunities to develop innovative solutions that enhance customer and business experiences, drive digital innovation, and unlock sustainable long-term value

MUSCAT: Reinforcing their shared commitment to innovation, digital advancement and sustainable economic growth, Sohar International and Omantel have signed a strategic collaboration programme, establishing a framework for collaboration across a range of business, technology, innovation, people and investment opportunities. The programme was signed by Abdulwahid Mohamed Al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, and Eng. Aladdin bin Abdullah Baitfadhil, Chief Executive Officer of Omantel, on behalf of their respective organisations.

This partnership unites the complementary strengths of two leading Omani organisations, bringing together Sohar International's financial expertise and banking capabilities with Omantel's advanced digital capabilities, technology infrastructure, and ecosystem reach.

Through this collaboration, the two organisations will explore opportunities to develop innovative solutions that enhance customer and business experiences, drive digital innovation, and unlock sustainable long-term value.

The collaboration reflects a broader shared ambition to contribute to an increasingly connected and digitally enabled economy. By leveraging their respective expertise, Sohar International and Omantel aim to explore opportunities that can benefit customers and businesses, strengthen the wider innovation ecosystem, support the development of national capabilities and contribute to the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Commenting on the signing, Abdulwahid Mohamed Al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer at Sohar International, said: "At Sohar International, we believe meaningful innovation is accelerated when leading organisations come together around a shared ambition to create lasting value. Our partnership with Omantel brings together complementary capabilities across banking, technology and digital enablement, providing a strong platform from which we can explore new possibilities for our customers, businesses and the wider economy. More importantly, this collaboration reflects our shared belief in the role that strong national institutions can play in supporting Oman's continued economic and digital advancement. We look forward to translating this partnership into meaningful opportunities that contribute to a more connected, innovative and future-ready economy."

Eng. Aladdin bin Abdullah Baitfadhil, Chief Executive Officer of Omantel, said: "Trust and security are the foundation on which digital economies are built, and our partnership with Sohar International puts that principle into action. Together, we are committed to harnessing advanced technologies, from sovereign cloud and artificial intelligence to cybersecurity and data analytics, to shape an integrated, future financial and technology ecosystem."

"Sohar International's established banking expertise, combined with Omantel's technological capabilities, creates a strong platform for co-creating solutions that deliver sustainable value for our stakeholders while accelerating Oman's transition towards a resilient, knowledge-based economy, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

The collaboration will provide a platform for both organisations to explore opportunities across areas including customer and business propositions, digital enablement, innovation, investment and human capital development. It will also encourage the exchange of expertise and capabilities between the two organisations, supporting the development of innovative approaches that respond to evolving customer and market needs.

Beyond the immediate opportunities presented by the program, the partnership underscores the importance of cross-sector collaboration in advancing Oman's digital ecosystem. By bringing together expertise from the financial services and telecommunications sectors, Sohar International and Omantel aim to contribute to an environment that supports businesses, encourages innovation and strengthens the capabilities required for the economy of the future. Specific initiatives arising from the partnership will be evaluated and progressed by the two organisations in line with mutually agreed priorities and, where applicable, will be subject to separate definitive agreements.

Through this collaboration, Sohar International continues to strengthen its role in supporting innovation, digital transformation and economic development in Oman, while building strategic partnerships capable of creating meaningful and sustainable value for customers, businesses and the wider community.

STRONG SPIRIT OF UNITY

Indian Social Club Oman celebrates 80th Indian Independence Day in grand style

MUSCAT: Indian Social Club Oman (ISC Oman) celebrated India's 80th Independence Day in grand style, bringing together a large gathering of members of the Indian community for an evening filled with patriotism, culture, music and a strong spirit of unity.

The event was graced by His Excellency Shri Prashant Pise, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, as the Chief Guest. A number of distinguished dignitaries, including Shri Kiran Ashar, Dr. Mohammed Ali, Mr. Aftab Patel, Mr. Mohnish Behl and several other prominent members of the community, were also present on the occasion.

His Excellency the Ambassador extended warm Independence Day greetings to the Indian diaspora in Oman, conveying his best wishes to the community on the occasion of India's 80th Independence Day.

Welcoming the gathering, Mr. Suhail Khan, Chairman of Indian Social Club Oman, delivered an energetic address and extended his warm wishes to everyone on the occasion. He also recognised the historic significance of the 150th anniversary of India's national song, "Vande Mataram," paying tribute to its enduring place in India's freedom movement and national consciousness.

Balwinder Singh honoured as "Indian of the Year"

One of the most memorable and moving moments of the evening was the presentation of the prestigious "Indian of the Year" Award to Mr. Balwinder Singh, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to community service and philanthropy.

For several decades, Mr. Balwinder Singh has quietly dedicated himself to charitable and community initiatives at the grassroots level, touching numerous lives through his selfless service.

In an emotionally charged acceptance speech, Mr. Balwinder Singh expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Indian Social Club Oman for the honour. Visibly moved by the recognition, he described the occasion as one of the best days he had spent in Oman, making the presentation an especially poignant moment of the celebrations.

A colourful celebration of India's cultural diversity

The evening showcased the extraordinary cultural diversity and artistic talent of the Indian community in Oman.

The Muscat Singers – Open Mic Group of ISC presented a wonderful medley of patriotic songs, filling the venue with the spirit of Independence Day. This was complemented by three energetic performances by various ISC groups, which received enthusiastic appreciation from the audience.

Adding colour, rhythm and regional flavour to the celebrations, 16 Linguistic Wings of Indian Social Club Oman presented an impressive array of folk and cultural performances representing their respective regions of India.

The performances transformed the evening into a vibrant celebration of India's remarkable diversity, reflecting the spirit of unity in diversity that has long been at the heart of the Indian community in the Sultanate.

Adding an artistic dimension to the celebrations, Rangrez, the artists' group of ISC, also exhibited a collection of paintings at the venue, giving guests an opportunity to appreciate the creativity and artistic expression of members of the Indian community. The seamless execution of the celebrations was the result of the relentless efforts of the ISC Management Committee over the past several weeks. Mr. K. M. Shakeel, Hon. General Secretary; Mr. Shameer PTK, Hon. Treasurer; Ms. Shalini Karthik, Hon. Entertainment Secretary; Mr. SDT Prasad, Hon. Cultural Secretary; and Mr. Santhosh Kumar, Hon. Community Welfare Secretary, along with the ISC staff and dedicated volunteers, worked tirelessly to ensure that the entire event was conducted with excellence.

Acknowledging the community behind the celebration

Proposing the Vote of Thanks, Mr. Manoj Ranade, Hon. Joint General Secretary of Indian Social Club Oman, expressed the Club's sincere gratitude to His Excellency the Ambassador, officials and staff of the Embassy of India, the Linguistic Wing Conveners, their respective committees and individual members whose collective efforts contributed to the success of the celebration.

He also extended special appreciation to the sponsors whose generous support helped make the grand Independence Day celebration possible.

Indian Social Club Oman gratefully acknowledged the support of Al Ansari, Al Omaniya, Khimji Ramdas, Jindal Steel, Asian Paints, Howden Insurance, STS, Bank Muscat, Lulu Hypermarket, Dhofar Insurance, Friendi, Seapride, OMIFCO, Al Hosni, IBN Sina, Badr Al Samaa, Black Swan, Asoud Global School, Mitsubishi Motors, Sohar Aluminium, Tire Select, Malabar Gold, Nabil Biscuits, Suroor's Company, Barzman Water, and Ajith Khimji Group – Woodlands.

The Club expressed its appreciation to all its sponsors and supporters for continuing to partner with ISC Oman in initiatives that bring the Indian community together and promote social and cultural engagement in the Sultanate.

Celebrating community, culture and unity

Over its several decades of successful functioning, Indian Social Club Oman continues to serve as the apex body supporting and promoting social, cultural and sporting activities for the Indian community across the Sultanate.

Through its 26 Linguistic Wings and other groups, ISC Oman provides a common platform for Indians representing different regions, languages and cultural traditions to come together, celebrate their heritage and contribute positively to the wider community in Oman. The grand celebration of India's 80th Independence Day once again reflected the Club's enduring commitment to community, culture, service and unity, while celebrating the deep bonds of friendship and goodwill that Indians in Oman proudly cherish.

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