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51

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WORLD CUP 2026

UPCOMING MATCHES

HYUNDAI

FRANCE

14 July VS 11:00pm

SPAIN

ENGLAND

15 July VS 11:00pm

ARGENTINA



For Hyundai Enquiries
80050003

Al Ashkhara
Tourism
Forum to start
on 22 July

A4

CABLE

His Majesty sends condolences to Qatar Emir on death of his father

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar on the death of his father, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sympathy to the Emir and all the Qatari people on this profound loss, praying to Allah the Almighty to rest the deceased's soul in peace in paradise, and grant them patience to bear the loss. — **ONA**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Over 8.2 million mobile phone subscribers

1 The total number of mobile phone service subscriptions in Oman rose to 8,246,003 by the end of May 2026, registering a growth of 1.4 percent. **>A2**

OMAN

Shura panel reviews utility sector jobs

2 Shura panel examined ongoing efforts to expand job opportunities. **>A3**

MARKET

Oman oil exports top 129 million barrels

3 The oil exports of Oman recorded an increase of 2.7 percent. **>B1**

OMAN SUMMONS IRANIAN AMBASSADOR TO HAND HIM FORMAL NOTE OF PROTEST



Several sites in Musandam and Al Wusta governorates were targeted by UAVs



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has summoned Mousa Farhang, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Sultanate of Oman, to hand him a formal note of protest following the targeting of sites in the Governorates of Musandam and Al Wusta by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

The note of protest was handed over by Sheikh Khalid bin Hashil Al Musalhi, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Administra-

tive and Financial Affairs, when he received the Iranian Ambassador in Muscat on Sunday.

During the meeting, Sheikh Al Musalhi voiced Oman's profound dismay at these irresponsible acts, underscoring the imperative of adhering to the provisions of state sovereignty, good neighbourliness, non-interference in

internal affairs and respect for the established norms and moral principles that bind the relations between the two neighbouring countries and their peoples.

Earlier in the day, a security source reported that sites in the Governorate of Musandam were targeted by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). **>A5**



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90

NATIONALITIES LIVE IN OUR COMMUNITY

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70

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL AWARDS WON

RESIDENTIAL UNITS HANDOVER

2006



Shareholder and Development Agreement signed

2008



First Unit Handover

2010



625

2014



1,257

2018



2,154

2022



2,538

2026



3,272

Construction of maritime area project in Musandam completed

This initiative forms part of the Ministry’s ongoing efforts to develop supporting infrastructure for the fisheries sector and enhance the sustainability of marine resources



KHASAB: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources has completed the construction works of the maritime area rehabilitation project in Mu-

sandam Governorate, covering a number of coastal sites across the wilayats of Diba and Khasab, as well as Lima area.

This initiative forms part of the Ministry’s ongoing efforts to develop supporting infrastructure for the fisheries sector, enhance the

sustainability of marine resources and improve working conditions for fishers across the governorate’s maritime zones.

Dr. Ali Abdullah Al Alawi, Director General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Musandam Governorate, stated that the governorate is distinguished by a rich marine environment abundant with diverse fishery resources.

He noted that commercial fishing stands as one of the foremost economic activities upon which the local population relies, serving as a primary source of livelihood.

Scattered marine areas

He further explained that the majority of fishers operate in scattered marine areas within the khors (creeks) and at considerable distances from the centres of the wilayats, which necessitated the implementation of this project to rehabilitate these sites and equip them with essential services.

Dr. Al Alawi highlighted that the project includes the provision of fixed quays and canopies, which will contribute to mitigating the

challenges faced by fishers and their families, enhance the quality of services extended to them, improve operational conditions at landing sites, and support the maintenance of quality control standards for landed fish.

Boost fish production

He pointed out that the project aims to encourage fishers to continue practicing their profession, boost fish production in the governorate, protect fishing gear and equipment from damage and facilitate the embarkation and disembarkation of boats, particularly for the elderly and women.

On his turn, Khalifa Ali Al Shihi, Director of Fisheries Department, stated that the project entailed the construction of 12 fixed quays, of which seven were built in the maritime areas in the Wilayat of Diba and five in the Wilayat of Khasab, in addition to the installation of 11 canopies in the marine zones of the Wilayat of Khasab. **-ONA**

ENHANCING PARTNERSHIP

Riyada discusses challenges to SMEs in food security



MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Riyada) on Sunday organised its 20th dialogue session titled “Opportunities, challenges and impact of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the food security sector”.

Enhancing partnership

The session focused on means of enhancing partnership and integration between SMEs and stakeholders, discussing policies of the food security sector and reviewing licenses, incentives and opportunities for promoting investment in a manner that encourages entrepreneurs and explores opportunities in the sector.

The session reviewed the food security sector’s indicators. Data shows that 39,973 SMEs engage in food security activities, including 32,537 micro enterprises, 7,054 small enterprises and 382 medium enterprises. A total of 10,703 enterprises have obtained “Riyada Card”.



Recommendations at the session underlined the need to develop the business environment, address the challenges facing SMEs and enhancing the enterprises’ contribution to food security and economic diversification goals.

The dialogue session was attended by Dr. Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and Halima Rashid Al Zar’i, Chairperson of the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Riyada), government officials, entrepreneurs and specialists in the food security sector.

-ONA

NCSI

More than 8.2 million mobile phone subscribers by end of May 2026

MUSCAT: The total number of mobile phone service subscriptions in the Sultanate of Oman rose to 8,246,003 by the end of May 2026, registering a growth of 1.4 percent compared to the corresponding period of 2025, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The data showed a slight growth in active postpaid mobile phone subscriptions by 5.3 percent, recording 1,305,759 subscriptions, while prepaid subscriptions stabilised at 5,242,015 subscriptions.

Internet of Things (machine-to-machine) service subscriptions continued their growth, registering an increase of 9.2 percent to record 1,698,229 subscriptions by the end of May 2026.



In the internet services sector, the total number of active mobile broadband internet subscriptions rose to 5,489,728, while the total number of active fixed broadband internet subscriptions reached 590,500.

On the front of fixed internet technologies, fiber optic technology subscriptions for homes and establishments continued their growth, registering an increase of 6.9 percent to reach 362,618 subscriptions by the end of May

2026, while the number of fixed 5G subscriptions reached 210,337 subscriptions.

In contrast, satellite subscriptions recorded the highest growth rate among fixed internet technologies, as they rose by 145.5 percent to reach 1,603 subscriptions.

Regarding other technologies, fixed 4G subscriptions continued to register a decline of 69 percent, recording 6,102 subscriptions, while Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) service subscriptions decreased by 22.8 percent to reach 9,114 subscriptions.

Likewise, other subscriptions (which include internet over power lines, Ethernet, and internet leased lines) decreased by 6.1 percent, recording 726 subscriptions by the end of May 2026, compared to the same period last year. **-ONA**

ECOLOGICAL REHABILITATION

Environment Department successfully plants 450 mangrove seedlings in Shinas

SHINAS: The Environment Department in the Governorate of North Al Batinah has successfully cultivated 450 mangrove seedlings in Khor Hameira, the Wilayat of Shinas.

This step forms part of an environmental initiative that has contributed to the ecological rehabilitation of the site and the enhancement of its vegetative cover, which had previously been devoid of this species.

Findings from ongoing field monitoring have demonstrated the successful establishment of the planted seedlings in their natural environment, with healthy growth patterns observed. The



average height of the seedlings ranges between approximately 1.5 and 2 metres, reflecting both the success of the cultivation operations and the suitability of the site

for mangrove growth.

The initiative was implemented in two phases commencing in 2024, following the conduct of necessary measurements and

tests for salinity levels and pH in both water and soil, to verify the environmental suitability for cultivation and ensure the long-term sustainability of seedling growth.

Natural habitats

The success of this initiative has resulted in the formation of a new coastal vegetative cover in Khor Hameira, thereby supporting the restoration of natural habitats, enhancing biodiversity, providing a conducive environment for marine life and bird species and reinforcing the sustainability of the coastal ecosystem while protecting shorelines.

-ONA

SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION

Over 190 additional flights added to Muscat-Salalah route

MUSCAT: Oman Air and SalamAir announced a significant expansion of their operational activities to the city of Salalah, coinciding with the Khareef Dhofar (monsoon) season 2026, by increasing their operational capacity by up to 400 percent during the peak period of the season.

Oman Air increased the number of available seats to Salalah from around 675 seats per day last April to more than 3,000 seats during peak demand days, while SalamAir’s daily seat capacity rose from 495 seats to 1,505 seats during the same period.

During the month of July alone, the two carriers added 192 additional flights and 35,639 extra seats on the Muscat-Salalah route, alongside enhancing domestic flights.

Oman Air maintained the fixed pricing for Omani citizens, which has been approved since 2023, allowing citizens to travel between



Muscat and Salalah for OMR54. During the Khareef season, travelers will be able to choose from up to 23 daily flights between Muscat and Salalah at various times meeting different travel needs.

SalamAir also continues to operate its daily direct flight between Sohar and Salalah, enhancing air connectivity between North Al Batinah and Dhofar.

On the international air connectivity front, Oman Air recently launched direct flights between Dubai and Salalah, along with a seasonal weekly service connecting Bahrain to Salalah in cooperation with Discovery Travel, while SalamAir launched its seasonal direct flights from Dammam and Baghdad to Salalah. These combined services are expected to contribute to attracting thousands of additional visitors to the governorate throughout the Khareef season, thereby supporting the hospitality sector, boosting local business activity, and contributing to revitalising the tourism sector more broadly.

As the national carriers of the Sultanate of Oman, both Oman Air and SalamAir continue to undertake a pivotal role in supporting the growth of the tourism sector by enhancing air connectivity, increasing operational capacity, and providing wider travel options during the Khareef season.

Through the integration of efforts between the two sides, the two carriers continue their commitment to facilitating travel within Oman, supporting economic growth, and contributing to achieving the targets of Oman Vision 2040.

Con Korfiatis, CEO of Oman Air, explained that the Khareef season

constitutes a key pillar of tourism attraction in the Sultanate of Oman.

From this standpoint, it is the responsibility of the national carriers to lead efforts aimed at enhancing air connectivity with this vital destination, noting that the expanded program reflects the company’s commitment to achieving this balance, ensuring seamless travel opportunities for Omani citizens at subsidised and fixed prices, in parallel with increasing the carriers’ share in attracting more international tourists to Dhofar Governorate.

He said that these additional flights represent an added value to support the local business sector and revive tourism activity, as well as their role in consolidating Oman’s position as a leading global destination.

For his part, Adrian Hamilton-Manns, CEO of SalamAir, said that the growth of the Khareef Dhofar

season, which is one of the most anticipated tourism seasons in the region, will be supported through the largest seasonal operational program implemented by the company, and by expanding its network of destinations, increasing the number of flights, and enhancing seat capacity, thereby allowing travelers from various parts of the Sultanate of Oman and the region easier opportunities to reach Dhofar and enjoy its unique natural and tourist assets.

He added that ease of access and providing affordable travel options remain at the core of its strategy, which is reflected in continuing to offer resident pricing alongside a set of additional promotional offers, noting that these initiatives embody SalamAir’s commitment to supporting domestic tourism and contributing to achieving the Sultanate of Oman’s tourism targets within the framework of Oman Vision 2040. **-ONA**

COMMENTARY

The Face behind the Voice

For twelve years, the lady was just a voice over the telephone. It never occurred to me to go and see her, but why would I have to do that? In a determined frequency, I would call her to get things done for me and she never disappointed me in anyway. Just this week, someone else picked up the phone.

The strange voice made me pause. The smooth, musical tone was replaced by a husky one that offended my ears. She told me the lady had left for Australia after serving for fifteen long years.

“Was she a good friend of yours?” the new lady asked amusingly because there was something in my hesitant tone that suggested the news came as a complete surprise to me.

I ignored her question and stated my business. Perhaps I was used to the efficiency and friendly tone of the former secretary. The new lady was business-like and was out to impress her superiors than callers like me. But her question whether I was a ‘good friend’ or not made me think. How could you be a friend to a person you have never met?

I had a picture of her formed in my mind as a small, thin and short-haired lady with a nervous disposition but yet strong when it mattered.

I took for granted that she would always pick up the phone. But years had passed and I took many things about her for granted. In a strange way, it was odd, at least for me,



that I was not included in her ‘good bye’ list that one would normally send to friends when you leave the country.

But I was not exactly a friend. But if I could string together all the minutes we talked on the phone over the dozen years, then it may be only a couple of days. Just hours, not even a week of exchanging words. I guess it was the number of years rather than the time that had effect on me.

It was also the way the words were exchanged between us than anything else.

Normally, you would not be familiar the same way with a person you always order pizza from. It is different though I don’t know exactly the difference. Perhaps I now feel the ‘loss’ because her replacement would not be sympathetic to my requests. But most of all, I never seized the opportunity to put the face on the voice. It was not important then because all I had to do was make that half an hour drive to her office. The drive I never made.

I am now left to stretch my

imagination. She was one of those loose ‘attachments’ in my life. There are quite a few of them. In a long journey of life, one comes up with many such examples. They are part of the thread that keeps everything together. If they don’t leave long lasting impression then you don’t learn anything from human nature.

These days, you could take a drive and meet many people but they would not make any impression in your mind. They cease to exist the moment you walk out on them. It is not something you could take away with you. An experience you could apply somewhere else at a later date.

Perhaps it is the curse of a city life where moments of boredom always loom large to put one in a depression when life is in a fast lane. You find you create fantasy in your head to amuse yourself. Nothing wrong with that as long as no one gets hurt. I guess it is one way of letting out the stress from your system in a harmless way. And why not?

Shura panel reviews utility sector jobs

Participants emphasised the importance of introducing measures that promote jobs, and retain national talent



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Youth and Human Resources Committee of the Shura Council hosted on Sunday Dr. Mansoor Al Hinai, President of the Authority for Public Services Regulation, together with specialists from the Authority and officials from Nama Water Services, as part of the Committee’s follow-up of operational contracts awarded by the Authority to companies operating in the electricity and water sectors, as well as initiatives relating to workforce development and the qualification of the national workforce employed in the sectors under the Authority’s supervision.

The meeting also examined ongoing efforts to expand employment opportunities and enhance the capabilities of national talent.

At the outset of the meeting, Younis Al Mundhri, Chairman of the Youth and Human Resources Committee, welcomed the President of the Authority and the accompanying delegation, commending the constructive cooperation between the Committee and the Authority on matters relating to employment and human resources.

He reaffirmed the Committee’s commitment to following up on issues concerning employment, training, and operational employment contracts with service providers in order to create sustainable employment opportunities that strengthen job security for Omani citizens and enhance the readiness of national competencies to fill positions in strategic sectors.

He explained that the meeting had been convened to discuss issues relating to vacancies for meter readers, operational contracts in the water sector, and employment prospects following the Sul-

tanate of Oman’s agreement with the French company SUEZ.

The meeting discussed a number of issues relating to the working environment within companies regulated by the Authority, foremost among them measures to reduce disparities in salaries and employment benefits between directly employed staff and employees working for subcontracting companies.

Participants emphasised the importance of introducing measures that promote employment equity, motivate and retain national talent, and improve working environments in a manner that contributes to higher-quality services and enhanced institutional performance.

The meeting also reviewed the Authority’s efforts to increase Omanisation across all occupational levels through programmes and initiatives aimed at raising Omanisation rates in technical, specialised, and administrative positions and expanding the employment of national talent across the sectors under the Authority’s regulation.

These efforts support the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 relating to human capital development, increasing the participation of national competencies in the labour market, and enabling them to assume specialised and leadership positions.

For his part, Dr.Mansoor Al Hinai affirmed the Authority’s commitment to ensuring job stability for employees working in companies contracted by the Authority.

He explained that the agreement concluded with the French company includes explicit provisions safeguarding the employment of the national workforce in companies operating within the water sector.

He added that the agreement also provides enhanced employee benefits and incentives, together

with opportunities for training, professional development, and capacity building.

In addition, the Authority is considering a number of employment-related proposals aimed at making greater use of the expertise available within companies contracted by the Authority, particularly in the areas of knowledge transfer, technical and administrative capacity building, benefiting from the company’s international experience, and preparing a new generation of national leaders capable of leading the sector in accordance with international best practices.

Dr. Al Hinai also briefed Committee Members on the Authority’s principal initiatives in the field of training and workforce development, explaining that, in cooperation with the companies it regulates, the Authority is implementing specialised training programmes designed to enhance the technical and administrative skills of employees, improve their readiness to undertake a wide range of roles, and raise productivity and performance across the regulated sectors.

He further noted that the Authority has already begun addressing the outstanding issues concerning vacancies for meter readers.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Youth and Human Resources Committee welcomed the announcement made by the Authority for Public Services Regulation during the previous week regarding a recruitment package comprising 631 employment opportunities under the ‘Nu’ahil Li Numakkin’ (Train to Empower) programme for training and employment.

The Committee considered the initiative an important step towards supporting employment efforts and preparing Omani talent for entry into the labour market.

POLICE COMMAND

Arab nationals held for theft

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Muscat Governorate Police Command has arrested two Arab nationals on charges of sabotage and theft targeting several commercial shops and com-

panies across the governorates of Muscat and South Al Batinah.

The suspects are accused of carrying out acts of vandalism and stealing property from business establishments. Legal procedures are being completed against them.



Tender Notice

Oman Water & Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) hereby announces the following Tenders:

Tender No.	Description of Project	Eligibility	Tender Fee (RO)	Last Date of Distribution of Tender Documents	Bid Submission Date
OW/T/10035/2026	Transporting (130-160 M3 per day) of drinking water from Khasab TFS to Al Harf TFS – Wilayat Khasab	Local Companies registered with Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority specialized in the works mentioned	50/ (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	23/07/2026	11/08/2026

- The tender documents can be obtained from the e-tendering page (Supplier Login) from this announcement date. The applicants shall pay the tender fee by logging into their (I-supplier Page).
- Applicants who are not registered shall register through the following link: <https://nws.nama.om/Business-with-U/> Vendor-Registration in order to receive the login credentials of the Supplier portal.
- All applicants who have paid the tender fee shall have access to the Tender Documents through Nama Water Services e-tendering page (Supplier Login <https://nws.nama.om/en-us/Business-with-U/Supplierlogin>). All participating companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of the bid value in a sealed envelope. Bid Bonds must be obtained from a local Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman addressed to Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) Chairman of Tender Committee not later than 2:00 pm on the bid submission date.
- The bid along with all required documents shall be uploaded through Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) e-tendering page not later than 2:00 pm on the date specified above. For more details refer to Tender Page of our website www.nws.nama.om & in case of general queries you may contact us through the email ID of tender@owwsc.nama.om

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OMR120mn water projects transform supply network in North Al Sharqiyah

The project seeks to establish a unified and flexible system capable of meeting the increasing demand

IBRA: Nama Water Services has completed the implementation of a package of major water projects in the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, at a cost exceeding OMR120 million.

This comes within the framework of national efforts to ensure the sustainability of water resources and achieve water security.

The package included main transmission projects, distribution networks, and small developmental projects targeting villages and population centers.

The company is also implementing a number of water supply sustainability projects with investments exceeding OMR43 million.

This comes within a sustainable developmental vision that aligns with the requirements of urban and population growth witnessed by the governorate, as well as the continuous development of basic infrastructure, thereby supporting the targets of sustainability and water security in the Sultanate of Oman.

The company clarified that the project to enhance the water transmission system between the South Al Sharqiyah and North Al Sharqiyah governorates is considered one of the national strategic projects that has been completely implemented and operated, at an implementation cost of OMR120 million.



The project consists of 17 reservoirs with a total storage capacity of 265,000 cubic metres distributed across strategic points in the wilayats of Al Qabil, Ibra, and Al Mudhaibi.

It also includes 312 kilometres of main transmission lines with

diameters ranging from 600 to 1,300 mm, in addition to four main pumping stations to ensure pressure stability.

The project aims to connect the water transmission systems between the South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, and Al Dakhl

iliyah governorates.

It seeks to establish a unified and flexible system capable of meeting the increasing demand up to the year 2050 and enhancing reliability in emergency situations.

The company affirmed that the overall objective of these projects is represented in achieving three main pillars: most notably securing a sustainable and safe water supply for all wilayats of the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, raising operational efficiency and reducing water loss, in addition to expanding the service to remote population centers within the principle of fairness in service distribution.

Regarding water network construction projects, Nama Water Services implemented a number of projects aimed at expanding coverage to address population density and geographical vastness.

The water connection projects in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi stand out as the first project in the first phase. Its implementation

and operation were completed in the areas of the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi's centre, the villages of Al Rawdha, Al Akhdhar, Lazaq, Khadhra Bani Difa, and the Niya-bat of Samad Al Shaan, comprising 13,836 connections.

Meanwhile, the second phase of the second project, which is currently underway, has reached a completion rate of 35 percent with 4,065 connections at an investment cost exceeding OMR15 million.

The project covers a group of villages, including Khadhra Bani Difa, Al Khashbah, Al Sudairah, Al Mintarib, Al Mutaili, Al Washahi, Al Wafi, Al Khurays, Al Tasawir, and Al Majazah.

It is being executed with 40 kilometres of transmission lines and 217 kilometres of distribution networks, alongside the construction of a pumping station and an elevated reservoir, within an integrated system aimed at raising distribution efficiency and enhancing supply stability.

The third project was located in the villages of Wadi Andam in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi. It has been completed and operated, serving 10 villages with 1,229 connections at a total cost of OMR3,668,000.

Nama Water Services has also commenced the implementation of the Al Jarda line project in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi and Mullah in the Wilayat of Dima W'attayeen at a cost exceeding OMR28 million, forming an integrated system for water transmission and distribution.

The project includes laying networks and establishing an integrated operational system comprising main and booster pumping stations, reservoirs with various capacities up to 4,000 cubic metres, and tanker filling stations, thereby enhancing the system's flexibility and capacity to respond to demand.

The project encompasses the execution of approximately 77.8 kilometres of main transmission lines and nearly 433 kilometres of

distribution networks, with diameters ranging from 110 to 600 mm.

It also features one main pumping station and eight reservoirs with a capacity of 34,000 cubic metres, providing more than 6,200 connections serving existing and future households.

Nama Water Services focused on implementing four packages of small developmental projects to ensure the delivery of potable water services to remote villages and communities in several wilayats of the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

The most prominent of these is the first package project in the Wilayat of Ibra, which was completed and operated in the villages of Al Mutaridh and Al Qa'a with 100 connections at a cost of OMR168,570.

The second package project in the Wilayat of Ibra has also been completed, covering seven villages with 247 connections.

Furthermore, the third package is currently in the awarding phase and its implementation will commence soon; it includes the wilayats of Ibra, Al Qabil, Al Mudhaibi, and Wadi Bani Khalid, with a total of more than 500 new connections.

The fourth package is in the tender document preparation phase and covers a number of villages in the wilayats of Ibra, Al Qabil, and Al Mudhaibi.

Nama Water Services is focusing on implementing an ambitious plan to rehabilitate networks that recorded high numbers of leaks and to reduce water loss during 2025-2026 in the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, within the framework of improving the efficiency of existing networks.

The company adopted a plan to rehabilitate networks by upgrading 17,000 metres of networks during the year 2025, and rehabilitating an additional 6,500 metres during the current year 2026.

This aims to reduce the water loss rate from 37 percent in 2024 to 20 percent in 2025, and subsequently to 17 percent in 2026. - **ONA**

WILAYAT OF JAALAN BANI BU ALI

Al Ashkhara Tourism Forum to begin on 22 July



JAALAN BANI BU ALI: The fourth edition of Al Ashkhara Tourism Forum will be held from 22 July to 15 August 2026. The event is organised by the Office of the Governor of South Al Sharqiyah Governorate in Al Ashkhara area, Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali.

Al Ashkhara Tourism Forum promotes activities that highlight the Omani heritage and enhance innovation and economic development.

Over the past few years, the forum succeeded in transforming the coastal strip of Al Ashkhara area into a destination that attracted thousands of visitors. It utilized natural and cultural elements in generating an integrated tourism product that showcased the vitality of the countryside economy, in partnership with the local community.

The forum emerges as a comprehensive national platform rooted in the Omani identity and aligned with the aspirations of the tourism sector. The 3rd edition of the forum attracted more than 430,000 visitors from within Oman, featured 120 events and generated 125 di-



rect and 46 indirect employment opportunities. It also saw the participation of 27 small and medium enterprises (SMEs), 20 local business households and 31 craftsmen.

This affirmed the forum's role in supporting entrepreneurship, marketing national products and empowering craftsmen and local business households in line with the goals of sustainable economic development. - **ONA**

SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY

New research strengthens Oman's earthquake readiness

MUSCAT: A research project conducted by principal investigator Dr. Abdullah Ansari at the Earthquake Monitoring Center, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), has developed an advanced framework to enhance earthquake preparedness and support safer urban planning in the Sultanate of Oman.

The project, titled "Multicriteria Risk Assessment Framework for Enhancing Earthquake Preparedness for Urban Environment (M-RAFEEQ)", provides a comprehensive approach to assessing earthquake risk in urban environments.

According to Dr. Ansari, the project introduces a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based multi-criteria seismic risk assessment framework that integrates seismic, geotechnical, structural, environmental, and socio-economic parameters to evaluate earthquake risk in urban environments.

Using the Al Seeb region in Muscat as a case study, the framework combines the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) with GIS spatial modeling to produce high-resolution seismic microzonation maps, comprehensive risk indices, and economic loss estimates, including Average Annual Loss (AAL), Loss Exceedance Curves (LEC), and Probable Maximum Loss (PML).

The research aims to develop a comprehensive vulnerability assessment framework for urban seismic risk, generate detailed microzonation maps for Al Seeb, quantify potential economic losses, support evidence-based urban planning and resilience strategies, and contribute to the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

Dr. Ansari adds that the study revealed significant variations in earthquake risk across the Al Seeb area. High-risk zones were identified in Al Hail North, Old Al Khoud, and several industrial areas, where weaker structural conditions, liquefaction-prone soils, and high urban density increase vulnerability. In contrast, areas such as Muscat Hills and Al Mouj



demonstrated relatively lower risk due to stronger construction standards and more stable geotechnical conditions. The project successfully classified the study area into five seismic risk categories, ranging from very low to very high, enabling authorities to identify priority areas for mitigation and preparedness.

Economic analyses further highlighted the potential financial consequences of future earthquakes, emphasising the importance of proactive risk reduction measures.

Based on these findings, Dr. Ansari recommends prioritising the retrofitting of buildings in high-risk areas, incorporating seismic microzonation maps into urban planning and development decisions, strengthening compliance with the Oman Seismic Code (OSC 2013), expanding geotechnical investigations before new construction projects, improving accessibility to hospitals and emergency response facilities, regulating the location of industrial and fuel infrastructure to reduce secondary hazards, and promoting community awareness and resilience initiatives.

The research findings have been published in three leading international peer-reviewed journals, scientific reports, Natural Hazards Review (American Society of Civil Engineers), and Modeling Earth Systems and Environment. The project brought together Dr. Abdullah Ansari, Dr. Issa El-Hussain, Dr. Ahmed Deif, Dr. Adel M. E. Mohamed, Prof. Khalifa Al Jabri, and Mr. You-suf Al Shijbi from SQU, alongside international collaborators from South Korea, Norway, and Japan. - **ONA**

COMMENTARY

THE INVITE: A Provocative Take on Modern Marriages & Relationships

Directed by Olivia Wilde, *The Invite* is a sharply written, intimate, and engaging exploration of married life. Sometimes, the simplest situations give rise to the most engaging storytelling, and *The Invite* is one such example.

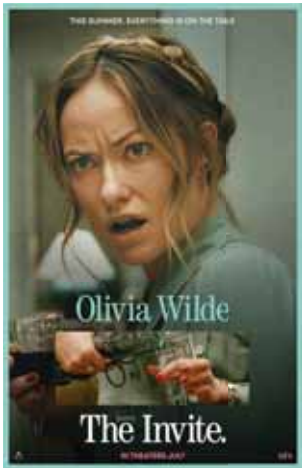
The whole film has only four prominent characters in the setting of one beautiful house, with a lot of discussions and chit-chat that deliver a thought-provoking and thoroughly entertaining experience. And that's the beauty of its storytelling. A superb script, brilliant screenplay, and solid dialogue that keep you perfectly hooked to the screen, scene after scene.

In an uncomplicated premise, the film revolves around a married couple, Joe (Seth Rogen) and Angela (Olivia Wilde), who have lost warmth and spark in their marriage over the years. There is a frustration, an emotional distance, and almost no intimacy between them.

One night Angela invites their neighbours living on the floor above to their home for dinner. Pina (Penélope Cruz) and Hawk (Edward Norton) enter their lives. They are unconventional about their marriage, relationships, and hookups, and are very candid about their choices; their presence brings a change in the emotional dynamics.

It's an intriguing narrative of marriage, desire, jealousy, insecurity, and communication that's built up in the movie from a deceptively simple situation. And the screenplay executes this meticulously by capturing the conversations among the key characters as everything appears natural and full of spontaneity.

A precise writing and measured dialogue turn humour into awkwardness, and the



revelations during conversations trigger and release tension in the atmosphere, making it volatile and tolerant at the same time. It generates curiosity, leading to emotional and sexual tension.

The screenplay allows the characters and their relationships to unfold gradually. What's interesting is that when you grasp a situation well, it delivers another conversation or a revelation that again changes your perception, and the story takes a new turn.

Seth Rogen as Joe is brilliant. He portrays a man struggling with emotional complexity, frustration, and a lot of insecurity. While he contributes humour, he also demonstrates the vulnerabilities of the character he

is playing. Olivia Wilde as Angela is impressive. She is in the crossfire of her own emotions, trying to understand if her marriage will still survive, and her disappointments with married life. As a director, she also displays excellent control by ensuring the performances and screenplay remain at the centre of the film.

Penélope Cruz is amazingly captivating as Pina. She is confident, she is provocative, and she is liberated. She disrupts the uncomfortable equilibrium between Joe and Angela, and as the story moves ahead, you come across the complexity within her character. Edward Norton, as Hawk, is perfectly cast. He is relaxed, he is confident, and he is open-minded, and his presence is intriguing. He is far more complicated than he initially appears.

The *Invite* delivers a cinematic experience that strongly resembles watching an exceptionally well-written play in contemporary settings. The film is more about what happens when people are compelled to confront truths they have conveniently avoided in their relationships.

It's a great, provocative watch leading to discoveries within.

The writer is Founder Festival Director, KidzCINEMA and Culture Cinema Film Festivals

IN ALDHABIRAH, AL BURAIMI

Rare biological sighting of species documented

IBRI: The Environment Authority Department in Al Dhahirah Governorate has documented a number of rare and endangered biological species inside the Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi Natural Oasis Reserve.

The monitoring operations included documenting the Arabian tahr in one of the mountainous locations within the reserve. Additionally, a lappet-faced vulture chick—which is an endangered bird of prey—was documented during its return to its nest in the reserve.

The Afghan fox, a rare desert mammal characterized by its ability to adapt to arid and mountainous environments, was also spotted, and wildlife cameras recorded the presence of the Sand-grouse bird.

The Environment Authority Department in Al Dhahirah Governorate confirmed that this documentation came as a result of continuous monitoring efforts carried out by the Yanqul Unit through field patrols, the use of wildlife cameras, and the tracking of natural habitats. -ONA



IN SALALAH

Programme to cultivate leadership capabilities ends

SALALAH: The summer programme (Leadership Rooting) was concluded yesterday at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Compound for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah.

The programme was organised by the Municipal Council of Dhofar Governorate in collaboration with the "Ta'seel" Initiative Team over a two-week period, targeting 90 male and female students.

The closing ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr. Ahmed Mohsen Al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, who hon-

oured the participating students, trainers, lecturers and contributors to the organisation, in recognition of their efforts in implementing the programme and achieving its objectives.

The programme encompassed a series of specialist lectures, workshops, interactive sessions and applied activities, delivered by over 26 trainers, lecturers and speakers.

These sessions were designed to cultivate leadership capabilities among young participants, instill

national values, enhance social responsibility and refine personal skills, thereby contributing to the preparation of a cadre of young national leaders.

The programme forms part of broader community-driven efforts aimed at nurturing a generation conscious of its national identity, steadfast in its values and equipped with the knowledge and leadership competencies necessary to make a meaningful contribution to the service of the nation and society. -ONA

SUMMER VACATION

‘Little Documentary Guide’ programme begins

MUSCAT: The National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA) launched on Sunday the activities of the sixth edition of the "Little Documentary Guide" programme.

Organised by the Department of Documentary Exhibitions, the program runs until 16 July at the Permanent Exhibition of National Records and Archives.

The programme comes within the framework of the Authority's efforts to utilise the summer vacation to develop the capabilities of youth and enhance their awareness of the importance of national documents.

This is achieved through a training programme that combines lectures, practical workshops, and field tours, aiming to develop guiding, communication, and public speaking skills, while consolidating the values of national identity and belonging.

The programme includes introductory visits to the Authority's facilities and practical applications in documentary guiding within the Permanent Exhibition.



It also features panel discussions with successful youth models in the fields of Holy Quran memorization, scientific innovation, entrepreneurship, and digital content creation, in addition to cultural competitions and awareness lectures that contribute to refining the participants' skills.

Ahmed Mohammed Al Sabahi, Head of the Exhibition Organisation Section at the National Records and Archives Authority, said that the programme embod-

ies the Authority's interest in investing in the energy of youth by introducing them to the role of documents in preserving national memory and providing them with guiding and communication skills.

This contributes to preparing a generation that is aware of the value of documents, proud of its national identity, and capable of presenting information in a scientific and engaging manner. -ONA

SHIP ATTACK

Oman condemns the attack

<FROM A1 The Sultanate of Oman affirmed its condemnation and denunciation of this attack, and confirmed that it was taking all necessary measures to address these developments in order to safeguard the safety of the nation and its residents.

Meanwhile the Maritime Security Centre (MSC) reported that the competent authorities responded to a distress call issued by the commercial vessel "GFS GALAXY," which flies the flag of the Republic of Cyprus, following an accident 4.4 nautical miles off the coast of Musandam Governorate.

The Centre indicated that 23 crew members of the ship were rescued and provided with the

necessary healthcare, while specialized teams continue search operations for one crew member who remains missing.

India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Sunday also condemned the attack on a commercial vessel off the coast of Oman.

In an official statement, the MEA said, "We condemn the attack on the commercial vessel GFS Galaxy. Of the 11 Indian nationals on board, 10 have been rescued so far, while 1 Indian National is reportedly missing. Our Embassy in Oman is closely monitoring the situation and proactively coordinating with the Omani authorities in the ongoing Search and Rescue operation. We thank the Omani authorities for their support."

The MEA said that the continuing incidents of attacks on commercial shipping in the region are deeply worrisome.

"The continuing incidents of attacks on commercial shipping in the region are deeply worrisome. We reiterate our call for immediate de-escalation of tensions, and the conclusion of ongoing negotiations for a diplomatic solution so that peace and stability can return to the region. The targeting of commercial shipping and civilian infrastructure in the region must end, and free and unimpeded navigation and commerce through the international waterways in the region, in keeping with international law, must be restored at the earliest," the statement read.



MUSCAT GOVERNORATE
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No.(20/2026)

Muscat Municipality, represented by the Auction Committee, announce the establishment of a public auction as per the following details:

	Items	Location
Set No.1	PC's-Printers-Scanners -Office Furniture-Metal Lockers-Doors	MM Store at Gala
Set No.2	Metal Scrap-Concrete Foundations-Porta Cabins-Lighting Poles-Fiberoptic Cables	MM Labor Camp at Al Amerat
Set No.3	Porta Cabins-Metal Scrap-Water Tanks	MM Yard at Quraiyat
Set No.4	Lighting Poles & Equipment-Metal Scrap- Fiberoptic Cables	MM Labor Camp at Quraiyat

Interested individuals for this Auction must comply with the conditions set out here under:

- Those wishing to enter the auction must pay a fee and its amount (≈/4 OMR) (four Omani rials) which are not refundable, and an amount of (500 OMR) (five hundred Omani rials) as a temporary deposit to participate in the auction (refundable). The payment shall be done electronically to Muscat Municipality's representative on the auction day at site.
- The person who wins the auction is obligated to pay the full price of the items if they were awarded to him plus 5% as value added tax, and the brokerage fees by (≈/3%OMR) of the total amount of the items. The payment shall be done electronically to Muscat Municipality's representative on the auction day at site.
- Items are sold in their current condition, and Muscat municipality is not responsible for the loss or damage of any part of it once its value has been paid; and it does not bear any obligation regarding the sold items. Those wishing to participate in the auction must inspect the items on the day specify for that purpose.
- The sold item is neither refundable nor devalued, and no appeal will be accepted in this regard.
- The buyer is obligated to transfer the items that have been awarded to him after paying their full value within a period not exceeding two weeks from the date of purchase. In the event of delay, a daily penalty of (≈/50 OMR) shall be imposed for each day, but not exceeding one month. Muscat Municipality shall not be responsible of the sold items if it were not transferred within the specified period; and it reserve the rights to resell the items on the expenses of the buyers.
- The buyer is obligated to clear and clean the site after transferring the sold items. In the event of failure, the temporary deposit will not be paid back to the buyer.
- The auction details are specified as follows:

Location	Set No.1: MM Store at Gala Set No.2: MM Labor Camp at Al Amerat Set No.3: MM Yard at Quraiyat Set No.4: MM Labor Camp at Quraiyat
The Date/Time of the inspection	From 14/7/2026 to 16/7/2026 From 08: 00 AM to 12:00 PM
The location for submitting the participation fees	Auction locations as per the above details
Auction date	Set No.1: 20/7/2026 at 8:00 AM Set No.2: 20/7/2026 at 9:00 AM Set No.3: 20/7/2026 at 10:30 AM Set No.4: 20/7/2026 at 11:00 AM
For inquires and coordination	Please contact the Auction Committee representative on (99293206 – 24753648)
Other terms	- The VAT specified in the law will be applied to the successful bidder. - It is not allowed to enter the auction yard without paying the entrance fee and the insurance amount. - Muscat Municipality reserve the rights to cancel or postpone the sale without providing any justification. - The security deposit will not be refunded in these cases: - If the buyer does not pay the value of the sold items. - If the buyer does not transfer the items from the auction yard within the specified period.



Website: www.mm.gov.om

CABLE

HM sends greetings to Montenegro

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Jakov Milatovic of the Republic of Montenegro on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik expressed his good wishes to President Jakov and the people of his coun-

try, wishing Montenegro growth, prosperity, and stability, as well as the realization of further achievements.

His Majesty the Sultan also wished the bilateral relations of cooperation and friendship further development and expansion across various fields.

-ONA



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Al Dhahirah boosts food security with OMR84 million investments

The governorate is witnessing accelerated activity through an integrated portfolio of ongoing projects, others completed during 2025, and future projects planned for 2026

IBRI: Al Dhahirah Governorate is emerging as a promising model in attracting investment and implementing high-quality agricultural, livestock and fisheries projects, driven by close coordination between government entities and the private sector and a clear vision to maximise local production through modern technologies.

The governorate is witnessing accelerated activity through an integrated portfolio of ongoing projects, others completed during 2025, and future projects planned for 2026.

Dr. Talal bin Zahran Al Busaidi, Director General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Al Dhahirah Governorate, said the governorate's significance extends beyond its agricultural base.

It possesses the resources to become an integrated economic hub for food production, built on natural assets, diverse activities and significant infrastructure development in recent years, in line with Oman Vision 2040, cementing its position as a key pillar of the food security system and sustainable development.



In a statement to the Oman News Agency (ONA), he said the governorate is steadily advancing towards greater competitiveness by maximising the added value of its resources, attracting quality investment and fostering a business environment conducive to sustainable development.

The governorate is rich in strategic resources, including fertile agricultural land, available water

resources, agricultural expertise, production diversity and a strategic location that opens wide access to regional markets and supports the expansion of food industries and logistics, he noted.

Government services — including agricultural extension, veterinary care and various support programmes — are a fundamental pillar in ensuring the success and sustainability of investment projects, he said. The total number of investment projects in food security in Al Dhahirah has reached 67 across three wilayats, covering about 9,607 acres, with an investment value of OMR84 million, including the recently signed poultry project with A'Namaa valued at OMR28.85 million.

Ibri accounts for the largest share with 38 investment projects, while Dhank is distinguished as the governorate's food basket, with promising investment projects supporting self-sufficiency

and economic diversification for 2026, he said.

The Directorate is working to achieve its 2026 targets with an investment value ranging between RO 375 million and OMR50 million by introducing new investment opportunities alongside high-quality projects spanning plant, animal and aquatic sectors, supporting production expansion, resource diversification and food security, Dr. Al Busaidi added.

The introduction of such projects supports the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources' targets of localising the second billion and enhancing self-sufficiency rates towards a more sustainable and competitive food system, he said.

Ibri is witnessing a wide range of projects covering agricultural, livestock, manufacturing and service activities, including greenhouse vegetable production, date palm cultivation and date produc-



tion, fodder projects, livestock and poultry farming, as well as specialised projects such as tissue culture laboratories, water bottling plants, and integrated projects combining agricultural and livestock production.

These contribute to improving food supply chain efficiency and added value, alongside fertiliser production, veterinary hospitals and table egg production.

Dhank continues to diversify its agricultural investments through ten projects spanning plant, manufacturing and service activities, including date palm cultivation and date production, onion, potato, garlic and vegetable production, food manufacturing, animal waste utilisation, livestock farming and table egg production.

Yanqul is implementing nine diverse investment projects covering plant production, livestock, food manufacturing and support services, including grape and fig cultivation and production, date palm cultivation and date production, livestock farming and fodder cultivation, along with support projects such as fish market management and operation, and water purification and bottling.

The Director General stressed that the next phase requires a shift from increasing production to building integrated value chains

— from agricultural production through sorting, packaging, storage and manufacturing to marketing and export.

Expansion in food industries, packaging and storage centres, fodder projects, and dairy and meat plants is a strategic direction to increase added value and enhance the sector's contribution to the national economy, he said.

He added that the governorate still abounds with multiple investment opportunities, including grain and strategic crop production, smart agriculture, fodder manufacturing, livestock farming, food industries, storage and refrigeration centres, agricultural services, water resources projects and logistics services.

Dr. Al Busaidi noted that 36 new projects have been listed on the Tatweer platform in collaboration with the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning for 2026, most notably the establishment of a veterinary hospital, a tissue culture centre, greenhouses, livestock projects, and carbonated and flavoured water plants.

Cooperation has also been established with specialists in the Ibri Industrial City (Madayn) to offer 11 investment opportunities in food manufacturing and organic fertilisers on the Tatweer platform. -ONA

WORLD YOGASANA CHAMPIONSHIP

Outstanding achievements of yoga students celebrated

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Vyaniti Yoga celebrated the outstanding achievements of four of its students who brought pride to their respective countries by winning medals at the 1st World Yogasana Championship 2026, held in Ahmedabad, India, recently.

For over 30 years, Vyaniti Yoga has been one of the pioneering yoga institutions in the Sultanate of Oman, dedicated to promoting authentic yoga, holistic wellness, and excellence in Yogasana.

Founded by Prema Nagesh, the institution has trained thousands of students across all age groups, organized numerous yoga workshops, wellness programmes, competitions, and community initiatives, and has consistently inspired the values of discipline, health, and lifelong learning through yoga.

One of Vyaniti Yoga's landmark achievements came in 2018, when it successfully organized a Limca Book of Records event in Oman, where more than 500 participants performed 108 rounds of Surya Namaskar together at a single venue. This remarkable accomplishment remains one of the largest Surya Namaskar events conducted outside India and reflects Vyaniti Yoga's long-standing commitment to spreading the practice of yoga at both commu-



nity and international levels.

The success of its students at the World Yogasana Championship is another proud milestone in this continuing journey. The main reason for success is not just participation but years of practice.

Medal winners

Mahua Mandal (Sultanate of Oman) competed in the Senior B Category (35-45 years) and won two Silver Medals in the Twisting and Traditional categories. She had also achieved remarkable success at the Asian Yogasana Championship 2025, winning one Gold Medal and two Silver Medals.

Mahua Mandal (Sultanate of Oman) participated in the Senior C Category (45-55 years) and secured one Silver Medal in the Tra-

ditional category and one Bronze Medal in the Twisting category.

Sreya Nagasubramanian (Sultanate of Oman) represented the Senior Category (18-28 years) and won two Bronze Medals—one in the Twisting category and another in the Rhythmic Pair event.

Kamini (New Zealand) competed in the Senior C Category (45 years and above) and earned two Bronze Medals, demonstrating dedication, perseverance, and excellence on the world stage.

These achievements are the result of months and years of disciplined training, determination, and unwavering commitment to Yogasana.

Vyaniti Yoga is immensely proud of all its athletes for representing their countries with grace, confidence, and sportsmanship.

OCEC

Sports Flame 2026 event to be launched in Muscat



MUSCAT: The Sports Flame 2026 event, one of the Sultanate of Oman's premier summer sports and entertainment festivals, will officially open this Tuesday, at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The two-day event provides a dynamic sport, commercial and marketing platform for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs, enabling them to capitalise on the anticipated public turnout through available participation opportunities in product and service offerings, retail outlet operations, food and beverage provision, as well as logistical, technical, marketing and

other event-related services.

The "Sports Flame" event is committed to maximising the utilisation of local capabilities and expertise, while creating opportunities for companies, suppliers and SMEs to take part in the execution of works and the delivery of associated services.

This approach contributes to retaining a greater share of expenditure within the national economy and enhancing local value addition.

The reliance ratios on local suppliers and the value of contracts awarded to them will be determined based on the final data pertaining to contracts, procurement

and operations.

Sports and entertainment events play a pivotal role in building an interconnected economic ecosystem encompassing event organisers, sports and entertainment facilities, SMEs, restaurants and cafés, technology, marketing, transport and logistics companies, among other activities.

This is achieved through increased participation of local enterprises, greater reliance on national suppliers, the development of Omani competencies and the encouragement of investment in sports and entertainment products and services. -ONA

CRITICAL CHOKEHOLD

Iran denies passage through Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN: Iran doubled down on the US while insisting that the passage through the Strait of Hormuz remains closed after the US Central Command (CENTCOM) claimed that the “traffic is flowing”, dismissing Tehran’s authority over the critical chokehold.

The Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA), an official Iranian maritime body established to regulate and control transit through the Strait of Hormuz, stated in a post on X that the passage has been closed due to “recent illegal movements” of the US military and will be permitted only through a “transit permit” issued by PGSA.

It added that the requests regarding the transit will be reviewed “as soon as stability and calm are restored” in the region.

“We hereby inform all esteemed applicants. Due to the recent illegal movements of the United States military forces in the region, passage through the Strait of Hormuz is currently not possible. As soon as stability and calm are restored, all requests will be reviewed based on the schedule, and the necessary permits will be issued,” PGSA stated. “The only way to obtain a transit permit is through the website <http://PGSA.ir>. To receive the latest news and updates, follow our account on the social network X. We appreciate your patience and cooperation,” it added.

The clarification comes shortly after the US Central Command claimed that the Strait of Hormuz is “open to all vessels”.

The CENTCOM, in a post on X, stated that US forces are “positioned and prepared” to ensure the “freedom of navigation.” — **ANI**

US and Iran exchange fresh strikes as tensions escalate

The US Central Command said on Sunday it had completed the third round of strikes against Iran this week after hitting some 140 targets while Iran launched attacks on US bases and facilities across the Gulf

WASHINGTON/TEHRAN: The United States completed a third round of strikes on Iranian military targets on Sunday, while Iran launched attacks on US bases and facilities across the Gulf, marking a sharp escalation despite a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in June.

The US Central Command said on Sunday it had completed the third round of strikes against Iran this week after hitting some 140 targets, including missile and drone launch sites, ammunition dumps, communication equipment and other sites.

“Iran was provided yet another opportunity to demonstrate ad-



herence to the MoU after being held accountable for earlier attacks on commercial vessels but has again failed,” the command said in a post on X.

Iran’s Press TV reported on Sunday that explosions rocked several cities in southern Iran. In response, Iran launched a series of strikes against US targets in Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Kuwait.

The UAE and Kuwait said on Sunday that their air defence systems had intercepted missile and drone threats in their airspace.

Any explosions heard by the public were the result of air defence systems intercepting the incoming threats, Kuwait’s armed

forces said on X, urging citizens and residents to follow security and safety instructions issued by the relevant authorities.

Iran also targeted a US military communications facility and a radar facility in Bahrain, and launched a ballistic missile strike against the US airbase of Al Udeid in Qatar, according to reports.

Explosions were heard in Qatar early Sunday after the Ministry of Interior issued a public alert raising the country’s security threat level for the second time within hours.

The ministry urged residents to remain indoors, stay away from glass windows, avoid unnecessary movement and follow safety in-

structions issued by the relevant authorities.

Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Sunday that it had destroyed a command and control center and drone hangars at the Prince Hassan air base in Jordan.

As for the Strait of Hormuz, Iran said earlier that the strait was closed after a vessel traveling on an unapproved route was struck, warning that any retaliation over the incident would be met with a “severe response.”

“A vessel that had jeopardised maritime security by switching off its systems was struck and brought to a halt,” the IRGC navy said in a statement.

As a result of the incident, the strait would remain closed “until further notice” and “until the end of US interference in this region,” the statement said.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations confirmed in an advisory that a container ship caught fire after sustaining damage in an incident off the coast of Oman late Saturday.

On June 18, Iran and the United States signed an MoU on ending the war in the region on all fronts, including Lebanon. Under the MoU, the two countries were scheduled to hold negotiations within 60 days to reach a final agreement.

— Xinhua

NEW ZEALAND AND INDIA

Agreed upon new deal that builds on FTA: New Zealand PM

AUCKLAND: New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon on Saturday said that bilateral ties with India were elevated to a strategic partnership during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit and the two countries aim to double trade by 2030.

He said in a post on X that an increase in trade will create more jobs and boost wages in New Zealand.

“New Zealand and India have agreed a new deal that builds on our free trade agreement. With Prime Minister @narendramodi here in New Zealand, we’ve lifted our relationship to a Strategic Partnership, with a plan to double trade between our countries by 2030 - meaning more money flow-

ing back into Kiwi communities, creating jobs and boosting wages here at home,” he said.

During PM Modi’s visit, the two leaders held extensive bilateral discussions in restricted and delegation-level formats. Their talks covered the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, including trade and investment, defence and security, agri-tech, sports, education, tourism, culture and people-to-people ties. They agreed to elevate the bilateral relationship to the level of Strategic Partnership, marking a new chapter in India-New Zealand relations. They reaffirmed their commitment to deepen cooperation across areas of mutual interest.

Both leaders underscored the

importance of the early implementation of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement. The two Prime Ministers set a target to double bilateral trade by 2030. The leaders exchanged views on regional and global developments and reiterated their commitment to strengthening cooperation in multilateral fora.

Several MoUs signed

Following the talks, the two Prime Ministers witnessed the exchange of several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and understandings in the fields of defence and maritime security, hydrography, sports, disaster management, dairy, tourism, maritime heritage, culture, food technology and

ocean research.

In a post on X, PM Modi said that India and New Zealand will move forward across every sector with clear goals.

“Held extensive and fruitful talks with PM Luxon in Auckland this morning. His own visit to India last year energised our bilateral partnership and my visit today, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 4 decades, has added further momentum to the India-New Zealand friendship. We have decided to elevate our ties to a Strategic Partnership. We will move forward across every sector with clear goals and concrete outcomes,” he said.

Prime Minister visited Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand from July 6 to 11. — **ANI**



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NOTICE OF INVITATION TO ATTEND THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING AND THE ANNUAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of Oman Agriculture Development Company SAOC (the “Company”) hereby invites all shareholders to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting (“EGM”) and the Annual Ordinary General Meeting (“AGM”), to be held on Monday, 27 July 2026, at 4:00 p.m., through the electronic platform designated for General Meetings, accessible via the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository S.A.O.C. (MCD) at www.mcd.gov.om. If a quorum is not met in the first meeting, the Second Extraordinary General Meeting and the Second Annual Ordinary General Meeting shall be convened on Tuesday, 28 July 2026, at 4:00 p.m., through the same electronic platform available on the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository S.A.O.C., for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the following agenda:

I) Extraordinary General Meeting

The agenda of the Extraordinary General Meeting shall include the following items:

First:

To approve the amendment of the Company’s Articles of Association in order to bring them into conformity with the provisions of the Commercial Companies Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 18/2019, which repealed the former Commercial Companies Law issued under Law No. 4/74, and requires all existing companies to amend their Articles of Association in accordance with its provisions. The proposed amendments shall also ensure compliance with the Executive Regulation of the Commercial Companies Law issued pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 146/2021, the Corporate Governance Principles for Closed Joint Stock Companies issued under Decision No. 5/2025, together with all implementing regulations and instructions issued thereunder, as well as all applicable legislation governing the Company’s activities. Any matter not expressly provided for in the Articles of Association shall be governed by the applicable laws and regulations, which shall prevail in the event of any conflict with the provisions of the Articles.

Second:

To approve the amendment of Article (6) of the Company’s Articles of Association as follows

Before Amendment	After Amendment
The Company shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of five (5) members, elected by the Ordinary General Meeting from among the shareholders who own, or represent shareholders owning, not less than one thousand (1,000) shares of the Company’s share capital. Each Board member shall, within one month from the date of election, deposit such shares with the Company as security for the due performance of his duties. Such shares shall remain non-transferable until the expiry of the member’s term of office and until the General Meeting approves the financial statements for the last financial year during which the member served on the Board.	Pursuant to Article (179) of the Commercial Companies Law, the Company shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of three (3) members, elected by the Ordinary General Meeting in accordance with the rules and procedures issued by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

II) Annual Ordinary General Meeting

The agenda of the Annual Ordinary General Meeting shall include the following items:

- To review and approve the Board of Directors’ Report for the financial year ended 30 April 2026.
- To review and approve the Auditor’s Report, the Balance Sheet and the Statement of Profit and Loss for the financial year ended 30 April 2026.
- To review and approve the Company’s Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 30 April 2026.
- To present to the Assembly the transactions entered into by the Company with related parties during the financial year ended 30 April 2026, as detailed in the attached schedule.
- To present to the Assembly the transactions proposed to be entered into by the Company with related parties during the financial year ending 30 April 2027.
- To review and approve the Board of Directors’ recommendation to distribute cash dividends to the shareholders registered as of the date of the General Meeting in the amount of 370 Baizas per share, to be paid out of the retained earnings for the financial year ended 30 April 2026.
- To elect the members of the Board of Directors from among the shareholders or non-shareholders. Any person wishing to nominate himself/herself for membership of the Board of Directors shall complete the prescribed nomination form and submit it to the Company no later than five (5) days prior to the date of the General Meeting, i.e. by Wednesday, 22 July 2026. No nomination forms submitted after this deadline shall be accepted.
- To appoint the external auditor for the financial year ending 30 April 2027 and to determine their remuneration.

Note:

Pursuant to the Company’s Articles of Association and the Rules Governing the Holding of General Meetings by Electronic Means issued by the Authority, shareholders are kindly requested to take note of the following:

A) A juridical person (legal entity) may authorize only a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through the electronic platform, provided that such natural person holds a valid Investor Number issued by Muscat Clearing & Depository S.A.O.C.

B) Voting on each item of the agenda shall commence no earlier than three (3) days prior to the date of the General Meeting and shall remain open until the close of voting on the day of the meeting. In the event of any increase or decrease in a shareholder’s shareholding during the voting period, the previously cast vote shall automatically be cancelled, and the shareholder shall be required to cast his/her vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For any enquiries, please contact Mr. Arun Kumar Singh at Tel.: 93653442.

Chairman
Board of Directors

Auditor

Legal Advisor

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/2026/063	NON-LOAD RELATED ASSET ENHANCEMENT WORKS - Lot-01-2026	26-JULY-2026	02-AUGUST-2026	52.500
DISC/2026/066	UTILITY NETWORK EXTENSION - Lot 07A/2026	26-JULY-2026	02-AUGUST-2026	52.500

- To purchase the tender document website via the link or the Barcode below:
https://supplier.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 “supplier 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.

شركة خدمات للخدمات المتكاملة
ص.ب. ١٦٩ - المزرع الغربي ٢١ - صلالة - محافظة ظفار
هاتف: ٢٤٥٩٢٠٩٩ - فاكس: ٢٤٥٩٢٠٩٩
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SPORTS

NEW ZEALANDER

Brendon McCullum sacked as England Test head coach

LONDON: Brendon McCullum was sacked as Test coach on Sunday in another staggering twist in the unravelling of the England team.

Two weeks after Ben Stokes announced his stunning decision to step down as captain and retire from international cricket, McCullum's exit brings a definitive end to the Bazball era.

The New Zealander will continue as England's white-ball coach, but leaves the Test team following a string of poor results and several off-field incidents.

Director of cricket Rob Key will remain in his position, the decision to remove McCullum came after the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) hierarchy spent time reflecting on the situation surrounding the men's team.

"I've absolutely loved coaching

the Test side and I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved together," said McCullum.

"There've been some unbelievable highs and a few tough days along the way, but that's all part of taking on a challenge like this.

"Of course I'm gutted not to be continuing, but I respect the decision. My focus now is on giving everything I've got to the white-ball teams and helping England keep moving forward."

England have lost seven of their past nine Tests, including the 4-1 Ashes hammering in Australia.

McCullum, Stokes and Key were backed to remain in charge following that defeat, only for England to be beaten 2-1 by New Zealand.

The defeat by the Black Caps – England's first in a home series of at least three Tests for 14 years – was overshadowed by a nightclub



incident involving Stokes and Gus Atkinson, then Stokes' abrupt retirement.

Now, the England Test team has no head coach and no captain, with the next series against Pakistan

beginning on August 19.

Harry Brook appears favourite to be named as Test captain, though that appointment could now hinge on the identity of the next head coach.

Since 1999, England have had only two English head coaches of the Test team. Peter Moores did the job twice, while Chris Silverwood was McCullum's predecessor.

Zimbabwean Andy Flower, who was in charge when England won the Ashes in Australia in 2010-11, would be the standout candidate to replace McCullum, though it is not known if he could be lured from the franchise world.

In remaining as white-ball coach, McCullum can continue to build on the improvements made by England's limited-overs team.

The victory over India on Saturday gave England a 4-0 T20 series win over the world champions and put them at No.1 in the world rankings.

McCullum combined the Test

and white-ball roles in 2024, two years after he first took charge of the Test team.

When he arrived as Test coach in 2022, he initially embarked on a spell of superb results earned with some breathtaking cricket.

The partnership with Stokes – the Bazball style – revitalised an England team that had won only one of its previous 17 Tests.

Overall, England won 10 of their first 11 Tests under McCullum and Stokes.

However, since that initial period of success, England have lost 19 and won 17 of 38 Tests, beginning with a heart-stopping one-run defeat by New Zealand in Wellington.

McCullum's contract with the white-ball team runs to the end of the 50-over World Cup in southern Africa next autumn. - Agencies

Buttler hits ton as England rout India to sweep series



The opener smashed 131 to lead hosts to the top of the world rankings with a 56-run win over India in the fifth T20I



LONDON: England emphatically dismantled Twenty20 cricket's traditional powerhouse, delivering India a sobering reality check as they begin the two-year task of building a team capable of reclaiming the T20I World Cup.

The two-time T20I world champions in blue were listless in all facets of the format as England sealed a 4-0 series win after India conceded over 250 runs for the first time in a T20 at Southampton in the final game on Saturday.

Jos Buttler smashed a majestic 131 to lead England to the top of the world rankings with a dominant 56-run win.

Buttler produced a vintage innings of touch and power following a relatively barren run, recording his highest score in a glittering T20 career.

He shared in an England T20 record stand of 233 - and world record for the second wicket in T20Is - with captain Harry Brook, who clattered 95 not out off 45 deliveries in the hosts' 257-3.

England's third-highest T20I total and highest against India proved too much for the tourists, who

made 201-8 as the world champions fell to a 4-0 series defeat.

Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma both hit half-centuries but Shreyas Iyer's beleaguered side, who were shocking in the field, never looked likely to snatch a consolation win and have now lost the No.1 ranking to their opponents.

The two sides will now face each other in a five-match one-day international series, starting at Edgbaston on Tuesday.

England not only dominated all the IPL big hitters like Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer, but Brook's men also shattered the confidence of 15-year-old prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

The selectors' road map for Sooryavanshi's international debut after a bumper IPL season this year backfired big time.

The left-hander was twice bounced out by his Rajasthan Royals team-mate Jofra Archer and

Bishnoi replaces injured Varun

LONDON: Ravi Bishnoi has replaced the injured Varun Chakravarthy in India's squad for the three T20Is in Zimbabwe later this month.

Bishnoi wasn't part of the original squad, but has now been added to it after it was ascertained that Varun, who missed the last two T20Is in England with a hamstring injury, will need more time to recover.

Meanwhile, Prince Yadav, who had earlier only been part of the T20I squad in England, will stay back for the ODI leg of the tour, with Harshit Rana ruled out of the series with a hamstring injury.

Jasprit Bumrah's return will boost India's pace stocks for the series, as the selectors are keen for him to feature regularly in ODIs with the 50-over World Cup a little over a year away.

Prasidh Krishna, Gurnoor Brar, Arshdeep Singh and Prince are the other frontline



seamers in the ODI squad.

India's squad for the Zimbabwe T20Is is expected to reach Harare on July 20.

VVS Laxman, the head of the CoE, will take charge as head coach along with assistant coaches Sunil Joshi and Hrishikesh Kanitkar, to give regular head coach Gautam Gambhir and his staff a breather after the ODI series in England. - Agencies

VS ZIMBABWE



Tanzid shines as Bangladesh avoid whitewash in ODIs

HARARE: Opener Tanzid Hasan struck 94 runs as Bangladesh trounced hosts Zimbabwe by seven wickets on Saturday in a dead rubber one-day international (ODI) in Harare.

Zimbabwe had clinched a winning 2-0 lead in the three-game series two days ago with a 13-run victory after winning the opener by 25 runs.

The tourists won the toss and bowled Zimbabwe for 199 with Wessly Madhevere (75) and Brad Evans (50) the only batters delivering significant knocks.

Bangladesh then reached 200-3 with 84 balls to spare. They now switch their focus to a three-match Twenty20 series in Bulawayo, starting on Wednesday. Before the ODIs, they lost a one-off Test.

Player of the match Tanzid said: "I am happy because the wicket was good. When I went to the wicket, the ball came on nice-

ly. In the previous wickets, there was a little bit more bounce."

Madhevere fell when his top edge was held by Mehidy Hasan Miraz in the covers. Evans was also punished for a top edge, caught by Tanvir Islam at fine leg.

Quick Shoriful Islam (4-44) was the pick of the Bangladeshi bowlers. His victims included opener Ben Curran (2), a centurion in the second ODI.

After failing in the previous ODIs when chasing a win, Bangladesh made no mistake at the third attempt as Tanzid and Soumya Sarkar (69) put on 151 runs for the opening wicket.

Zimbabwe used seven bowlers without success until Sarkar was bowled by Tanaka Chivanga in the 28th over.

Tanzid fell just six runs short of a second ODI century, caught by Evans at long on. His knock included three sixes and eight fours off 101 deliveries. - Agencies

BEZZECCHI INJURED

Marquez claims pole at Germany MotoGP

SACHSENRING: Marc Marquez secured pole position for the Germany MotoGP after the Spaniard set the fastest time on his Ducati in qualifying at the Sachsenring on Saturday, but Marco Bezzecchi will miss the rest of the weekend after breaking his collarbone following a heavy fall.

Marquez, the reigning world champion, will start from pole for the ninth time in the premier class at the German circuit, becoming the first rider in history to achieve this feat.

He booked his place at the front of the grid with a new all-time lap record of 1min 19.041sec.

Nicknamed 'The King of the Ring', the 33-year-old Catalan will be aiming on Sunday for a 13th victory on the German circuit, his 10th in MotoGP.

"Front row was the target but pole position and especially the lap record here in Sachsenring... is something really good,"



Marc Marquez said.

Victory in the Grand Prix this weekend would see him equal two records held by Italian legend Giacomo Agostini: most wins at a single event (13) and most victories at the same circuit in the premier class (10).

Marc Marquez finished ahead of his brother Alex Marquez, riding for the Ducati satellite team Gres-

ini, and Italian Fabio Di Giannantonio for the VR46 outfit owned by Italian MotoGP icon Valentino Rossi. "I was upset in the moment to not get the pole," Alex Marquez said of his initial reaction to seeing he had come second in qualifying. "But happy to see Marc and me again at the top," the 30-year-old added.

Spaniard Raul Fernandez of

Aprilia-Trackhouse took fourth place, ahead of his Japanese teammate Ai Ogura and France's Fabio Quartararo of Yamaha.

The session was marred by another heavy crash involving Aprilia's Bezzecchi.

Two weeks after crashing at nearly 200 km/h (120 mph) in the Netherlands without suffering any injuries, the Italian this time lost his back wheel at over 130 km/h and was thrown over his handlebars before bouncing several times in the gravel.

Second in the championship, Bezzecchi, who had set the eighth-fastest time before crashing, broke his left collarbone in the fall, his team announced.

The 27-year-old will return to Italy for surgery.

It was a morning to forget for Aprilia, with its championship leader, Spaniard Jorge Martin, only managing the ninth-fastest time in qualifying. - Agencies



SOHAR INTERNATIONAL

Sohar International has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) to become the Title Sponsor of the fourth edition of Sports Spark 2026.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 7,652.14 points, up by 0.10% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.37% at 613.74 points. Gulf Mushroom Products, up 7.14%, was the top gainer while, Gulf International Chemicals, down 5.26%, was the top loser.

STATISTICS

Oman oil exports rise by 2.7% to reach 129.5 million barrels

MUSCAT: The oil exports of the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 2.7 percent by the end of May 2026, reaching 129.49 million barrels, compared to 126.05 million barrels during the corresponding period of 2025.

Preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated that the average price of oil rose by 1.3 percent to reach \$76.2 per barrel by the end of May 2026, compared to \$75.2 per barrel during the corresponding period of 2025.

On the production front, the average daily oil production recorded a growth of 9.7 percent, reaching 1,083,000 barrels per day by the end of May 2026, compared to 987,600 barrels per day during the corresponding period of 2025.

The total oil production of the Sultanate of Oman also rose by 9.7 percent, registering 163,641,700 barrels by the end of May 2026, compared to 149,133,700 barrels during the corresponding period of the previous year. -ONA



Pact signed for \$29mn ammonium sulphate fertiliser production plant

The project represents another milestone in strengthening Salalah Free Zone's position as a leading destination for value-added industrial investments while supporting the growth of Oman's chemical and downstream manufacturing sectors

MUSCAT: Salalah Free Zone (SFZ) has signed a sub-usufruct agreement with Majan Petrochemical Industry (SFZ) to establish an ammonium sulphate fertiliser production plant with an investment value exceeding OMR11 million (\$29 million) on a land area of 43,669.63 square metres.

The project represents another milestone in strengthening SFZ's



position as a leading destination for value-added industrial investments while supporting the growth of Oman's chemical and downstream manufacturing sectors.

The signing ceremony was attended by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz).

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Salalah Free Zone by Dr. Ali Tabook, Chief Executive Officer of Salalah Free Zone, while Said Mousa Al Junaibi, Partner and Chairman of the Company's Board of Directors, signed on behalf of the company.

The project aligns with SFZ's strategy to attract high-value manufacturing industries that contribute to economic diversification, strengthen industrial value chains, and enhance the competitiveness of Oman's industrial sector. It will capitalise on Salalah Free Zone's strategic location on major international shipping routes, its direct integration with the Port of Salalah, world-class infrastructure, and investor-friendly business environment.

The facility will manufacture ammonium sulfate fertiliser, one of the world's most widely used agricultural fertilisers, recognised for its effectiveness in improving

soil fertility and increasing crop productivity. The plant is expected to meet the growing regional and international demand for fertiliser products while reinforcing the presence of Omani industrial products in global markets.

The investment will support the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 by expanding value-added downstream manufacturing, increasing non-oil exports through the Port of Salalah, and leveraging SFZ's strategic location to efficiently serve key markets across Asia, Africa, and the GCC. The project will further strengthen Oman's position as a regional hub for industrial

manufacturing and export-oriented industries.

Beyond its direct industrial impact, the project is expected to generate significant economic value by creating skilled employment opportunities and supporting Omani SMEs through procurement, logistics, engineering, maintenance, construction, and other industrial services. It will also introduce advanced fertiliser manufacturing technologies, enhance local technical capabilities, and promote sustainable industrial practices through efficient resource utilisation and environmentally responsible production.

Commenting on the agreement, Dr. Ali Tabook, Chief Executive Officer of Salalah Free Zone, said "This project represents a strategic addition to Salalah Free Zone's growing chemical manufacturing portfolio and reflects our commitment to attracting investments that build integrated industrial value chains rather than standalone production facilities. Our focus is on developing a comprehensive industrial ecosystem where investors benefit from the synergy between logistics infrastructure, industrial services, and seamless access to international markets, ultimately enhancing the global competitiveness of their businesses."

He added, "The global fertiliser and chemical industries continue to experience sustained growth, driven by increasing demand for agricultural products. We see this investment as an important opportunity to strengthen Salalah Free Zone's contribution to this vital sector by leveraging Salalah's competitive advantages as a global logistics hub connecting manufacturers with key international markets efficiently and reliably, while supporting Oman's economic diversification agenda and the expansion of non-oil exports."

The signing of this agreement reflects Salalah Free Zone's continued success in attracting high-quality industrial investments that contribute to sustainable economic development and reinforce its position as one of the region's leading destinations for export-oriented manufacturing through an integrated business environment designed to support long-term investor growth. -ONA

SUPPORT

BankDhofar named gold sponsor of Khareef Festival

MUSCAT: BankDhofar has been announced as a Gold Sponsor of the Salalah Khareef Festival 2026, one of the region's most celebrated tourism and cultural events. The festival attracts large numbers of visitors from across the world, offering a distinctive seasonal experience defined by monsoon mist, lush greenery, cultural heritage showcases, and traditional music.

The Khareef season provides a strategic platform for BankDhofar to deepen engagement with customers and strengthen its market presence in Dhofar Governorate. As part of its participation, the bank will host a dedicated pavilion at Ittin Plain, designed in alignment with the visual identities of both BankDhofar and Dhofar Islamic. The pavilion will showcase a comprehensive suite of banking solutions, including retail and SME banking services, personal finance offerings, and advanced digital banking channels.



In addition, the bank will roll out a series of activations across key tourist and heritage destinations throughout the governorate, further reinforcing its community outreach and customer engagement initiatives during the peak tourism season.

Enhancing accessibility across Dhofar, BankDhofar will also deploy its innovative mobile branch during the Khareef period. Fully equipped to deliver end-to-end banking services and personalised

financial advisory support, the mobile unit will operate across multiple high-traffic locations, ensuring convenient and seamless service for residents and visitors alike.

BankDhofar recognises the Khareef Festival as a key economic catalyst for Dhofar, driving activity across hospitality, retail, transport, and small businesses. Hotels and lodges operate at full capacity during the season, while local vendors of frankincense, honey, and traditional crafts benefit from height-

ened demand. Many of these transactions are increasingly supported by digital payment solutions such as the bank's SoftPOS service, improving efficiency and customer convenience for merchants and visitors.

Through its sponsorship, BankDhofar reaffirms its commitment to corporate social responsibility, financial inclusion, and local economic development. The bank continues to play an active role in supporting Dhofar's social and economic ecosystem, anchored in principles of service, sustainability, and shared growth.

With an extensive network of more than 145 branches across Oman and over 400 ATMs, cash deposit machines, and multi-service kiosks, BankDhofar continues to expand financial accessibility nationwide, serving individuals, SMEs, and corporate clients through a robust and modern banking infrastructure.

UNCTAD REPORT

Governments adopted a record 229 investment policy measures in 2025

GENEVA: Foreign investment is not falling out of favour with governments. But the rules governing it are changing.

According to the World Investment Report 2026 by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), governments adopted a record 229 investment policy measures in 2025. While most remained favourable to investors, policymakers are increasingly steering investment towards industries they see as critical for growth, resilience, technological leadership and economic security.

The shift reflects a broader change in how countries view investment. The question is no longer simply how to attract more capital. Increasingly, it is how to attract investment that supports national priorities.

The record number of measures adopted in 2025 was not driven by a return to protectionism.

Of the 229 measures introduced worldwide, 167 were favourable to investors, accounting for 73% of the total. But unlike previous decades, when governments often focused on broad liberalization, today's measures are increasingly designed to channel investment towards specific sectors, technologies and activities.

Developing Asia remained the most active region, with policies focused on industrial upgrading, digital transformation and green investment. Europe concentrated on industrial policy initiatives and investment screening, while Latin America and the Caribbean continued to emphasise investment facilitation and investor retention. -WAM

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Gulf Mushroom Products, up 7.14%, was the top gainer while, Gulf International Chemicals, down 5.26%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,652.14 points, up by 0.10% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.37% at 613.74 points. Gulf Mushroom Products, up 7.14%, was the top gainer while, Gulf International Chemicals, down 5.26%, 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 8921 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 25.75 million, with more than 96.34 million shares changing hands. Out of 59 traded securities, 16 advanced, 22 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR 1466,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR 1166,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR 300,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 13,237.20 points, up 0.12%. Prices of Al Madina Investments,

Ominvest, Bank Nizwa, Bank Muscat, Bank Dhofar were up by 6.06%, 0.81%, 0.71%, 0.50%, 0.44% respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, Al Anwar Investment, Al Madina Takaful, Sohar International Bank, Oman Arab Bank were down by 1.49%, 1.16%, 0.82%, 0.52%, 0.42% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 9,868.47 points, up 0.50%. Prices of Gulf Mushroom Products, Voltamp Energy, Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 7.14%, 1.72%, 0.69% respectively. Prices of Gulf International Chemicals, Oman Packaging, Raysut Cement were down by 5.26%, 4.76%, 0.53% respectively. Services Index was down by -0.21% before closing at 3,074.60 points. Prices of Al Batinah Power, Al Jazeera Services, Abraj Energy, Oman Telecom were up by 1.05%, 0.36%, 0.26%, 0.14% respectively. Prices of Barka Desalination, National Gas, Dhofar Generating, Muscat Desalination, OQ Gas Networks were down by 3.07%, 2.73%, 1.21%, 1.10%, 0.89% respectively.

United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	7,678.10	7,642.46	7,652.14	7,644.45	7.69	0.10
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,281.56	13,221.50	13,237.20	13,221.75	15.46	0.12
Industry Index	9,879.93	9,819.14	9,868.47	9,819.14	49.33	0.50
Services Index	3,092.04	3,069.76	3,074.60	3,081.14	-6.54	-0.21
MSX Shariah Index	615.61	611.48	613.74	611.48	2.26	0.37
MSX TR INDEX	11,878.91	11,823.76	11,838.74	11,826.85	11.90	0.10
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16,328.98	16,255.14	16,308.39	16,255.45	52.94	0.33
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,653.69	12,575.82	12,639.00	12,575.82	63.18	0.50
SERVICES TR IDX	4,142.75	4,112.89	4,119.39	4,128.15	-8.76	-0.21
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
96,341,307	25,747,799	8,921	38,290,873,224	16	22	21	59

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JULY 12

SNSECURITY NAMEVOLUME TURNOVER TRADES OPEN PRICE HIGH LOW CLOSE PR PREV. CLOSE DIFF (RD) DIFF %LAST PRLAST BIDLAST OFFER PUR VALUE MARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	4,460	1,942	4	0.450	0.450	0.435	0.450	0.420	0.030	7.143	0.435	0.427	0.435	0.100	22,654,070
OM0000006861	VOLTAMP ENERGY	318,207	55,717	50	0.175	0.177	0.174	0.177	0.174	0.003	1.724	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	177,000,000
OM0000003908	OQBASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	32,873,759	9,048,128	1,753	0.277	0.279	0.273	0.274	0.270	0.004	1.481	0.274	0.275	0.274	0.040	947,900,453
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	27,880	5,299	7	0.190	0.192	0.190	0.192	0.190	0.002	1.053	0.190	0.190	0.202	0.100	128,578,387
OM0000001353	OMINVEST	26,907	10,248	11	0.373	0.382	0.373	0.373	0.370	0.003	0.811	0.382	0.372	0.381	0.100	418,824,510
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	147,479	20,638	20	0.143	0.143	0.141	0.142	0.141	0.001	0.709	0.142	0.142	0.151	0.100	317,647,231
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	6,108,568	2,432,485	1,507	0.388	0.400	0.385	0.389	0.397	0.002	0.504	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.100	2,995,052,428
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	170,000	38,695	150	0.227	0.228	0.227	0.228	0.227	0.001	0.441	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.100	693,074,065
OM0000002236	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	5,600	1,560	4	0.280	0.280	0.277	0.280	0.279	0.001	0.358	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.100	11,996,037
OM0000006834	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	291,119	113,230	215	0.390	0.390	0.386	0.390	0.389	0.001	0.257	0.390	0.388	0.390	0.100	300,378,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	1,274,632	1,793,348	37	1.404	1.408	1.404	1.406	1.404	0.002	0.142	1.404	1.404	1.404	0.100	1,054,500,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	500	250	1	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500	0.494	0.499	0.100	812,973,178
OM0000001509	DHOFAI INTL DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	22,000	6,502	5	0.295	0.296	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.000	0.000	0.296	0.292	0.296	0.100	146,336,562
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	200	646	2	3.230	3.230	3.230	3.230	3.230	0.000	0.000	3.230	3.228	3.230	0.100	289,731,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	3,510	2,949	4	0.840	0.842	0.838	0.842	0.842	0.000	0.000	0.838	0.842	0.842	0.100	105,164,082
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	35,738	3,334	4	0.093	0.094	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.093	0.094	0.100	33,119,639
OM0000002440	AL SHARGIYA INVESTMENT HO.	30,800	3,111	8	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.101	0.103	0.100	9,090,000
OM0000002804	ASAFA FOODS	600	456	1	0.760	0.760	0.760	0.760	0.760	0.000	0.000	0.760	0.750	0.760	0.100	91,200,000
OM0000005983	PHOENIX POWER	1,463,409	380,541	69	0.260	0.263	0.258	0.260	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.260	0.260	0.261	0.100	380,276,380
OM0000001020	ASWAD SHIPPING	407,170	113,052	297	0.279	0.279	0.276	0.278	0.278	0.000	0.000	0.278	0.280	0.278	0.000	1,448,030,910
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	623,665	204,719	46	0.331	0.331	0.327	0.329	0.330	-0.001	-0.303	0.329	0.327	0.329	0.100	214,160,652
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	162,779	49,531	12	0.305	0.305	0.303	0.304	0.305	-0.001	-0.328	0.305	0.301	0.305	0.100	71,868,640
OM0000000759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	3,313,346	1,698,088	275	0.477	0.477	0.472	0.474	0.476	-0.002	-0.420	0.472	0.472	0.472	0.010	3,792,000,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	16,553,952	3,145,094	1,354	0.191	0.192	0.189	0.190	0.191	-0.001	-0.524	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.100	1,257,276,791
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	75,450	14,342	9	0.194	0.194	0.190	0.190	0.191	-0.001	-0.524	0.190	0.188	0.202	0.100	135,737,205
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	236,912	61,558	36	0.258	0.265	0.256	0.256	0.258	-0.002	-0.775	0.256	0.257	0.256	0.100	244,370,419
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	45,550	5,545	15	0.122	0.122	0.121	0.121	0.122	-0.001	-0.820	0.122	0.118	0.122	0.100	21,175,000
OM0000008072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	16,271,808	3,611,491	1,480	0.224	0.225	0.219	0.222	0.224	-0.002	-0.893	0.221	0.218	0.221	0.100	961,398,510
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	62,984	10,707	5	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.172	-0.002	-1.163	0.170	0.170	0.189	0.100	52,276,618
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	11,000	1,140	2	0.159	0.159	0.158	0.158	0.163	-0.005	-3.067	0.158	0.160	0.166	0.100	11,932,476
Total	30	80,770,184	22,805,242	7,343												

Parallel Market

OM0000001982	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	269,895	9,525	29	-0.034	-0.036	-0.034	-0.035	-0.033	0.002	-6.061	-0.036	-0.036	-0.036	0.100	2,975,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	20,100	2,180	10	-0.106	-0.109	-0.106	-0.109	-0.106	0.003	2.830	-0.107	-0.106	-0.107	0.100	71,105,308
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	112,100	16,443	11	-0.147	-0.147	-0.145	-0.147	-0.146	0.001	0.685	-0.147	-0.146	-0.147	0.100	32,340,000
OM0000010823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	6,122	6,399	8	1.040	1.046	1.040	1.046	1.040	0.006	0.577	1.046	1.046	1.050	0.000	28,603,130
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	36,200	2,425	2	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.100	20,578,804
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	2,031	431	1	0.212	0.212	0.212	0.209	0.209	0.000	0.000	0.212	0.210	0.219	0.100	3,867,513
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	5,896	996	1	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.166	0.166	0.000	0.000	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.100	11,870,468
OM0000000249	NATURAL FINANCE	880	188	1	0.214	0.214	0.214	0.214	0.214	0.000	0.000	0.214	0.215	0.000	0.100	138,248,815
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	41,720	7,407	9	0.179	0.179	0.177	0.177	0.177	0.000	0.000	0.179	0.177	0.178	0.100	35,929,601
OM0000007910	AMAL REAL ESTATE	60,212	4,396	2	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.068	0.073	0.100	14,600,000
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	10,000	1,040	1	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.100	18,096,000
OM0000011151	OMIFCO	14,318,225	2,753,904	1,283	0.193	0.195	0.190	0.193	0.193	0.000	0.000	0.194	0.194	0.210	0.000	1,291,049,375
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	425,000	100,290	161	0.236	0.236	0.234	0.236	0.237	-0.001	-0.422	0.234	0.233	0.235	0.100	472,647,427
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	300	27	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.091	-0.001	-1.099	0.090	0.082	0.090	0.100	13,999,536
OM0000007407	DHOFAI GENERATING	48,800	4,012	3	0.083	0.083	0.082	0.082	0.083	-0.001	-1.205	0.082	0.075	0.090	0.100	18,223,680
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	15,000	990	1	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.067	-0.001	-1.493	0.066	0.063	0.067	0.100	16,500,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	20,970	2,282	7	0.106	0.109	0.106	0.107	0.110	-0.003	-2.727	0.109	0.109	0.110	0.100	9,095,000
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	1,460	292	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.210	-0.010	-4.762	0.200	0.197	0.000	0.100	6,487,172
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	5,440	397	3	0.073	0.075	0.072	0.072	0.076	-0.004	-5.263	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	1,512,000
OM0000002333	SALALAH PORT SERVICES	500	248	3	0.500	0.500	0.480	0.480	0.533	-0.053	-9.944	0.480	0.482	0.533	0.100	86,321,952
Total	20	15,400,651	2,913,872	1,538												



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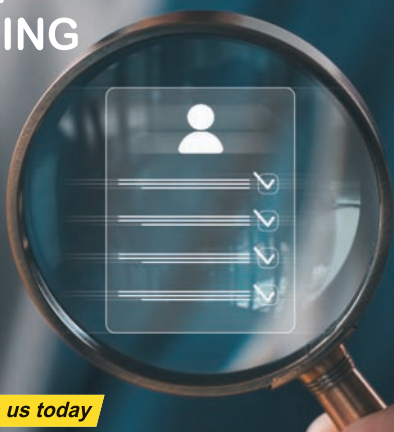
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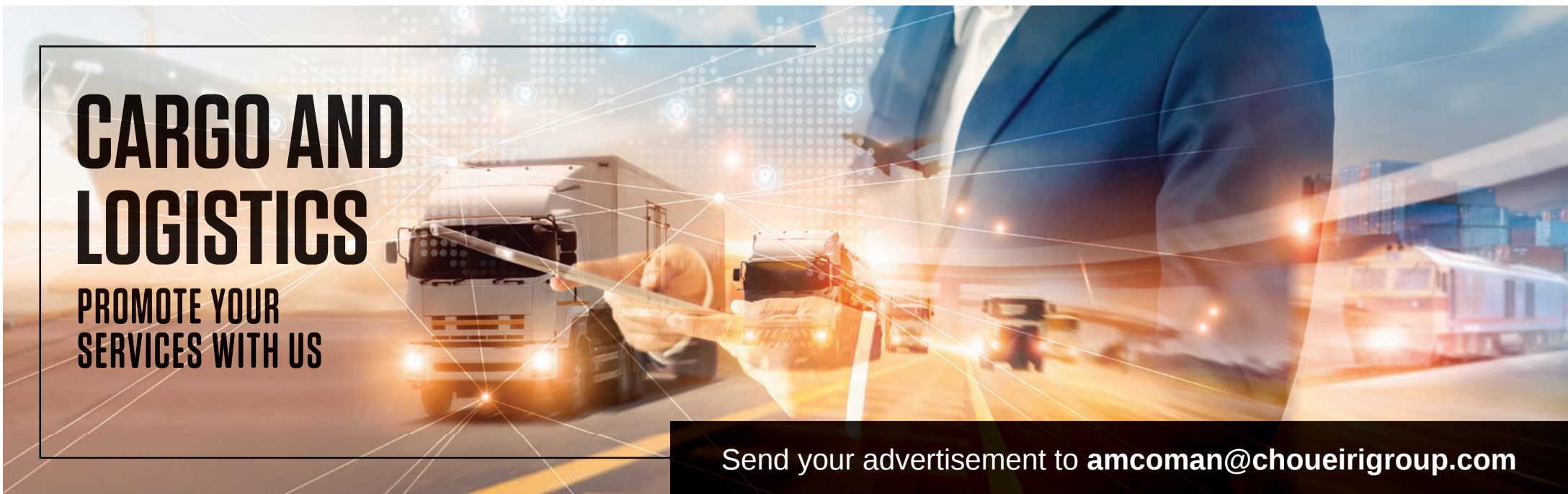
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South Africa World Cup midfielder Adams, 25, dies



JOHANNESBURG: South African midfielder Jayden Adams, who represented his country at the ongoing World Cup, died on Saturday at the age of 25, Sports Minister Gayton McKenzie said. "It is with profound shock and a heavy heart that I have learnt of the passing of Jayden Adams," McKenzie said in a statement. "South African football has lost one of its brightest young talents." The minister did not disclose a cause of death. Police said they had opened an investigation after the body of a 25-year-old man was found at a house in Schotschekloof, a suburb in central Cape Town, on Saturday morning. "Circumstances surrounding this incident are under investigation," Western Cape police spokesperson FC van Wyk told a news agency. Adams played in all three of South Africa's group-stage matches at the tournament but did not feature in the knockout defeat by Canada. Born in Cape Town, he began his professional career with Stellenbosch FC before joining CAF Champions League winners Mamelodi Sundowns in January 2025. His death comes less than a month after the passing of his grandmother, on the eve of South Africa's Group A match against Czechia at Atlanta Stadium. "Jayden started in the match against Czechia and gave his all while carrying the burden of losing his grandmother," the South African Football Association said at the time.

Senegal sack coach Thiaw after disappointing campaign



DAKAR: Senegal fired coach Pape Thiaw on Saturday, saying the side's results at the World Cup necessitated a change at the helm of the team. Senegal had hoped to be a contender at the World Cup after beating Morocco in January's Africa Cup of Nations final but had a disappointing tournament

in which they lost their opening two group games to France and Norway and let slip a 2-0 lead with five minutes remaining against Belgium in the last 32 before going down 3-2 in extra time. Thiaw, 45, was due to begin a five-match ban in September at the start of the 2027 Cup of Nations qualifiers because he led a walk off of players in protest at the penalty that Morocco was awarded in the final in Rabat. French daily L'Equipe reported that Patrick Vieira, the French World Cup winner who was born in Dakar, was among the favourites to take over.

Courtois rethinks quitting Belgium but wants time off



LOS ANGELES: Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois is willing to continue his international career but wants to be let off from playing for his country over the next few months. Courtois, who was controversially taken off in Friday's World Cup quarter-final defeat by Spain, said during the tournament he

was thinking of retiring from the national team. But the 34-year-old, who has won 115 caps after debuting in 2011, is now open to staying if he is guaranteed a reduced schedule. "I've already indicated that I'd like a quieter year, where I can stay in Madrid during the Nations League campaign to focus on my recovery. That way, Senne (Lammens), Mike (Pendors) or Maarten (Vandevoortd) could play," he said, listing potential replacements. "If they (Belgium) accept that, then I'd be open to continuing," said Courtois. Belgium begin their Nations League campaign against Italy in Rome on September 25.

Argentina midfield great Rattin dies aged 89



BUENOS AIRES: Antonio Rattin, one of Argentina's greatest midfielders - and the man who brought about the introduction of red and yellow cards in football - has died aged 89, his former club Boca Juniors have announced. Rattin played at the 1962 and 1966 World Cups, but it was his controversial dismissal at the latter tournament which led to an overhaul. He spent his entire career with Buenos Aires club Boca Juniors, who said: "With great sorrow, we mourn the passing of Antonio Ubaldo Rattin, an idol and symbol of our institution. "We stand with his family and loved ones at this difficult time. Farewell, Rata." He made 382 appearances for Boca between 1956 and 1970, scoring 28 goals and winning four league titles, and reaching the 1963 Copa Libertadores final. He represented Argentina from 1959 to 1969 and it was his sending-off in a 1-0 quarter-final loss to England that many outside his country would remember him for. He refused to leave the pitch after being dismissed, saying he did not understand German referee Rudolf Krepitlein, who did not speak Spanish. On his way off, Rattin crumpled an England corner flag and sat on a red carpet reserved for Queen Elizabeth II in protest against the decision. FIFA introduced the yellow and red card system at the next World Cup in 1970 to avoid communication problems between referees and players from different countries. After retiring as a player, Rattin had a brief spell as Boca's coach before moving into politics. - Agencies

Argentina survive Swiss scare to reach semis



Messi and La Albiceleste overcame a gritty opposition to win 3-1 in extra-time and set up a last-four clash against England

Alvarez said, "so we're meeting our objectives, and we knew it wasn't going to be easy. "The whole match was hard, and we would have loved to have the win earlier, but we tried to get the win however we could."

"It seems like if there's no suffering, it doesn't count," Argentina's Leandro Paredes added, "but as long as the results come through."

Alexis Mac Allister had the other goal off a corner kick from Messi for La Albiceleste, helping to send them into a showdown with England on Wednesday in Atlanta. The Three Lions beat Norway 2-1 earlier in the day.

Messi's nine-game World Cup scoring streak ended, but his pursuit of a second World Cup title continues.

With Argentina and England joining France and Spain in the semi-finals, it's the first time the top four teams in the FIFA rankings have advanced that far.

"A match is coming up," Paredes said, "that every kid dreams of playing."

The game against Switzerland swung on a call sure to rile up those who think Argentina has been favoured by World Cup officials.

The Swiss had just tied the game on Dan Ndeye's goal in the 67th minute when Paredes was shown a yellow card for a

tackle on Breel Embolo. But video showed the Swiss player falling before the Argentina midfielder made contact with him, and since Embolo received a yellow card earlier in the match, he was sent off and Switzerland was left to defend with 10 players.

It was the second time a yellow card has been overturned using the "mistaken identity" protocol at the World Cup. The rule allows the video assistant referee to intervene when an incorrect player is shown a yellow or red card.

It was a maddening end to the Swiss' first World Cup quarter-final appearance since 1954. They still have never made a semi-final, nor have they beaten Argentina in eight meetings — three of those in the tournament that matters the most.

The defensive-minded Swiss had only conceded three goals in five games, and they dominated the ball in the opening minutes.

But leave it to Messi, whose eight goals in the tournament are tied for the most with France's Kylian Mbappé, to send a jolt through that heavily pro-Argentina crowd which included Chiefs quarter-back Patrick Mahomes.

He helped to earn an early corner kick with some nifty footwork, then delivered the ball that Mac Allister turned into a 1-0 lead.

For most of the match, the

Swiss struggled to break down an Argentina back line that had conceded two goals apiece in its last two games. And it didn't help their cause that they were playing without Johan Manzabi, one of their best goal-scorers, who remained out with a knee injury after missing their round of 16 penalty shootout win over Colombia.

But after forcing Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez into making a couple of tough second-half saves, the Swiss broke through when Ricardo Rodriguez slipped a tidy pass to Ndeye and he easily found the back of the net.

Whatever momentum the equaliser gave the Swiss disappeared with Embolo's red card a few minutes later.

Argentina turned up the pressure with Mac Allister missing wide with a header in the 89th minute, and Messi creating an opportunity in front of the goal that he sent just wide in the second minute of stoppage time, leaving the game tied into extra time.

There, just as they have all tournament, La Albiceleste found a way to keep their quest for back-to-back championships alive.

"We knew this could happen," Argentina midfielder Thiago Almada said. "They have top players, very good position, they were trying to find people inside. We knew how to hold up and we made it through."



Switzerland coach fumes after Embolo red card



KANSAS CITY: Switzerland forward Breel Embolo was sent off in the second half of its World Cup quarter-final loss to Argentina on Saturday night, a controversial decision following a video review that is certain to fuel those who believe referees have been biased toward the reigning champions throughout the tournament.

"We were punished because of a rule that in my opinion is completely unacceptable," Swiss coach Murat Yakin said. "It's very painful that we were eliminated that way. I don't think we deserve that today, and in my opinion, my boys are the real heroes. They put all their heart and their passion into their performance. I am very proud. They are very proud."

Yakin wasn't done with his criticism of Portuguese referee João Pinheiro, though.

"The referee made the wrong decision," Yakin said. "It was in my opinion a harmless foul, if it even was a foul. I know they will protect their referee but this rule destroyed our game today, and it's very painful, and to be eliminated in that way hurts a lot."

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni acknowledged that "luck was on our side because one of their players was sent off."

It was the second time a yellow card was overturned using the "mistaken identity" protocol at the World Cup. The relatively obscure rule allows the video assistant referee to intervene when an incorrect player is shown a

yellow or red card.

"I think the red card changed our game," Swiss captain Granit Xhaka said. "This decision was difficult to accept now after the game because the dressing room was very quiet, disappointed."

Earlier this week, the Egyptian Football Association said it "cannot remain silent" after what it believed was biased officiating in its 3-2 loss to Argentina in the Round of 16. Egypt coach Hossam Hassan and several players had criticised the officiating after the defending champions scored three unanswered goals to pull off one of the biggest comebacks in World Cup history.

"Nobody can question the integrity of the FIFA World Cup match officials," FIFA's chief of refereeing Pierluigi Collina said in response last week. "When this happens, it may provoke reactions that lead to threats against them and their families. This is not right."

Yakin stopped short of saying Argentina was being favoured by World Cup referees. But he also did not hold back about an incident that he believes changed the complexion of Saturday night's match.

"We were punished by a referee's mistake," he said. "I didn't know this rule before. It was a very harmless situation, and then a yellow card was awarded. The VAR interfered. It was a very meaningful moment for us, and it was decisive in the outcome of the match." - Agencies

QUARTER-FINALS

Bellingham's brace lifts England past Norway

MIAMI GARDENS: Jude Bellingham locked arms with teammate and captain Harry Kane as England fans belted out the Beatles' "Hey Jude." Bellingham certainly earned the serenade.

He scored twice on Saturday — an equaliser in the first half and the go-ahead goal in the third minute of extra time — to lift England past Norway 2-1 and into the World Cup semi-finals for the first time since 2018.

The Real Madrid star has now matched Kane with six goals in this tournament, two behind France's Kylian Mbappé and Argentina's Lionel Messi and one shy of Norway's Erling Haaland, who was held scoreless by England. Bellingham also scored twice in the round of 16 as England beat co-host Mexico.

England, winner of the 1966 World Cup and facing pressure to return to the title match, is now one win away from getting there. The Three Lions will face Argentina in the semi-finals.

"The game is split into loads of different facets. Some of it is technical, tactical," Bellingham said. "For me, the biggest one is psychological and how you can manage setbacks, how you can manage adversity. This team showed yet again that they can do it and that's a really valuable skill and trait to have."

Not everyone was thrilled with England's performance. "We made life very, very difficult for ourselves today," coach Thomas Tuchel said in a contentious interview with Fox Sports. "The result is fantastic. We're in the last four. It's amazing, but not happy with the performance ... in every sense."

Tuchel clarified in his news conference that he was "proud and happy" with how his squad has overcome adversity, but added, "I'm also a football coach and I also have demands. ... I think we can play faster. I think we can play more clinical."

Bellingham seemed to disagree with his coach's critique after

England prevailed in the heat and humidity of South Florida, with temperatures reaching 92 degrees Fahrenheit (33 Celsius) at the start of warmups.

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Schjelderup, making just his second start of the tournament, fired a shot that caromed off the right post and into the net to send an England team that had dominated possession to that point. Bellingham's equaliser from close range elicited a roar from that crowd that included Mick Jagger and England great David Beckham.

Moments before Bellingham evened the score, a Norway goal kick resulted in the ball appearing to make contact with an aerial camera cable before landing at the feet of England's Elliot Anderson. The ball was eventually played to Bellingham, who beat Orjan Nyland with a low shot to the far post.

There was a brief moment of silence before the match in honour of Jayden Adams, the midfielder for South Africa whose death was announced on Saturday. - Agencies



AGAINST NORWAY

England score after ball appears to hit camera cable over field

MIAMI GARDENS: A goal kick appeared to clip a cable over the field late in the first half of the England-Norway match in the World Cup quarterfinals on Saturday, shortly before England's Jude Bellingham scored the tying goal. By rule, if the ball had been noticed hitting the cable, play would have stopped and a drop ball would have been utilized to determine possession. FIFA, more than an hour afterward, said there was "no evidence" that the ball hit the wire — citing technology in the ball.

Before England's goal ... the sensor in the Connected Ball showed no peak in the heartbeat of the ball' when in the air, and therefore no evidence that the ball touched the overhead wire and changed the movement of the ball," FIFA said.

It's unclear when or how FIFA reviewed that data. England went on to win 2-1 in extra time.

The match was not interrupted and it was not even known if the



video assistant referee, Jerome Brisard, reviewed the play.

Brisard was also in the VAR role for the Argentina-Egypt match in the quarter-finals, one where Argentina rallied to win 3-2 and Egypt complained the officiating was unfair.

Norway goalkeeper Orjan Nyland took the kick to start the

play in question on Saturday, which was controlled by England seconds after the trajectory of the ball changed, suggesting it brushed one of the cables used to suspend a robotically controlled camera. The ball was eventually played to Bellingham, who beat Nyland with a low shot to the far post. - Agencies

Bodies of 15 Indian tourists killed in Vietnam boat accident to be sent home

‘The mortal remains of 15 Indian nationals who tragically passed away in yesterday’s boat accident have reached Ho Chi Minh City. After completion of formalities at Ho Chi Minh, the mortal remains would be transported to India at the earliest,’ the Embassy of India in Vietnam said

HANOI: The mortal remains of 15 Indian nationals who died after a tourist speedboat capsized off the coast of Vietnam’s Phu Quoc island have reached Ho Chi Minh City, the Embassy of India in Vietnam stated on Sunday.

In a post on X, the Embassy informed that the mortal remains of the deceased will be transported to India following the completion of



necessary formalities.

The Embassy added that, along with the Consulate teams and the Vietnamese authorities, it remains committed to facilitating the earliest repatriation.

“The mortal remains of 15 Indian Nationals who tragically passed away in yesterday’s boat accident have reached Ho Chi Minh City. After completion of formalities at Ho Chi Minh, the mortal remains would be transported to India at the earliest. The Embassy and the Consulate teams are closely co-ordinating with the Vietnamese authorities who are committed to providing all assistance for the earliest transportation of the mortal remains to India,” it stated.

The Embassy also extended hopes for the speedy recovery of one survivor undergoing treat-

ment at the Phu Quoc Hospital.

“We continue to pray for the early recovery of the one survivor at Phu Quoc Hospital,” it added.

Further, the Embassy stated that 15 survivors of yesterday’s tragic boat accident have been discharged from the hospital and are travelling back to India. “Of the two patients in critical care, one has been discharged and is travelling back to India. The other is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Phu Quoc.

We continue to pray for his early recovery,” the Embassy of India in Vietnam said.

The tourist speedboat AG 26751, operated by Ocean Pearl Island Company (Minh Huy Phu Quoc Trading and Tourism Co. Ltd. was carrying 32 Indian tourists and four crew members from

Hon May Rut to An Thoi Port, according to Vietnamese news outlet VN Express International. It capsized about 400 metres off Hon May Rut Ngai.

Further, the outlet cited Vietnam News Agency (VNA) to report that a 57-year-old local man has been detained for alleged legal violations tied to the tourist boat capsizing.

Meanwhile, Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu has intervened to facilitate the early repatriation of the mortal remains. District Collectors have furnished details of the designated recipients.

According to Andhra Pradesh Bhavan special commissioner Arja Srikanth, a detailed request has been submitted through the e-Care portal to transport Nal-

lapeta Adiseshaiah Ravi Teja to Bengaluru, Gelli Jaya Lakshmi to Vijayawada, and Mudium Sreedhar to Chennai.

The Embassy of India has finalised the travel plan, and flight schedules will be communicated later in the day.

Additionally, he stated that the survivor, Gelli Kishore, during his transfer from Phu Quoc Government Hospital, developed critical complications, necessitating postponement of his transfer. He added that Kishore remains unconscious in the ICU on advanced life support.

“MRI investigations revealed a small blood clot in the brain, followed by a mild cardiac episode. He has undergone an emergency cardiac procedure, and subject to stabilisation, will be airlifted to Ho

Chi Minh City for advanced medical care.” Srikanth stated.

Andhra Pradesh Minister Kollu Ravindra has spoken with Kishore’s cousin, Santosh, who is at the hospital.

The Indian Ambassador to Vietnam remains in constant contact with the treating doctors, while the Vietnamese Minister also visited the hospital to review the patient’s condition.

“Despite language constraints, close coordination between the Embassy, Vietnamese authorities, medical teams, and the family is ensuring uninterrupted support. We pray for Mr. Kishore’s speedy recovery,” Srikanth stated.

Vietnam’s embassy condoles death of 15 Indians in boat accident

Meanwhile, in New Delhi, Vietnam’s Embassy in India on Sunday offered condolences at the loss of life of 15 Indian nationals in a tourist boat capsizing accident in Vietnam.

In a social media post, the Embassy said that Vietnamese President To Lam and Prime Minister Le Minh Hung sent messages of condolences to their Indian counterparts.

“Upon learning that a tourist boat accident caused by adverse weather conditions occurred in An Giang Province on 11 July 2026, resulting in multiple casualties among Indian tourists, General Secretary and President To Lam and Prime Minister Le Minh Hung sent messages of condolences to President of India Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi,” the statement read. — **ANI**

FROM SOUTH CAROLINA



US Senator Lindsey Graham passes away after ‘brief and sudden illness’

WASHINGTON DC: US Senator Senator Lindsey Graham, a close aide of US President Donald Trump, passed away on Saturday evening after “brief and sudden illness”, his office said on Sunday.

In a statement, Graham’s office said the family of the Republican Senator from South Carolina had sought privacy during the difficult time.

“On the evening of Saturday, July 11, US Senator Lindsey Graham passed away from a brief and sudden illness. Senator Graham’s family appreciates prayers at this time and asks for privacy during this incredibly difficult period,” the statement said. Graham had met Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday.

“Good meeting with U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham in Kyiv. This is already his 10th visit to our country, and we appreciate this support,” Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

Senator Graham had said in May this year that any potential deal with Tehran in the West Asia crisis must not handcuff Israel’s military operations against Hamas and Hezbollah.

“In a recent conversation with President Trump, I affirmed my support for a deal with Iran that accepts President Trump’s demand to open up the Strait of Hormuz and start negotiations about forever ending their nuclear ambitions and support for terrorism. I have confidence that at the end of the day, President Trump will not agree to a bad deal with Iran,” he had said.

Graham said that Israel must be allowed to neutralise Hezbollah, given the national threat it poses to Israel.

“On a separate front, it is my belief that we must allow Israel to neutralise the threats the country faces from constant Hezbollah attacks emanating from Lebanon. There are parts of Israel that are uninhabitable because of Hezbollah missile and rocket fire.”

“It would be unconscionable to ask Israel to accept a ceasefire with Hezbollah, given Hezbollah’s stated desire to destroy Israel and their constant attacks. Any ceasefire with Hezbollah would allow them to re-arm and become stronger. In my view, there must not be any linkage between an Iran deal and Israel’s ability to fight back against Hezbollah’s unceasing aggression in Lebanon. As to Hamas, how much longer are we going to give them to disarm? Let Israel finish them off. Any deal with Iran that restricts Israel’s ability to fight back against Hamas and Hezbollah would be unwise,” he added.

Graham was elected to the US Senate in 2002 and was re-elected in 2008, 2014 and 2020. He formally ran against Trump for the Republican presidential nomination in 2015, but once Trump won the presidency in 2016, he underwent a massive political pivot and started backing the president. In the following years, Graham became one of Trump’s most loyal defenders and closest confidants. — **Agencies**

FLOOD-RELATED ISSUES

More than a million people have been affected by waterlogging in Bangladesh

DHAKA: Due to the flood and heavy rain, more than a million people in Bangladesh have been affected by waterlogging.

Due to the continuous rainfall over the past week, about 45 people have died in various ways from landslides and other flood-related issues in Bangladesh.

The capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka, along with Chittagong city, the hill regions, and the coastal district of Cox’s Bazar, have been severely flooded. Roads and rail connections to Cox’s Bazar have been disrupted, and many schools and educational institutions have been affected. In Dhaka, all schools have been closed since last night due to the heavy rainfall.

The water level of the seven rivers in Bangladesh is still flowing above the danger mark, and the northern districts have also been severely affected.

“I left my car behind--I usually travel by car. My office is in Fakirapool. The office owner called and said that water had entered the office. There is a lot of furniture there, so I have to go myself. Also, a delivery letter is arriving today from Saudi Arabia, and an Arabic speaker will be coming. Because of this, it is mandatory for me to go,” an office-going woman told ANI, sitting on a rickshaw in Dhaka’s busy Rajarbag area where



her rickshaw was moving on two feet of water.

“I couldn’t bring the car out. Now I’ve headed out by rickshaw, but I am very scared that I might fall off the rickshaw. All right, then, thank you for coming out in this rain to make these videos. Thank you,” she added.

“We are in a lot of trouble, as you can see. We are facing a lot of difficulties. This rickshaw puller uncle... he looked after us so carefully, taking us through the road just like a daughter, navigating through all the broken and flooded spots. A big thank you to him, and thank you to you too,” said another woman.

“I am pulling this rickshaw while completely drenched in this

rain. The water is chest-high. Even so, we are working hard through all these difficulties to run our households. We are earning an income this way. In this rain, whatever provision Allah gives us, our livelihood runs on that. What else can I say?” said the rickshaw puller.

Schools have postponed classes and exams due to rain and waterlogging.

“One big problem is that our whole country, Bangladesh, is practically drowning. Look, everything is underwater here. Buses, schools--everything is closed today. There was supposed to be a school exam today, but the exam won’t happen anymore,” a student said.

“I worked so hard and went through so much trouble in this heavy rain just to go to school. But now there are no exams or anything happening at school. Look at what has happened! Going to school after working so hard and studying so much... won’t they teach us at school now? They are saying that schools will resume after another week”, a student said.

The Bangladesh Army has been deployed under ‘In Aid to Civil Power’ to assist the civil administration in tackling the sudden flood situation caused by heavy rainfall and mountain runoff in Chittagong district, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Friday. — **ANI**

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

China steps up flood control, disaster relief efforts as Typhoon Bavi moves inland

BEIJING: Chinese authorities have stepped up flood control and disaster relief efforts as Typhoon Bavi continued to affect large parts of the country on Sunday.

Typhoon Bavi, the ninth typhoon of the year, made successive landfalls along the coast of east China’s Zhejiang Province late Saturday before moving inland. It is expected to move northwest while gradually weakening.

From Sunday to Tuesday, heavy to torrential rain is expected to lash a swath of China, including Anhui, Jiangxi and Zhejiang provinces, as well as parts of Liaoning and Jilin provinces.

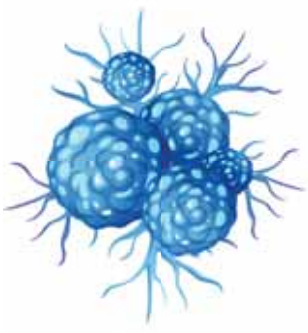
The Ministry of Water Resources on Sunday upgraded its flood alert to yellow, the third-highest

level in China’s four-tier weather warning system, saying that heavy rainfall could trigger flooding in some rivers, mountain torrents and urban waterlogging.

Central authorities have dispatched 70,000 items of disaster relief supplies to Zhejiang, Tianjin and Anhui to support the relocation and resettlement of affected residents, according to the Ministry of Emergency Management.

The items, including folding beds, blankets, summer quilts and family emergency kits, were jointly allocated by the office of the national commission for disaster prevention, reduction and relief, the MEM, and the National Food and Strategic Reserves Administration. — **Xinhua**





HIDDEN

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Light (MPL) have now created detailed maps of these sugar structures using advanced high resolution microscopy.

SUGAR

PATTERNS

ON HUMAN CELLS



CAN

SCIENTISTS have uncovered a hidden “sugar code” on the surface of human cells that could transform how diseases are detected. Using an advanced imaging technique called Glycan Atlasing, researchers at the Max Planck Institute mapped the tiny sugar structures coating cells and discovered that these patterns shift depending on what the cell is doing.

Immune cells changed their sugar layouts when activated, and cancerous tissues displayed distinct surface signatures compared to healthy tissue.

Every human cell is covered by a thin layer of sugars called the glycocalyx. This outer coating helps cells interact with their surroundings and may also provide important clues about what is happening inside the cell itself. Researchers at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Light (MPL) have now created detailed maps of these sugar structures using advanced high resolution microscopy.

Their findings, published in Nature Nanotechnology, suggest that changes in the arrange-



ment of these sugars could one day help doctors detect diseases such as cancer.

The glycocalyx surrounds all human cells like a protective outer shell. Rather than remaining fixed in place, these complex sugar molecules constantly shift and reorganize. Scientists in the “Physical Glycosciences” research group, led by Prof. Leonhard Mockl at MPL, study how this sugar coating behaves and what it reveals about cell biology.

To investigate these structures, the team developed a technique called “Glycan Atlasing.” Using cutting edge super resolution microscopy, they mapped the glycocalyx at the level of individual

sugar molecules across many different types of cells. Their work included cell culture lines, primary human blood cells, and tissue samples.

The resulting maps showed that the glycocalyx changes its molecular arrangement depending on the condition of the cell. For example, immune cells displayed different sugar patterns after being stimulated, similar to what happens during an immune response. According to the researchers, this provides the first direct evidence that the glycocalyx functions almost like a display screen, showing information about a cell’s internal state on its outer surface.

Sugar patterns could help detect cancer

The team found that these nanoscale sugar patterns could reliably distinguish between different cellular states. Their measurements allowed them to identify separate stages of cancer development, tell the difference between activated and inactive immune cells, and distinguish cancerous regions from healthy regions in

human breast tissue.

The findings suggest that the cell surface contains structured biological information that can be read using a standardised approach. “The results provide a promising foundation for the development of future diagnostic methods, as Glycan Atlasing delivers reliable results even in complex samples,” explains Mockl, the study leader and corresponding author.

Future medical applications

The researchers now plan to expand the method by analyzing additional target structures and automating more of the process. They also hope to study much larger numbers of samples so the technique can eventually be adapted for routine medical use.

“In large-scale studies, we want to investigate which surface patterns are associated with specific disease courses or therapeutic responses and how cell states can be detected early and objectively via the surface,” Mockl explains, outlining his team’s future plans. - **ANI**

HELP

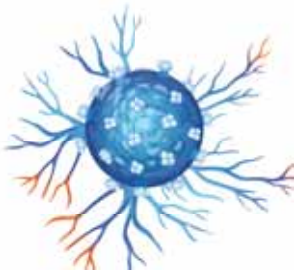
IN

EARLY

CANCER



DETECTION:



STUDY

ROUND-UP

Mitsubishi Motors Oman rolls out enticing Cool Summer promotion

Designed to deliver exceptional value and peace of mind, the limited-time campaign combines attractive ownership benefits with the quality, reliability, and performance that Mitsubishi Motors is renowned for

MUSCAT: General Automotive Company (GAC), a part of The Zubair Corporation and the authorized distributor of Mitsubishi Motors in Oman, has announced the launch of its Cool Summer Offers, bringing customers an exciting range of exclusive benefits across the entire Mitsubishi range.

Designed to deliver exceptional value and peace of mind, the limited-time campaign combines attractive ownership benefits with the quality, reliability, and performance that Mitsubishi Motors is renowned for.

As part of the Cool Summer Offers campaign, customers can take advantage of an exceptional financing opportunity with 0% interest for up to 24 months and enjoy exclusive benefits that include complimentary insurance and registration, free service for up to 4 years or 50,000 kilometers, and a generous 6-year unlimited mileage warranty that comes with roadside assistance. Additionally, customers will receive free Llumar window tinting, enhancing comfort and style. The campaign has been designed to suit a wide range of customer needs, whether they are looking for a practical city sedan, a versatile crossover, or a capable family SUV. With attractive offers available across the entire Mitsubishi range, customers can enjoy greater savings while investing in a vehicle that delivers outstanding performance, advanced technology, and dependable reliability.

Speaking on the campaign,



Manoj Ranade, General Manager of General Automotive Company, said: "At Mitsubishi Motors Oman, our focus is always on delivering greater value to our customers

without compromising on quality or ownership experience. Through our Cool Summer Offers campaign, we are making it even easier for customers to own a Mitsubishi

by combining flexible financing with a comprehensive range of ownership benefits. We are confident these offers will provide exceptional value and reinforce the

trust our customers place in the Mitsubishi brand."

The Cool Summer Offers are available for a limited period at Mitsubishi showrooms across

Oman. Customers are encouraged to visit their nearest Mitsubishi showroom and take advantage of these exclusive seasonal offers before the campaign concludes.

ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY

Visa & Bank Muscat bring FIFA World Cup fan experience



MUSCAT: Visa & Bank Muscat are bringing the excitement of FIFA World Cup 2026 to Mall of Oman through a football-themed customer activation taking place from 11 to 19 July. The activation aim to offer visitors an exciting and interactive football-inspired experience.

The initiative forms part of the Bank Muscat's strategy to create innovative platforms for direct engagement with the community and

provide customers with the opportunity to discover various Visa card products the bank offers.

The activation coincides with the key matches of the FIFA World Cup 2026™, including the semi-finals and final, creating an exciting football atmosphere that combines entertainment, customer engagement and the opportunity to learn more about the bank's products and services.

Visa and Bank Muscat invites

visitors to Mall of Oman to explore its dedicated booth, where they can apply for the exclusive limited-edition FIFA World Cup 2026™ Visa cards, courtesy of Visa, especially design for football enthusiasts. Visitors will also enjoy a variety of interactive football-themed games and activities created for the whole family, offering participants the chance to win official FIFA World Cup 2026™ merchandise, courtesy of Visa.



The activation will also feature competitions and lucky draws designed to enhance visitor engagement and create a memorable customer experience.

Ideal platform

The activation serves as an ideal platform to showcase Bank Muscat's limited-edition FIFA World Cup™ Visa cards, courtesy of Visa, including the Bank Muscat Visa Gold Credit Card and the Bank

Muscat Visa Prepaid Card, introduced to celebrate the excitement surrounding the world's biggest football event while delivering an exceptional banking experience for football fans.

The initiative also reflects the Bank Muscat's commitment to strengthening its presence at community and commercial events and creating new opportunities to engage with customers. Through such initiatives, Bank Muscat con-

tinues to attract new customer segments and promote innovative banking solutions that meet evolving customer needs.

Through its diverse initiatives and programmes, Bank Muscat remains committed to delivering innovative services that enhance the customer experience and uphold the bank's culture of excellence and innovation, in line with its vision of providing the best banking services in the Sultanate of Oman.



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