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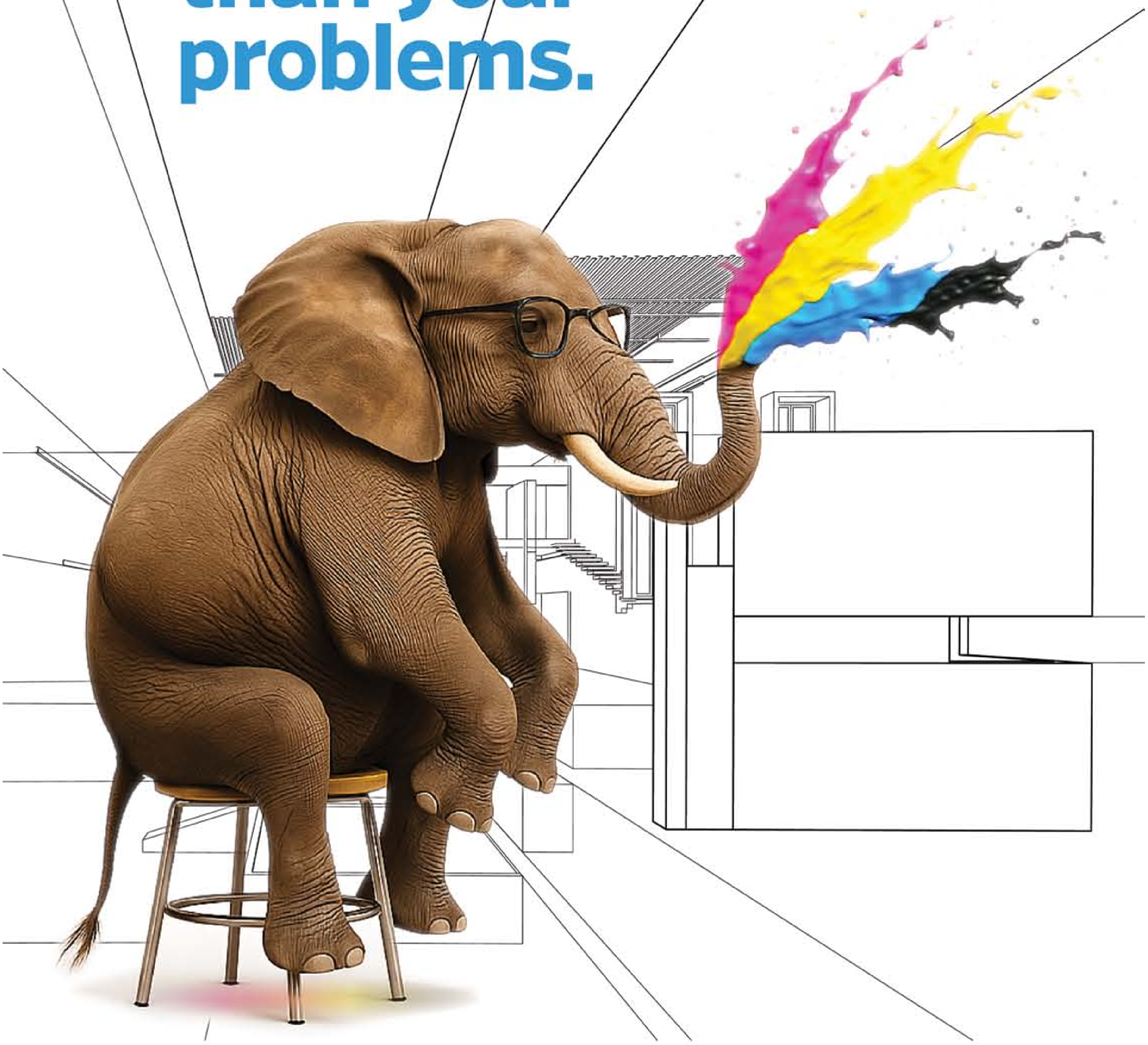

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Times of Oman

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DELTA AQUARIID METEOR

Meteor showers to light up Oman skies on July 30 & 31

MUSCAT: Skywatchers in Oman are in for a celestial treat as the annual Delta Aquariid meteor shower reaches its peak on the nights of July 30 and 31, offering the chance to witness up to 15–20 meteors per hour under ideal viewing conditions.

According to the Oman Society of Astronomy and Space, the Delta Aquariids are among the most prominent summer meteor showers.

The shower remains active from July 12 to August 23 each year and is known for its fast-moving meteors streaking across the night sky.

The meteors originate from debris left behind by Comet 96P/Machholz and enter Earth's atmosphere at speeds of around 41 kilometres per second.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman showcases heritage conservation

1 The Sultanate of Oman participated in the proceedings of the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), hosted by the city of Busan in the Republic of Korea. >A2

OMAN

Jabal Akhdar records highest rainfall

2 Jabal Akhdar received the highest rainfall in Oman during the period from July 26 until 7:00 am on July 29, recording 37mm. >A3

SPORTS

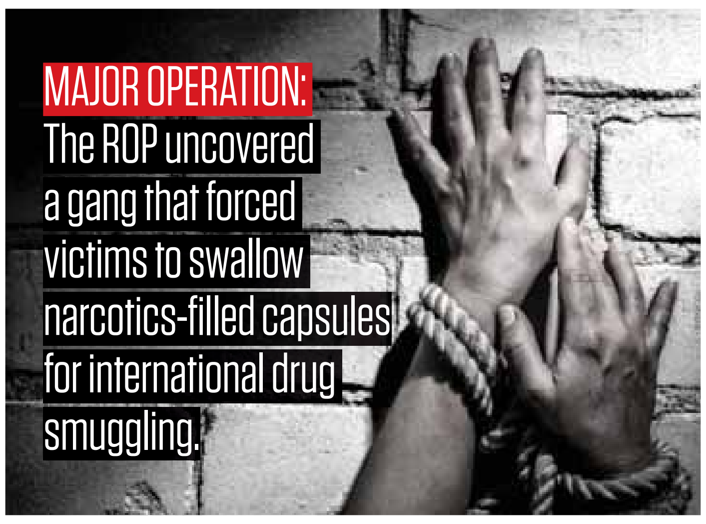
FIFA plans to form new commercial subsidiary

3 FIFA plans to create a new commercial subsidiary valued at $20 billion and sell non-controlling minority stakes to investors. >B6

HUMAN TRAFFICKERS USE FAKE JOB OFFERS TO LURE VICTIMS

Oman exerts unwavering efforts to combat human trafficking, protects rights of victims

Times News Service


MAJOR OPERATION: The ROP uncovered a gang that forced victims to swallow narcotics-filled capsules for international drug smuggling.

MUSCAT: Oman has warned that fake overseas job offers are increasingly being used by human trafficking networks to lure victims into forced labour, cybercrime and other forms of exploitation, as the Sultanate joins the international community in observing World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on July 30.

Under this year's global theme, "Trapped in the Fraud Trap," authorities said criminal networks are increasingly exploiting digital platforms to deceive people with promises of lucrative employment before trapping them in exploitative conditions or coercing them into online fraud schemes.

Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs and Chairman of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, said the annual observance is an opportunity to renew the collective commitment to protecting human dignity and combating one of the world's most serious transnational crimes.

He stressed that human trafficking is not merely a legal violation but a direct assault on human freedom and fundamental rights.

Al Harthy said Oman follows a comprehensive national strategy based on four key pillars—prevention, protection, prosecution and institutional partnership—with victims' rights and safety at the centre of all efforts. >A4

Traffickers face fines of up to OMR100,000

MUSCAT: Oman has strengthened penalties against human trafficking, with offenders facing fines of up to OMR100,000 and lengthy prison terms under the Law on Combating Human Trafficking issued by Royal Decree No. 78/2025.

Jail term

The law prescribes three to 10 years' imprisonment and fines ranging from OMR5,000 to OMR100,000 for those convicted of human trafficking offences. >A4

OMAN

COMMENTARY

INS Kaundinya strengthens maritime and cultural ties between Oman and India

The voyage of Indian Navy's vessel INS Kaundinya to the Sultanate marked a unique chapter in the evolving relationship between Oman and India, highlighting centuries-old maritime connections while reinforcing modern strategic cooperation.

Named after the ancient Indian mariner Kaundinya, the vessel is inspired by historical trading ships that once sailed across the Indian Ocean, linking the coasts of India with Arabia, East Africa and Southeast Asia.

Its launch underscored the shared maritime heritage that has connected Oman and India for generations through commerce, culture and people-to-people exchanges.

For Oman, a nation whose history is deeply rooted in seafaring and international trade, the symbolism of INS Kaundinya resonates strongly.

Omani merchants and sailors were among the most active participants in Indian Ocean trade networks, maintaining commercial and cultural links with ports along India's western coast for centuries.

These exchanges helped shape economic prosperity and fostered enduring social ties that remain evident today.

The vessel's journey came at a time when bilateral relations are expanding across multiple sectors.

The recent implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has opened new opportunities for trade and investment, while defence and maritime cooperation continue to grow. Against this backdrop, INS Kaundinya serves as a reminder that the foundation of the modern partnership rests on a long history of mutual engagement across the sea.

Beyond its naval role, the ship is expected to participate in goodwill voyages, cultural outreach programmes and international maritime events. Such activities provide opportunities to showcase the rich maritime traditions shared by both nations and promote greater understanding among younger generations.

Maritime security remains another important area of cooperation. Oman and India have worked closely to ensure the safety of vital shipping lanes in the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean region.

The vessel's emphasis on maritime heritage complements these efforts by highlighting the historical importance of safe and open sea routes for trade and prosperity.

As Oman and India continue to strengthen their strategic partnership, INS Kaundinya stands as a powerful symbol of friendship, shared history and a common maritime future.

The vessel bridges the past and present, celebrating the enduring connections that continue to bring the two nations closer together.

OMR1.4 MILLION COST

Barka sewage, irrigation pipeline project completion rate reaches 78%

BARKA: Work is ongoing on the execution of the "Project for Constructing Sewage and Irrigation Pipelines To and From the Hai Al Naseem Project and the Wastewater Treatment Plant in the Wilayat of Barka," with the total completion rate reaching 78% at an overall cost of OMR1.4 million.

This comes as part of continuous efforts to develop and strengthen the infrastructure of the water and wastewater sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The project aims to raise the efficiency of basic services directed to the Hai Al Naseem project in the Wilayat of Barka and its surrounding farms by laying networks that ensure environmental sustainability and maximise the utilisation of available water resources.

Eng. Hassan Abdullah Al Farsi, Acting Director General of Development Projects for the Eastern Sector at Nama Water Services, stated that the project consists of an integrated pipeline network made of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) materials with a total length of 19.429 kilometers, of which 15.207 kilometres have been executed so far.

It includes six main connections, featuring a wastewater conveyance pipeline extending from Hai Al Naseem to the treatment plant in Barka with a length of 7,802 meters, with implementation of the line expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of this year.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), he added that reclaimed water pipelines for irrigation are currently being executed. These include the main irrigation pipeline running from the wastewater treatment plant in Barka to Barka City, with a diameter of 500 millimetres and a total length of 8,806 meters, as well as a branch irrigation pipeline extending from the main line to Hai Al Naseem, with a diameter of 315 millimetres and a total length of 2,821 metres.

He explained that the project reflects the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to achieving the targets of Oman Vision 2040 within the pillar of environmental sustainability and integrated water resource management.

The project achieves a set of objectives, including providing an integrated infrastructure by safely connecting the Hai Al Naseem project to the wastewater treatment plant in Barka, elevating operational reliability and efficiency, reducing breakdowns, lowering long-term operation and maintenance costs, and protecting groundwater by utilising reclaimed water for irrigation purposes and expanding green spaces to curb the depletion of aquifers.

It also keeps pace with urban expansion and meets current and future population growth requirements in the Wilayat of Barka, alongside positive environmental and health impacts in reducing risks resulting from traditional wastewater disposal methods.

Eng. Hassan Al Farsi pointed out that engineering flexibility was taken into account in the project's design so that it serves as a foundation capable of future expansion and development. The current design allows for accommodating future population increases, connecting new residential neighbourhoods and land layouts to the public network, and increasing the quantities of transported treated water to be utilised in afforestation, food security, and economic development projects in the Wilayat of Barka. -ONA

Oman calls for heritage conservation efforts at UNESCO meeting in Korea

The 48th session of the World Heritage Committee witnessed the adoption of 25 new sites onto the World Heritage List

BUSAN: The Sultanate of Oman participated in the proceedings of the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), hosted by the city of Busan in the Republic of Korea.

The event sees the participation of States Parties to the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman was led by Amna Salim Al Balushi, Permanent Delegate of the Sultanate of Oman to UNESCO.

The Sultanate of Oman participated in this session as an observer, with the delegation taking part in the committee's sessions dedicated to discussing nomination dossiers for inscribing new sites on the World Heritage List and state of conservation reports for inscribed properties.

The delegation also followed up on topics related to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and participated in several meetings and side events held alongside the session.

The 48th session of the World Heritage Committee witnessed the adoption of 25 new sites onto the World Heritage List, comprising 19 cultural sites, 5 natural sites, and 1 mixed site.

In addition, state of conservation reports for a number of World Heritage sites were discussed, and a set of decisions and recommendations aimed at enhancing the protection of cultural and natural heritage and supporting the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention were adopted.

This brought the total number of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List to 1,273, including 991 cultural sites, 240 natural sites, and 42 mixed sites, distributed across 173 countries around the world.

The Sultanate of Oman's participation featured an active presence in side events, where it presented its experience in supporting capacity-building and implementing the World Heritage Convention in African nations during an event titled "Enhancing African Expertise in World Heritage."

Throughout the event, Oman reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening international cooperation, exchanging expertise, and supporting efforts aimed at protecting cultural and natural heritage.

Oman showcased the outcomes of the strategic programme it has been implementing in partnership with UNESCO since 2021, which aims to support five African countries in developing their national capacities in the field of World Heritage.

The programme has contributed to training approximately 250 heritage specialists, supporting the preparation of nomination dossiers, and enhancing the sustainable management of World Heritage sites, reflecting Oman's contribution to supporting the implementation of the World Heritage Convention internationally.

The Omani delegation held several bilateral meetings with UNESCO officials and representatives of States Parties, during which they discussed ways to enhance cooperation in heritage protection, capacity-building, and knowledge exchange, thereby supporting international efforts to safeguard human heritage.

Oman's participation in the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee underscores its keenness to continue contributing to international efforts to protect cultural and natural heritage and to strengthen cooperation with States Parties and international organizations in alignment with the objectives of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. -ONA

IN FIRST HALF OF 2026

Al Dakhiliyah records 64 environmental violations

NIZWA: The Environment Department in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate is exerting unremitting and integrated efforts to ensure that establishments comply with national environmental standards, operating across multiple tracks that include digital and field monitoring, as well as nature conservation and sustainability projects.

The Department explained that the total number of environmental violations recorded reached 64 during the period from January until the end of June of 2026, while the number of violations recorded during the past year, reached 184.

Hamad Said Al Furqani, Head of the Environmental Compliance Section at the Environment Department in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, affirmed that preserving the environment and protecting natural resources is a shared societal responsibility requiring collective awareness and integration, as well as safeguarding the natural heritage with which the Sultanate of Oman is endowed.

He pointed out the ongoing implementation of numerous programs and initiatives aimed at protecting biodiversity, preserving natural reserves, monitoring wildlife, protecting endangered species, and regulating activities that might impact ecosystems to ensure the sustainability of these natural riches.

Regarding environmental monitoring and smart systems, Al Furqani told Oman News Agency (ONA) that five air quality monitoring stations have been installed at various strategic locations in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate to monitor gases and fine particulate matter resulting from industrial activities, ensuring they remain within safe and permissible local and international limits.

He added that the Department is also keen on operating and maintaining radiation monitoring stations as part of the early warning system and comprehensive environmental safety framework in the Sultanate of Oman.

Al Furqani indicated that during the past year, the Department carried out 2,879 visits to factories and crushers, which resulted in recording 184 violations, and conducted 1,401 visits during the first half of the current year, resulting in recording 48 violations.

He emphasized that inspection visits are carried out on a periodic and surprise basis to monitor liquid and solid waste management and ensure the application of the best available technologies to curb pollution at the source.

Regarding sustainable environmental projects and waste recycling in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Al Furqani explained that during the past year, 16 visits were conducted to companies operating in the field of waste recycling, and 19 visits were carried out during the first half of the current year.

He added that recycling projects in the governorate are closely monitored with the aim of promoting circular economy principles, reducing the volume of waste diverted to landfills, and encouraging the optimal utilisation of available resources.

As part of efforts to preserve unique vegetation cover and combat desertification through natural reserves and afforestation initiatives in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Al Furqani pointed out that the Environment Department pays special attention to expanding green spaces through the National Initiative to Plant 10 Million Wild Trees.

The governorate contributes a significant share to this initiative through the Department's nurseries. More than 5,000 wild trees have been planted and distributed since the beginning of this year.

The Department also supervises the implementation of administrative and monitoring plans for prominent reserves in the governorate, most notably the "Jabal Akhdar Biosphere Reserve," which represents a global model for harmony between local communities and the conservation of vital natural resources, and the "Western Hajar Starlight Reserve," which aims to reduce light pollution and preserve the governorate's dark skies as a rare natural and astronomical heritage and an ideal environment for research and observation.

Regarding biodiversity protection, efforts include intensifying field inspection and conducting patrols by wildlife protection units in sensitive environments and reserves to prevent illegal logging and poaching, ensuring the sustainability of unique ecosystems.

The Environment Authority works with the industrial sector and the local community to ensure promising economic growth that respects nature, safeguards its resources, and preserves its environmental heritage for future generations. -ONA

COMMENTARY

Oman: A Leading Investment Hub for Agriculture

The Oman agriculture market size is projected to be USD 2.60 billion in 2026 and reach USD 3.20 biliion by 2031 growing at a CAGR 4.14%. Agriculture is a vital driver of Oman's economic diversification, food security, and Vision 2040 goals, reaching a cumulative production value of over OMR600 million for agriculture and livestock.

Oman has emerged as one of the most promising destinations for foreign investors seeking stable, long-term opportunities in the agriculture and fisheries sectors, with a strong national focus on food security, economic diversification, and sustainable development.

Oman is known for its agricultural potential. Al Batinah governorates is one of the most productive farming areas, supported by fertile land and proximity to major cities. Dhofar offers favourable climatic conditions and seasonal rainfall, allowing a wider range of crops. Al Sharqiyah governorates provides access to arable land, local farming expertise, and reasonable connectivity to ports, making it another viable option for agricultural investment.

Greenhouse farming, in particular, has become highly attractive due to its ability to significantly reduce water consumption while enabling stable, year-round production. By creating controlled growing environments, greenhouse projects deliver higher yields per square meter compared to open-field farming and allow investors to maintain consistent quality regardless of seasonal climate variations. In addition, greenhouse systems are fully compatible with advanced technologies such as hydroponics, climate control, and smart monitoring solutions, which further enhance productivity and resource efficiency.

Oman is actively investing in sustainable food systems to enhance local agricultural production, reduce import dependency, and promote healthier diets. Ongoing programmes supported by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) are linking food production with market demand. These include awareness campaigns to shift consumer behavior, capacity building for smallholder farmers, and upgrading the national food value chain infrastructure.

Crop farming remains one of the most accessible and scalable forms of agriculture investment in Oman, attracting both regional and international investors. The country's agricultural market shows strong demand for a wide range of products, including dates, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, leafy greens, and selected tropical fruits. These crops are well suited to Oman's growing conditions when supported by modern farming techniques and efficient irrigation systems.

Investors who focus on export-oriented crop production gain an added advantage from Oman's strategic location. Proximity to major ports and free zones facilitates efficient logistics, reduces transportation costs, and provides direct access to GCC, Asian, and African markets, making crop farming and greenhouse projects a strong cornerstone of agriculture investment in Oman.

Oman actively encourages agricultural investment through 100% foreign ownership, tax exemptions. Key offerings include strategic agricultural zones, modern smart-farming tech support, and long-term residency pathways. Corporate tax exemptions spanning 5 to 10 years for eligible food and agro-processing projects. Oman has emerged as a top investment hub driven by economic diversification under Oman Vision 2040, progressive foreign ownership laws, and soaring FDI reaching OMR32.2 billion by early 2026.

WEATHER

Jabal Akhdar records 37mm of rainfall

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Jabal Akhdar received the highest rainfall in Oman during the period from July 26 until 7:00 am on July 29, recording 37mm, according to data released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The figures show widespread rainfall across several wilayats as weather conditions continued to bring showers to different parts of the Sultanate.

Salalah recorded the second-highest rainfall at 28mm, followed by Al Jazer with 21mm, Ibri with 19mm, and Khasab with 18mm.

Rainfall totals of 17mm were recorded in Al Rustaq, while Liwa and Shinas each received 15mm. Al Suwaiq registered 14mm, and Sohar and Ibra each recorded 13mm. Other areas receiving notable rainfall included Musannah (11mm), Muscat (10mm), Barka (10mm), Al Mudhaibi (9mm), Seeb (9mm), Al Hamra (8mm), Sur (8mm), Izki (7mm), Adam (7mm), Haima (6mm), Ibra (6mm), Duqm (5mm) and Nizwa (5mm). The lowest recorded totals were 3mm in Wadi Bani Khalid and Sohar.

The rainfall data highlights the widespread precipitation across Oman, with the heaviest rainfall concentrated in the highlands of Jabal Akhdar and parts of Dhofar, contributing to seasonal water recharge and cooler weather conditions in several regions.

Oman strengthens food safety laws to protect consumers

Oman advances food safety framework to boost trade and consumer confidence

MUSCAT: The advanced legislative system of the Food Safety and Quality Centre, affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, represents a fundamental pillar for enhancing food security and protecting public health.

This is due to its pivotal role in raising the efficiency of food control, boosting consumer confidence, ensuring the smooth flow of trade, and enabling the food sector to keep pace with rapid changes and challenges at the regional and international levels.

The Centre continues its efforts to update the legislative and regulatory system in line with international best practices and modern scientific standards.

This enhances the Sultanate of Oman's readiness to address developments related to food safety, modern food technologies, and emerging risks, aiming to contribute to boosting the competitiveness of national food products and enhancing compliance levels among various relevant entities.

Dr. Intisar Salim Al Gharibi, Director General of the Food Safety and Quality Centre, confirmed that Oman's commitment to continuing the development of a flexible and integrated legislative framework that keeps pace with global changes supports achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

This is achieved by enhancing food security, protecting consumer health, elevating the competitiveness of the food sector, and consolidating Oman's position as a trusted partner in the food trade system regionally and internationally.

She added that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, represented by the Center, witnessed during the period from 2023 to 2025 the achievement of a package of qualitative accomplishments that contributed to strengthening the legislative infrastructure supporting the food safety and quality system.

In 2023, a decision was issued banning the production, import, export, or marketing of food products containing titanium dioxide additive, based on scientific developments related to food safety.

She stated that during the period, 82 draft technical regulations and national and Gulf standard specifications were reviewed, in addition to updating and translating five draft specifications, and studying eight requests to make partial amendments to Gulf standard specifications and technical regulations, contributing to aligning national legislation with scientific and regulatory developments regionally and internationally.

She pointed out that 2024 saw the registration of a regulation on food products and advertisement or promotion, which contributed to enhancing proactive control over food products circulating in the markets and ensuring the accuracy and correctness of information provided to consumers.

During the same year, 66 draft technical regulations and national and Gulf standard specifications were reviewed, eight draft specifications were updated and translated, and five requests to amend Gulf standard specifications and technical regulations were studied.

She explained that during the past year, 48 draft technical regulations and national and Gulf standard specifications were reviewed, along with updating, translating, and adopting eight new specifications, and studying six requests for technical amendments and notifications.

The Centre also provided 232 standard specifications to competent departments across the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, supporting the unification of inspection procedures and elevating the efficiency of applying technical requirements along the food chain.

She emphasised that these efforts contribute to enhancing the efficiency of the food control system by providing unified technical references that support competent authorities and ensure the efficient implementation of health and technical requirements across all stages of the food chain. -ONA

IN DHOFAR GOVERNORATE

Omani-Bahraini products' exhibition to start from 1 August

SALALAH: The activities of the 9th Omani-Bahraini Products Exhibition, organised by the Omani-Bahraini Friendship Association in cooperation with the Embassy of Bahrain in Oman, will be launched in Dhofar Governorate on 1 August, and will continue for several days.

The organisation of the exhibition stems from the fraternal, close, and historical relations between the two countries and peoples.

It reflects the sincere desire and keenness of the wise leadership in both brotherly countries, as well as their directives to develop and foster relations across all fields, reaching the highest levels of coordination, cooperation, and rapprochement up to the stage of integration between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman.

The exhibition aims to achieve a package of strategic goals, most notably supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in both countries by displaying their products and creating partnerships between the two sides, in addition to enhancing trade exchange by opening direct marketing channels between producers and consumers, thereby contributing to increasing trade activity between the two countries.

It also aims to support SMEs by providing an incubating platform for them to showcase their products and services and enhance their ability to access new markets.

Additionally, it seeks to facilitate the exchange of expertise by giving SME owners the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience in the fields of production, marketing, and business management, benefit from inspiring success stories, highlight the cultural, craft, and heritage diversity of both the Sultanate of Oman and Bahrain, introduce the Omani public to Bahraini products and vice versa, and provide an interactive environment that encourages the establishment of future investment partnerships among participating enterprises.

Dr. Juma Ahmed Al Kaabi, Ambassador of Bahrain to Oman, confirmed that organising this edition of the exhibition underscores the government's interest in and support for SMEs to develop their business and production volume, forming an added value to the gross domestic product (GDP).

He pointed out that previous editions of the exhibitions resulted in approximately 560 partnerships between SMEs in both countries.

He noted that organising this exhibition reflects the strength and solidity of Bahraini-Omani relations, acting in implementation of the directives of the leadership in both countries to support and enhance relations in all fields, translating the outcomes of the Joint Omani-Bahraini Committee, and activating the memorandums of understanding signed between the two countries across various sectors.

For her part, Rudaina Amer Al Hajri, Head of the Omani-Bahraini Friendship Association, emphasized that holding such exhibitions is of paramount importance in strengthening partnerships between SMEs in both countries, which positively reflects on their volume of business and creates job opportunities.

She added that approximately 30 SMEs are participating in the exhibition, presenting various products ranging from fashion, perfumes, incense, Omani frankincense, Omani halwa, accessories, and heritage and craft products that reflect the Bahraini and Omani environments, as well as other household supplies. -ONA

Takamul initiative boosts governance and procurement efficiency

The meeting was part of the management efforts for the national project and saw the participation of representatives from government entities in Dhofar Governorate

SALALAH: Dhofar Municipality, in cooperation with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority, organised an introductory meeting on the "Takamul" project for government project and procurement management.

The meeting formed part of the change management efforts for the national project and saw the participation of representatives from government entities in Dhofar Governorate.

The meeting aimed to enhance the readiness of government entities for the upcoming phases of the project, which stands as one of the strategic national initiatives designed to unify the system for managing government projects and procurement.

This system encompasses stages from planning, through tenders, contracts, and implementation, to closure and performance measurement, thereby enhancing governance, transparency, and spending efficiency.

Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Ba'Owain, Director General of the Directorate General of Projects and Technical Affairs at Dhofar Municipality, stated that the meeting stems from the municipality's keenness to support national initiatives aimed at developing the government work system and enhancing the readiness of government entities in the governorate to implement the project in accordance with best practices.

He added that the "Takamul" project represents an institutional transformation that extends beyond merely being a digital system, as it contributes to unifying procedures, fostering integration among government entities, and raising the efficiency of project and procurement management, which positively impacts performance quality and the speed of decision-making.

He pointed out that the municipality worked, in cooperation with the Authority, to complete the requirements of the project's first phase by establishing work teams, executing change management programs, and participating in technical meetings, in preparation for the upcoming operational phases.

For his part, Eng. Badr Ali Al Maamari, Head of the Project Management Office for the National System for Managing Technical Projects at the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority, explained that the "Takamul" project is an integrated national platform aiming to unify the management of government projects and procurement across the Sultanate of Oman.

He noted that it achieves integration among government entities, provides accurate data supporting decision-making, enhances the efficiency of planning, follow-up, and implementation, and contributes to raising the efficiency of government spending while achieving the targets of digital transformation and Oman Vision 2040.

He noted that the introductory meetings organised by the Authority in cooperation with government entities represent a fundamental pillar for empowering work teams, building awareness of the project, and instilling a supportive culture for change management, thereby contributing to the success of the implementation phases.

The event included an introductory presentation outlining the objectives of the "Takamul" project, its primary components, implementation phases, and expected impact on developing the government project and procurement management system, alongside a discussion session addressing the project's key aspects.

At the conclusion of the meeting, which was held under the auspices of Dr. Ahmed Mohsen Al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, the team from the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority and the "Takamul" project team were honoured in recognition of their efforts in completing the first phase of the project, in the presence of representatives of government entities in Dhofar Governorate.

-ONA

JOB OFFERS

Human traffickers use fraudulent advertisements to entice victims

< FROM A1

He noted that the Law on Combating Human Trafficking, issued under Royal Decree No. 78/2025, has strengthened the country's legal framework by addressing emerging forms of trafficking while expanding protection for victims.

Highlighting this year's theme, Al Harthy said traffickers are increasingly using fraudulent recruitment advertisements to entice victims with attractive job offers abroad before forcing them into criminal activities, including online fraud. He said tackling these evolving threats requires stronger international cooperation, intelligence sharing and cross-border judicial and security coordination. He reaffirmed Oman's commitment to working closely with regional and international partners to prevent human trafficking, protect victims and bring offenders to justice.

Brigadier Jamal Habib Al Quraishi, Director General of Inquiries and Criminal Investigations at the Royal Oman Police (ROP), said the annual observance also aims to raise public awareness about the dangers of human trafficking, encourage reporting of suspected cases and strengthen cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the community.

He said human trafficking cases in Oman remain limited, but authorities continue to treat every case as a serious crime that violates human dignity and human rights.

According to Al Quraishi, traffickers are increasingly exploiting victims through sophisticated online scams. Individuals are lured by fake overseas employment opportunities and, upon arrival, are confined in facilities where they are forced to participate in cyber-enabled crimes, including romance scams, cryptocurrency fraud and other online financial scams.

He said common forms of trafficking also include forced labour, withholding of passports, non-payment of wages, excessive working hours, sexual exploitation and other abusive practices.

Al Quraishi revealed that the Royal Oman Police recently dismantled a criminal network that recruited victims under the guise of overseas employment before forcing them to smuggle narcotics internationally by swallowing drug-filled capsules.

The gang members were arrested in Muscat Governorate after investigators tracked one victim arriving at Muscat International Airport carrying narcotics concealed inside his body. Authorities also foiled another attempt by the network to smuggle drugs out of Oman.

He said the Royal Oman Police works closely with the Public Prosecution and other government agencies to identify trafficking indicators, investigate cases, gather evidence and protect victims through an integrated response system. Victims are provided with medical and psychological care, legal assistance, confidential handling of their cases and safe shelter in coordination with the Ministry of Social Development.

Al Quraishi added that Oman also cooperates with international organizations, including Interpol, the GCC Police, Europol and the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, to exchange intelligence, investigate criminal networks and strengthen implementation of international conventions related to combating human trafficking.

The law prescribes imprisonment ranging from three to 10 years and fines between OMR5,000 and OMR 100,000 for human trafficking offences. Penalties increase to seven to 15 years' imprisonment when aggravating circumstances exist, including crimes involving children, organized criminal groups or public officials. Courts may also confiscate assets used in trafficking offences and suspend the activities of companies found responsible.

Authorities said technology is playing an increasingly important role in combating trafficking through the use of artificial intelligence and data analysis to detect suspicious recruitment advertisements, identify trafficking patterns and improve communication with victims through real-time translation tools.

Employers and recruitment agencies were urged to comply fully with labour regulations by providing clear employment contracts, paying wages on time, respecting working hours, refraining from withholding passports, ensuring proper accommodation and healthcare, and reporting suspected trafficking cases. Authorities also warned against the misuse or sale of employment visas.

The Royal Oman Police noted that workers violating labour or residency laws, particularly domestic workers, remain among the groups most vulnerable to trafficking, alongside children exploited in isolated begging cases.

Calling on the public to play an active role, Al Quraishi urged citizens and residents to verify job offers before accepting them, avoid dealing with unlicensed recruitment agents, report suspected trafficking through official channels and help raise awareness about the dangers of human trafficking.

The World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, observed annually on July 30, seeks to strengthen global efforts to prevent trafficking, protect victims and reinforce international cooperation against one of the fastest-evolving forms of organised crime.

PENALTIES

Courts may order the confiscation of assets

< FROM A1

Penalties become more severe in aggravated cases, with prison terms increasing to seven to 15 years if the crime involves children, is committed by an organised criminal group, or involves a public official.

In addition to imprisonment and fines, courts may order the confiscation of assets and tools used in the crime and suspend the operations of companies found liable for involvement in human trafficking.

The penalties were highlighted by the Royal Oman Police ahead of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on July 30, reaffirming the Sultanate's commitment to protecting victims, prosecuting offenders, and combating all forms of human trafficking.

KING OF MOROCCO

HM sends greetings

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Mohammed VI of Morocco, on the occasion of the anniversary of Throne Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his best wishes to the Kingdom of Morocco, under the leadership of King Mohammed VI, for achieving lasting stability and continuous prosperity to fulfill the aspirations of the Moroccan people. -ONA

Asian Paints Wins Best Brand in Customer Experience Award in Paints Category

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

Asian Paints has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to customer experience by delivering innovative painting solutions that combine superior product quality, inspiring colour choices, and value-added services. Serving homeowners, architects, interior designers, contractors, and businesses, the brand continues to redefine the painting journey through a customer-first approach that extends beyond products to complete décor solutions.

With a customer-centric philosophy built around innovation, quality, and personalised service, Asian Paints offers a comprehensive portfolio of decorative and industrial coatings, expert colour consultation, and professional painting services. Its focus on understanding customer aspirations, introducing advanced technologies, and delivering consistent product performance has helped establish the brand as one of the most trusted names in the paints industry.

By continuously investing in research and development, sustainable products, digital innovation, and customer engagement, Asian Paints continues to set benchmarks in customer experience within the paints sector. Its commitment to transforming living spaces through innovation, creativity, and service excellence reinforces its position as a preferred choice for customers seeking quality and reliability.

The Best Brand in Customer Experience (CX) Awards are instituted by Times of Oman, in collaboration with Muscat Media Group, Gulf Leaders Circle and TEvents. They are presented to the leading brands that are ahead of the curve in meeting and exceeding customer expectations. The winners are selected based on an extensive consumer survey conducted by the Times of Oman.

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Al Buraimi offers 153 food security projects

The investment opportunities aim to boost the agricultural and livestock sectors' contribution to GDP and align with Oman Vision 2040

AL BURAIMI: Al Buraimi Governorate has offered 153 investment opportunities in the food security sector through the Tatweer platform by the first half of 2026, covering a total area of 4,900.58 acres.

Dr. Ahmed bin Saif Al Amri, Director General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Al Buraimi, said the opportunities were developed in coordination with the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning to boost the agricultural and livestock sectors' contribution to Gross domestic product (GDP) and align with Oman Vision 2040.

He pointed out that the opportunities span date palm, potato, garlic and seedling production, along with a tissue culture laboratory, agricultural sorting and packaging centres, livestock fattening projects for camels, cattle and sheep, fodder production and specialised veterinary clinics.

He added that the existing investment projects in the governorate's agricultural and water resources sector reached 69 by mid-2026, covering more than 5,832 acres with an investment value of OMR38 million.

He said that the plant sector accounted for 42 projects across 2,655.3 acres, valued at OMR9.13 million, including 11 local wheat cultivation projects on 1,246.9 acres worth OMR2.88 million.

He concluded that the livestock sector saw 15 projects across about 1,775.6 acres, valued at OMR25.86 million, covering red and white meat, eggs, fodder, feed supplements and veterinary medicines. — ONA

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IMPORTANT ROUTE

Sohar-Al Buraimi road bridge project 24% complete

AL BURAIMI: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology is continuing work on the project to construct five bridges on the Sohar-Al Buraimi road, spanning North Al Batinah and Al Buraimi governorates — one of the most important routes connecting Al Buraimi Governorate to the rest of the Sultanate of Oman.

The project has achieved a 24 percent completion rate, with a total cost exceeding OMR6 million.

The new bridges are being built to replace damaged bridges constructed more than 50 years ago, in order to ensure the safety of road users. The structural condition of these bridges had been carefully assessed.

The project aims to enhance road safety and provide a sustainable road network to maintain the efficiency of the logistics connectivity system. — ONA

MOUNTAIN DESTINATION

New 8-km road opens in Al Jabal Al Akhdar

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) on Wednesday opened an 8-kilometre stretch of the upgraded Siya–Qutnah Road in Al Jabal Al Akhdar Governorate, marking a major step towards improving connectivity and supporting tourism in one of Oman's most popular mountain destinations.

The newly opened section forms part of a 9-kilometre road enhancement project and was opened to traffic on July 29.

The road begins from the main Al Jabal Al Akhdar road opposite the Dusit Hotel and extends to the Al Makhb area, passing through Shanut.

According to the ministry, the road has been fitted with comprehensive traffic safety features, including steel guardrails, concrete barriers, as well as directional and warning signs to improve safety for motorists and other road users.

Boost tourism activity

Officials said the project is expected to strengthen tourism activity in Al Jabal Al Akhdar by providing easier and safer access to tourist attractions and residential communities.

The improved road is also expected to enhance traffic flow and reduce travel time for both visitors and residents.

The road upgrade is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to develop the country's transport infrastructure, improve road safety, and support economic growth through better connectivity to key tourism and residential areas.

FEATURING WARSI BROTHERS

Deccani Wing of Indian Social Club Oman to host grand 'Jashn-e-Deccan'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Deccani Wing of the Indian Social Club Oman is proud to announce "Jashn-e-Deccan", an evening celebrating the rich cultural, musical and literary heritage of the Deccan.

The event promises an unforgettable experience for the Indian community in Oman with a mesmerising live performance by the internationally acclaimed Warsi Brothers, among the world's most celebrated Qawwali maestros.

Renowned for preserving the timeless tradition of Sufi Qawwali, the Warsi Brothers have enthralled audiences across the globe with their soulful renditions and exceptional musical artistry.

Their performance in Muscat is expected to be one of the biggest cultural highlights of the year.

Speaking about the event, the organisers said: "Jashn-e-Deccan is a tribute to the vibrant culture, traditions and heritage of the Deccan. We invite families, music lovers and the wider community to join us for an evening of spirituality, nostalgia and world-class entertainment."

The event will bring together members of the Indian diaspora and lovers of Sufi music for a memorable celebration of unity, culture and heritage.

The Deccani Wing has consistently organised quality cultural programmes that strengthen community bonds while showcasing the rich traditions of Hyderabad and the Deccan.

Trump again threatens Iran after Tehran strikes US bases in Jordan

Trump further said US forces had successfully intercepted the incoming ballistic missiles launched towards American positions, adding that troops had only minutes to respond to the attack

WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday vowed a forceful response against Iran after the Islamic Republic launched a ballistic missile attack targeting US bases in Jordan.

He stated that Washington, in response, would retaliate with a major strike.

"We'll be hitting them hard. They're going to get a beating," Trump told Fox News while reacting to the Iranian attack.

Trump further said US forces had successfully intercepted the incoming ballistic missiles launched towards American positions, adding that troops had only minutes to respond to the attack.

According to Fox News, Trump said US forces carried out the operation in real time to defend the area, with personnel calling out coordinates to ensure that the missiles did not reach their targets.

The US President's remarks come after Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) claimed responsibility for targeting a US military base and Central Command facility in Jordan.

According to a statement carried by Iranian state media, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), the IRGC Aerospace Force said it had launched "several ballistic missiles" at the US Army air base and Central Command centre in Jordan, describing the action as a response to what it called aggressive actions by the United States.

"As long as threats against the Islamic Republic of Iran continue and illegal and evil actions by American forces against our interests continue, the resistance will continue," the IRGC statement said, according to IRIB.

The statement also said that threats by US officials and what it termed illegal interventions against Iranian interests must stop.

The US President also addressed overnight US-Saudi strikes against Iran-backed militias in Iraq, saying the operation was coordinated with the Iraqi government.

Trump described the Iran-backed militias as a "cancer on the world" and did not rule out further action against Tehran-linked proxies in the region.

Earlier, US Central Command (CENTCOM) in a statement said that the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces and CENTCOM jointly carried out precision strikes against Iran-aligned militant sites in Iraq, targeting locations used for logistics and weapons operations.

CENTCOM said the strikes were conducted on July 28 against groups it described as Iran-aligned terrorists that had been directed by the IRGC to target US forces and Saudi energy infrastructure.

"US and Saudi fighter aircraft struck multiple terrorist logistics and weapons sites across eastern Iraq in a strong response to over 30 IRGC-directed aerial drone attacks in the last 72 hours," CENTCOM said.

The US military said the recent drone attacks against American forces were unsuccessful.

"The unwarranted attacks against US forces were not successful," CENTCOM said.

The command also claimed that between February and April 2026, there were more than 600 attempted attacks on US citizens and facilities by Iran-aligned militant groups operating in Iraq.

"The IRGC and its terrorist proxies must cease these attacks to avoid further U.S. military response," CENTCOM warned.

Iran condemns US-Saudi strikes in Iraq

Meanwhile, In Tehran Iran on Wednesday strongly condemned the joint US-Saudi precision strikes on Iraq, accusing Washington and its regional allies of violating Iraqi sovereignty and holding them responsible for the consequences of what it described as "criminal, inhumane and provocative actions".

In a statement, Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the attacks targeted areas in Iraq, including facilities and locations belonging to official Iraqi institutions as well as processions and stations linked to Arbaeen pilgrims.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the aggressive attacks by the US and Saudi Arabia on some areas in Iraq, including against facilities and places belonging to official Iraqi institutions, as well as the processions and stations of the Arbaeen pilgrims," the statement said.

Iran alleged that the strikes represented an attack on Iraq's national sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling them a violation of international law and the UN Charter.

"These attacks are a clear attack on the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and a gross violation of Article 2, Paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter and the fundamental rules of international law," the ministry added.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry further accused the United States and Israel of seeking to expand conflict in West Asia and expressed support for the Iraqi government and people.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while expressing condolences for the martyrdom of a group of honourable Iraqi people during these aggressive attacks, emphasises the full support and solidarity of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the government and people of Iraq," it said.

— Agencies

KUMAMOTO PREFECTURE

Rescuers in Japan 'race against time' after deadly earthquake

TOKYO: A powerful 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck Kumamoto Prefecture on Japan's southern island of Kyushu on Tuesday afternoon, triggering emergency warnings and prompting authorities to assess the extent of the damage.

On Wednesday, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said 13 people have been found dead since the earthquake struck. She added that many other people were still missing, suggesting the death toll was not final.

By Wednesday, over 9,000 people were in evacuation centres amid the rescue efforts.

"We have received reports of seven people with serious injuries and 29 with minor injuries. Furthermore, as of 7:00 am today (2200 GMT Tuesday), 9,186 people have sought refuge in 506 evacuation centers across five prefectures, including Kumamoto and Fukuoka," government spokesman Minoru Kihara said.

At least two of the victims died in a shopping mall in Kashima and the third died in a building collapse in a town near the epicenter.

Japan's public broadcaster, NHK, reported that "many people" were trapped inside the shopping mall damaged by the earthquake.

Several people were rescued from the mall, including a person who was reported to be in cardiopulmonary arrest.

The collapse of the mall followed an explosion likely triggered by a gas leak, NHK reported.

"Even now, there are people waiting to be rescued, and this is a race against time. We will marshal all available resources on the ground to save and rescue as many people as possible," Takaichi told reporters at her office in Tokyo a day after the quake struck.

Prime Minister Takaichi also said initial reports indicated multiple injuries, damage to civilian infrastructure, and fires in several affected areas.

"We are still assessing the extent of injuries and property damage, but I have been informed that there have already been several injuries," Takaichi said.

"Power outages and fires are happening in some areas, and roads and bridges have been damaged and buildings collapsed," she added.

— DW

SPORTS

Australia head coach McDonald calls for larger squads for 2027 ODI World Cup

The ICC announced that the 2027 WC, to be co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, will have 14 teams

MELBOURNE: Australian head coach Andrew McDonald has called for greater squad sizes for the expanded 2027 ICC Cricket World Cup, arguing that teams should be allowed to carry more members in their squads with the number of games increasing. He also added that this would allow the team to manage their injured players and playing XI composition better, as per the conditions.

Recently, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that the 2027 WC, to be co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia, will have 14 teams and laid down a new structure which will include a Super Series round before the group stages and a Super 7 round before the semifinals.

This is a huge change in the format from the 10-team 2023 edition, which Australia won. After a nine-match group stage, the knockout stages started with the semifinals.

During the 2023 WC, Australia played a total of 11 games, and the winner of the 2027 World Cup will have to play at least 13 matches, including five group stage games, six Super 7 games, a semifinal and a final.

There is a possibility that the number of games for the winner goes up to 15 if one of the bottom-three ranked teams features in the two-match 'Super Series' and is able to make it to the final.

Australia has long advocated for larger squad sizes at World Cups, having experienced injuries within their camps in the 2019 and 2023 Cricket World Cups and the 2022, 2024 and 2026 T20 World Cups.

Speaking to SEN Radio on Wednesday, McDonald argued that teams should be allowed to carry larger squads because they would be playing more matches in the 2027 edition within the same time frame as the 2023 edition.

"One of the big things from my perspective is if it is going to be your pinnacle event, what do your squad sizes look like?" McDonald said as quoted by Cricinfo.

"We had the dilemma of what it looked like having a 15-player squad for the last World Cup, and I think New Zealand were in the same boat where we had a couple of injuries, Travis Head been the most notable one, and I think Kane Williamson and a couple of others for New Zealand, where you end up with sort of 12-13 players to select from early on in your tournament, and you are trying to carry those other players through the early rounds, and you are not able to play potentially the way that you want to play, or structure up the way that you think you need to, and in particular in countries where you in the north or the south or the east or the west, the conditions change quite significantly," he added.

Australia battled injury concerns in the 2023 edition, with their star opener Travis Head missing a chunk of the group stage due to a finger injury suffered before the tournament. Australia did not name a replacement for him as he was due to be cleared by the medical team halfway through.

As per the ICC rules, a player cannot be left out of the 15-man squad and return halfway through the tournament unless they come in as an injury replacement following approval from the ICC's technical committee.

Australia carried an injured Head as a part of their main 14 and played five group stage matches with just 14 fit players.

They did not carry a second specialist spinner in the squad, as Head was a useful part-time spin option. Aussies gambled on Adam Zampa to stay fit throughout the tournament.

The gamble paid off as Head smoked a century against New Zealand on his return during the competition and secured 'Player of the Match' awards in the semi-final against South Africa and India, demolishing a dominant Men in Blue with a stroke-filled 137 in the title clash at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium while chasing 241 runs.

Injury concerns

Australia are quite wary of the injury concerns that could follow ahead of the tournament, with them playing 20-21 Tests in 14 months before the start of the tournament, including tough five-match assignments against India and England away from home in the first seven months of next year.

The pace trio of ODI skipper Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, and Mitchell Starc have faced injury concerns in recent months, causing them to miss marquee series/tournaments, while Cameron Green, Marnus Labuschagne and Alex Carey are some other marquee stars who cannot afford an injury ahead of the tournament.

Wicketkeeper-batter Josh Inglis and Matt Renshaw could feature in some Test tours and some bilateral limited-overs cricket ahead of the World Cup.

The famed pace trio of Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc did not feature in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy and the 2026 ICC T20 World Cup, with the Aussies facing a semifinal finish and Super Eight exit in both of these tournaments.

The Australian head coach cited the example of the recent FIFA World Cup 2026, which allowed for 26 squad members, urging the ICC to increase the number of squad members to 17.

He also pointed out that cricket leading up to the Cricket World Cup is demanding and there will be players who would be '50/50' and some star players could face injuries and hence a larger squad could allow teams to carry these players with them to the tournament.

"My push within it, any time you are playing more games in the same period of time, you do not want it to be attritional," McDonald said. -ANI

NEW LA LIGA SEASON

Barcelona weighs more transfer moves as title defence approaches

MADRID: FC Barcelona is training in England as Hansi Flick's side continues preparations for the new La Liga season.

It has been a relatively quiet summer at the Camp Nou. Robert Lewandowski has left after his contract expired, while Joao Cancelo and Marcus Rashford have returned to their parent clubs after their loan spells ended.

Removing Lewandowski's salary from the wage bill has given Barcelona greater financial flexibility than in recent years. The club has already signed England winger Anthony Gordon from Newcastle United and Germany forward Karim Adeyemi from Borussia Dortmund as it looks to refresh an attack that will again be built around Lamine Yamal.

However, Barcelona still appears to have significant work to do before opening its league title defence away to Elche on August 23, with both further arrivals and departures expected before the transfer window closes.

Barcelona would like to bring Cancelo back, but first has to negotiate with his current club, Al-Hilal. If a deal cannot be reached, the Spanish champion is expected to pursue another full-back.

Hector Fort impressed during a loan spell at Elche before a shoulder injury cut short his campaign, and the versatile defender will have the chance to prove he deserves a place in Flick's first-team squad.

Racing Santander full-back Jorge Salinas has also been linked with Barcelona, although the Segunda Division club is reportedly reluctant to sell one of its academy products.

Julian Alvarez remains Barcelona's priority attacking target. The club has made no secret of its admiration for the Argentina forward, who has also indicated he wants to leave Atletico Madrid.

Atletico has reacted angrily to Barcelona's public pursuit of Alvarez, insisting any deal would require the Catalan club to meet the striker's reported 500 million euro (570 million U.S. dollar) release clause.

One possible compromise could involve Ferran Torres moving in the opposite direction as part of the deal. Torres enhanced his reputation with Spain during the World Cup and has yet to agree a new contract with Barcelona, increasing speculation over his future.

Several departures also appear increasingly likely.

15-YEAR-OLD

Vaibhav makes massive leap in latest ICC T20I batting rankings

NEW DELHI: Rising sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has made a significant jump in the latest ICC Men's T20I Batting Rankings following an impressive start to his international career.

The 15-year-old was named Player of the Series after scoring 151 runs at an average of 50.33 during India's 3-0 T20I series win over Zimbabwe in Harare. Sooryavanshi's performances helped him climb 230 places to a career-best 48th position among T20I batters in the rankings released by the ICC on Wednesday.

Sooryavanshi currently has 536 rating points and trails India teammate Ishan Kishan, who leads the latest T20I batting rankings. Kishan reached a career-best 916 points after scoring 81 in the second match against Zimbabwe, the third-highest rating ever recorded by a T20I batter. He finished the series with 910 points but remains comfortably ahead of second-placed Sahibzada Farhan, who has 848 points.

Kishan's career-best rating is also higher than those achieved by fellow Indian stars Suryakumar Yadav (912) and Virat Kohli (909). Abhishek Sharma holds the record for the highest-ever T20I batting rating with 931 points, followed by England's Dawid Malan at 919 and Kishan at 916, according to the ICC.

Tilak Varma also moved up two places to sixth, while Shreyas Iyer climbed seven spots to 24th among T20I batters. Ravi Bishnoi made one of the biggest jumps in the bowling rankings, rising 31 places to 41st after taking three wickets in the Zimbabwe series.

Zimbabwe also had some movement in the rankings, with Ryan Burl climbing six places to joint 85th among T20I batters. Fast bowler Blessing Muzarabani moved up 10 spots to 26th among T20I bowlers.

In the ODI rankings, Shubman Gill regained the No. 1 position among batters after New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell missed the recent series against the West Indies. Mitchell had occupied the top spot since January, according to the ICC.

Namibia spinner Bernard Scholtz was another major mover, climbing five places to seventh among ODI bowlers following his performances in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series in Utrecht.

West Indies all-rounder Justin Greaves also made significant progress in the Test rankings after his standout display against Pakistan in Trinidad. He climbed 21 places to 48th among Test bowlers and moved up eight spots to ninth among all-rounders after claiming five consecutive wicket maidens. His West Indies teammate Jayden Seales rose five places to 24th among Test bowlers, while Pakistan's Mohammad Abbas climbed nine spots to 17th. Babar Azam also moved up four places to 15th among Test batters following his 32nd Test half-century in the second innings. -ANI

LEFT-BACK

Julio Diaz joins Sevilla from Atletico Madrid

MADRID: Sevilla has completed its fifth signing ahead of the new La Liga season with the arrival of Spain under-20 international left-back Julio Diaz from Atletico Madrid.

Diaz follows Arouna Sangante, Juan Iglesias, Jon Guridi and Odysseas Vlachodimos, whose loan move has been made permanent, after the southern Spanish club paid Atletico one million euros for 50 percent of the player's rights.

The defender has signed a four-year contract through June 2030, although Atletico has retained a buy-back option.

Diaz spent the past two seasons with Atletico's B team, while also making four first-team appearances under Diego Simeone.

His arrival at Sevilla will raise further doubts over the future of Joaquin Martinez Gauna, better known as Oso.

The 23-year-old impressed at left-back as Sevilla pulled away from the relegation zone in the 2025-26 season, but has yet to agree a new contract.

Sevilla could now decide to sell Oso this summer rather than risk losing him on a free transfer in 12 months. -Xinhua

BAYERN MUNICH CAPTAIN

Neuer hints at retirement after upcoming season

BERLIN: Bayern Munich captain Manuel Neuer indicated that the upcoming campaign is likely to be the final season of his career after the veteran goalkeeper returned to training at the club's preseason camp in Tegernsee.

The 40-year-old rejoined Bayern's training camp alongside several internationals following Germany's World Cup exit.

Neuer told reporters that retirement had been a serious consideration before he decided to continue playing.

"It looks very much like I will retire after the season," Neuer said, while stressing that he was not approaching matches as farewell occasions. "I don't think about whether it could be my last season when I play."

Neuer revealed that he had been close to ending his career this summer but chose to continue because of the atmosphere within the club.

"I would probably have retired in 85 percent of cases, but with this team, the staff and the coaching group it is simply fun," he said.

"We always have the opportunity to compete for every title." Neuer admitted that the disappointment of Germany's World Cup exit had been difficult to accept but said his focus had already shifted back to Bayern's new campaign.

"We all hoped for more," he said. "Now we have new goals and want to achieve a lot with the club."

The Bayern captain said the club enters the new season with confidence after retaining the core of the squad and adding further quality through new signings.

"We are very happy," Neuer said. "We have kept the core of the team together. The new arrivals add further quality and should make us even stronger." -Xinhua

OMAN OIL PRICE RISES

The price of Oman crude oil has increased, with prices for delivery by September 2026 reaching $79.60. The price of Oman crude oil rose by $2.56 from the price of Tuesday, which was $77.04. -ONA

MARKETS
BUSINESS & FINANCE

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 7,281.48 points, up by 0.47% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.08% at 578.55 points. SMN Power Holding, up 6.84%, was the top gainer while, Al Madina Investments, down 5.71%, was the top loser.

Bank Muscat (S.A.O.G.) First Half Results 2026

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to share with you the results achieved by the Bank during the first half of the year ended 30th June 2026. The Bank continued to build on its strong momentum, delivering resilient financial performance while successfully executing its long-term strategic priorities. The Bank remained focused on strengthening its core businesses, investing in technology and innovation, expanding strategic partnerships and supporting key sectors of the national economy in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Financial Review

The Bank posted a net profit of OMR 137.49 million for the period compared to OMR 125.82 million reported during the same period in 2025, an increase of 9.3 per cent.

Net Interest Income from Conventional Banking and Net Income from Islamic Financing stood at OMR 210.49 million for the six months period ended 30 June 2026 compared to OMR 206.44 million for the same period in 2025, an increase of 2.0 per cent.

Non-interest income was OMR 92.23 million for the six months period ended 30 June 2026 as compared to OMR 81.83 million for the same period in 2025, an increase of 12.7 per cent, mainly due to growth in business volumes and higher investment income.

Operating expenses for the six months period ended 30 June 2026 was OMR 114.38 million as compared to OMR 108.08 million for the same period in 2025, an increase of 5.8 per cent.

Net impairment losses on financial assets for the six months period ended 30 June 2026 was OMR 24.30 million as against OMR 30.16 million for the same period in 2025.

Net Loans and advances including Islamic financing receivables increased by 6.3 per cent to OMR 11,395 million as against OMR 10,724 million as at 30 June 2025.

Customer deposits including Islamic customer deposits increased by 13.2 per cent to OMR 11,182 million as against OMR 9,879 million as at 30 June 2025.

Business Initiatives & Key Developments

The Bank continued to enhance and optimise the Sultanate's largest banking network through the strategic consolidation and relocation of selected branches. The Bank now operates a network of 176 retail, corporate and Meethaq branches, in addition to 24 Hisabi centres, supported by 918 self-service machines, including ATMs, CDMs, FFMs and MFKs, providing customers with round-the-clock access to banking services across the Sultanate.

The Bank's digital transformation strategy continued to deliver tangible results, with sustained growth in registered users across Internet Banking and Mobile Banking platforms. Following the successful introduction of the Maal Card, merchant acceptance using the card across point-of-sale terminals in Oman reached approximately 95%, representing a significant milestone in accelerating digital payment adoption and supporting the Sultanate's transition towards a cashless economy. The Bank's Tap 'N' Go (SoftPOS) solution continued its exceptional growth trajectory, surpassing 2 million number of transactions during the first half of 2026 showing a 272% remarkable increase over same period in 2025. Tap 'N' Go transaction values also increased by 301% during the same period. Overall number of payment transactions increased by 24% and their values increased by 11% during the same period, highlighting the increasing adoption of innovative digital payment solutions by businesses across the country. The Bank also introduced fully digital onboarding for POS merchants, enabling businesses under the Najahi Business Banking programme and retail enterprises to seamlessly register through BM Internet Banking.

The Bank expanded eligibility for the digital instant loan service during the quarter to include employees of quasi-government entities alongside government employees. The fully digital solution enables eligible customers to obtain competitive personal loan with instant disbursement of approved funds without the need to visit a branch or complete paper-based documentation. This initiative is the first of its kind in the Omani financial sector.

Demonstrating its commitment to supporting national priorities, Bank Muscat and Meethaq Islamic Banking further strengthened their collaboration with Oman Housing Bank under the Iskan initiative for subsidised housing finance. The partnership aims to streamline financing procedures, improve turnaround times and provide eligible citizens with faster and more efficient access to affordable housing finance.

Corporate Banking continued to strengthen its position as the preferred financial partner for businesses across Oman by expanding transaction banking capabilities and supporting the growth ambitions of strategic corporate customers. During the quarter, the Bank successfully onboarded new API Banking customers and Business-to-Business (B2B) customers while facilitating the creation of more than 5,000 electronic mandates through its API Banking platform. The Bank continued supporting strategic sectors of the national economy by extending financing to leading Government Related Entities (GRE) operating in the technology and oil & gas sectors, reaffirming its commitment to financing projects that contribute to sustainable economic growth and national development.

The Bank expanded its participation in renewable energy projects through the issuance of several high-value guarantees via its international banking network, supporting strategic investments in the clean energy sector.

Despite heightened geopolitical uncertainty and volatile market conditions, the Bank's proprietary investment portfolio continued to deliver resilient performance, supported by disciplined asset allocation across diversified local, regional and international investment opportunities. Bank Muscat acted as Issue Manager and joint global coordinator for the highly successful Initial Public Offering of Oman India Fertiliser Company (OMIFCO), the Sultanate's largest IPO during the year. Bank Muscat and Meethaq Islamic Banking served as Issue Managers for the successful execution of Series 11 Issuance under the Omani Rial Sovereign Sukuk issued by the Government of Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, reaffirming their longstanding expertise in managing strategic capital market transactions and supporting the continued development of Oman's financial markets. In addition, Meethaq Islamic Banking served as the collecting bank for the US $850 million Energy Development Oman (EDO) Sukuk, and also for the OMIFCO Initial Public Offering.

The Bank's Assets Under Management (AUM) increased by 22% to surpass US $4.4 billion as of June-end 2026, compared to the same period last year. The Bank Muscat Money Market Fund recorded outstanding performance, with assets under management increasing by 109% over the corresponding period in 2025, making it the largest open-ended investment fund in Oman.

The Bank continued to attract new discretionary portfolio management mandates from both government and private sector institutions, reflecting growing confidence in its investment capabilities and contributing to the continued expansion of its wealth management franchise.

However, Meethaq continued its regular engagement with the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Zakat Committees and charitable associations across the Sultanate to support community initiatives.

Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility

Sustainability remains central to Bank Muscat's long-term strategy. During the second quarter, the Bank continued to deliver impactful initiatives that support national priorities, promote social inclusion and contribute to the Sultanate's sustainable economic development. The Bank launched a pioneering initiative in partnership with Oman College of Tourism to provide specialised vocational training for individuals with Down syndrome.

The Bank also enhanced its strategic partnership with the Oman Football Association by becoming the Main Sponsor of the Oman National Football Team which reinforces its support for the continued development of Oman's sporting sector.

The Bank announced its sponsorship of Khareef Dhofar 2026 as part of its commitment to supporting tourism as a key pillar of economic diversification under Oman Vision 2040. It also entered into a strategic partnership with the Ministry of Information as sponsor of the Media Excellence Award 2026 with the aim to recognising professional excellence and encouraging innovation within the media sector.

The Bank organised rounds of the Maliyat Challenge in Sohar, Sur and Nizwa, as part of its CSR financial literacy initiative "Maliyat Academy". The Challenge aimed to strengthen financial literacy, entrepreneurship and innovation among school students at grades 9 and 10. The Bank further organised a dedicated financial literacy workshop for more than 120 students with hearing impairments in the Scientific College of Design.

The Bank launched the second phase of the Al Wathbah Academy programme, in cooperation with the Fund For Development of Youth Projects (Sharakah). Running from June to December 2026, the programme provides specialised training for entrepreneurs and start-ups, building on the successful completion of the first phase and reaffirming the Bank's commitment to supporting Oman's entrepreneurial ecosystem and SME sector.

Awards and Accolades

The Bank's commitment to innovation, customer excellence and sustainable growth continued to receive strong recognition from leading regional and international institutions. Bank Muscat was honoured with the Platinum Award on Product Innovation presented by Infosys Finacle for its Instant Loans Automation solution, and won four prestigious accolades at the Asian Banking & Finance (ABF) Wholesale Banking Awards, which are Domestic Foreign Exchange Bank of the Year, Call Center Initiative of the Year, SME Bank of the Year, and Corporate & Investment Bank of the Year in Oman awards, reflecting the breadth and strength of its capabilities across treasury, operations, business banking and investment banking. Locally, the Bank received the Gold Award in the ESG Category at Oman Sustainability Week in recognition of its continued commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices and was honoured with the "Innovator & Trend Setter in Digital Banking of the Year" award by Oman Economic Review (OER). Among others.

Meanwhile, Meethaq Islamic Banking received three prestigious accolades from Islamic Finance News, being named Best Islamic Investment Bank, Best Islamic Corporate Bank, and Best Islamic Retail Bank in Oman.

In Conclusion

Looking ahead, Bank Muscat remains well positioned to sustain its growth trajectory while continuing to deliver long-term value for shareholders and customers. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our shareholders for their continued trust in the Bank. We commend the measures implemented by the Central Bank of Oman and the Financial Services Authority aimed at bolstering the financial market in the Sultanate. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik for his visionary leadership and guidance in advancing the nation's comprehensive development across all sectors.

Khalid Bin Mustahail Al Mashani
Chairman

INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

	Unaudited	Audited	Unaudited
	30-Jun-2026	31-Dec-2025	30-Jun-2025
	OMR 000	OMR 000	OMR 000
Assets			
Cash and balances with Central Banks	**873,103**	560,524	507,664
Due from banks	**841,569**	720,073	469,062
Loans and advances	**9,688,374**	9,083,751	9,075,040
Islamic financing receivables	**1,706,524**	1,658,654	1,649,124
Investments securities	**2,882,973**	2,813,695	2,203,349
Investment in associate	**9,501**	9,950	9,413
Other assets	**206,346**	195,869	178,136
Property, equipment and software	**83,778**	86,580	81,884
Total assets	**16,292,168**	15,129,096	14,173,672
Liabilities and equity			
Liabilities			
Deposits from banks	**1,416,218**	1,020,730	1,134,187
Customers' deposits	**9,505,934**	8,741,504	8,322,091
Islamic customers' deposits	**1,676,486**	1,688,777	1,556,841
Sukuk	**16,834**	16,826	16,826
Euro medium term notes	**292,271**	487,387	195,139
Other liabilities	**695,223**	499,324	437,930
Taxation	**73,510**	82,422	58,265
Total liabilities	**13,676,476**	12,536,970	11,721,279
Equity			
Equity attributable to equity holders of parent:			
Share capital	**750,640**	750,640	750,640
Share premium	**156,215**	156,215	156,215
General reserve	**410,258**	410,258	410,258
Legal reserve	**208,586**	208,586	183,032
Revaluation reserve	**4,904**	4,904	4,904
Cumulative changes in fair value	**118,917**	84,949	62,737
Foreign currency translation reserve	**(1,813)**	(1,821)	(3,548)
Cash flow hedge reserve	**3,665**	3,464	4,142
Retained earnings	**459,000**	469,611	378,693
Total equity attributable to the equity holders	**2,110,372**	2,086,806	1,947,073
Perpetual Tier I capital	**505,320**	505,320	505,320
Total equity	**2,615,692**	2,592,126	2,452,393
Total liabilities and equity	**16,292,168**	15,129,096	14,173,672
Net assets per share (in OMR)	**0.281**	0.278	0.259
Contingent liabilities and commitments	**2,184,037**	1,957,031	1,771,391

INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SIX MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Unaudited for six months period ended	
	30-Jun-2026	30-Jun-2025
	OMR 000	OMR 000
Interest income	**304,166**	297,640
Interest expense	**(112,161)**	(109,515)
Net interest income	**192,005**	188,125
Income from Islamic financing / investments	**51,774**	52,852
Distribution to depositors	**(33,286)**	(34,534)
Net income from Islamic financing	**18,488**	18,318
Net interest income and income from Islamic financing	**210,493**	206,443
Commission and fee income (net)	**50,203**	47,515
Other operating income	**42,022**	34,319
Operating income	**302,718**	288,277
Operating expenses		
Other operating expenses	**(102,569)**	(96,561)
Depreciation	**(11,807)**	(11,520)
	(114,376)	(108,081)
Share of results from an associate	**134**	226
Net impairment losses on financial assets	**(24,303)**	(30,161)
	(138,545)	(138,016)
Profit before taxation	**164,173**	150,261
Tax expense	**(26,680)**	(24,443)
Profit for the period	**137,493**	125,818
Other comprehensive (expense) / income		
Net other comprehensive (expense) / income to be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods, net of tax:		
Translation of net investments in foreign operations	**8**	142
Change in fair value of FVOCI debt investments	**(2,524)**	3,063
Share of other comprehensive income of an associate	**(139)**	(30)
Change in fair value of cash flow hedge	**201**	(1,759)
	(2,454)	1,416
Net other comprehensive (expense) / income not to be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods, net of tax:		
Change in fair value of FVOCI equity investments	**35,571**	16,111
	35,571	16,111
Other comprehensive income / (expense) for the period	**33,117**	17,527
Total comprehensive income for the period	**170,610**	143,345
Total comprehensive income for the period attributable to:		
Equity holders of Parent Company	**170,610**	143,345
Profit attributable to:		
Equity holders of Parent Company	**137,493**	125,818
Earnings per share (in OMR)		
- Basic and diluted	**0.017**	0.015

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

SMN Power Holding, up 6.84%, was the top gainer while, Al Madina Investments, down 5.71%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,281.48 points, up by 0.47% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.08% at 578.55 points. SMN Power Holding, up 6.84%, was the top gainer while, Al Madina Investments, down 5.71%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 8623 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 51.07 million, with more than 181.84 million shares changing hands. Out of 72 traded securities, 27 advanced, 26 declined, and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for RO 2741K while GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 2635K, followed by foreign investors for RO 107K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 12,845.16 points, up 0.08%. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, Ominvest, Bank Muscat, Muscat Insurance, Ahli Bank were up by 3.88%, 1.03%, 1.01%, 0.60%, 0.47% respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Oman & Emirates Investment, National Finance, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Madina Takaful were down by 5.71%, 1.54%, 1.40%, 0.99%, 0.86% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,399.22 points, down -0.54%. Prices of Al Maha Ceramics, Oman Fisheries, Al Anwar Ceramics, Jazeera Steel Products, Voltamp Energy were up by 5.69%, 4.55%, 0.76%, 0.72%, 0.60% respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering, A'Saffa Foods, Oman Flour Mills, Construction Materials, Gulf Mushroom Products were down by 6.79%, 2.28%, 1.72%, 1.33%, 0.71% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.03% before closing at 2,904.88 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Oman Telecom, Sembcorp Salalah, Majan College were up by 6.84%, 2.95%, 1.56%, 1.56%, 0.77% respectively. Prices of Al Batinah Power, Phoenix Power, Muscat Desalination, Al Suwadi Power, Ooredoo were down by 2.72%, 2.67%, 2.22%, 2.21%, 1.20% respectively.– **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev . Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	7,287.21	7,245.42	7,281.48	7,247.19	34.29	0.47 %
FINANCIAL INDEX	12,907.68	12,814.60	12,845.16	12,835.15	10.01	0.08 %
Industry Index	9,467.89	9,378.77	9,399.22	9,450.26	-51.04	-0.54 %
Services Index	2,914.38	2,882.37	2,904.88	2,904.11	0.77	0.03 %
MSX Shariah Index	580.42	575.59	578.55	578.08	0.46	0.08 %
MSX TR INDEX	11,274.16	11,209.50	11,265.30	11,212.25	53.05	0.47 %
FINANCIAL TR IDX	15,869.32	15,754.89	15,792.45	15,780.15	12.30	0.08 %
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,125.96	12,011.82	12,038.01	12,103.39	-65.37	-0.54 %
SERVICES TR IDX	3,904.72	3,861.83	3,891.99	3,890.96	1.03	0.03 %
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
181,842,079	51,068,987	8,623	37,607,419,455	27	26	19	72

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	4,534	897	4	0.190	0.203	0.190	0.203	0.190	0.013	6.842	0.203	0.184	0.203	0.100	40,526,027
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	5,108,772	6,622,085	346	1.289	1.328	1.288	1.328	1.290	0.038	2.946	1.328	1.328	1.328	0.100	996,000,000
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	11,981,959	5,278,626	520	0.434	0.444	0.434	0.441	0.434	0.007	1.613	0.441	0.441	0.441	0.010	3,528,000,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	21,290	5,442	6	0.256	0.260	0.255	0.260	0.256	0.004	1.563	0.260	0.257	0.259	0.100	248,188,707
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	176,250	68,666	13	0.388	0.391	0.388	0.391	0.387	0.004	1.034	0.391	0.390	0.400	0.100	439,035,881
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	16,465,824	6,605,456	1,249	0.395	0.405	0.394	0.399	0.395	0.004	1.013	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.100	2,995,052,428
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	94,000	78,035	8	0.830	0.835	0.830	0.835	0.829	0.006	0.724	0.835	0.835	0.900	0.100	104,289,797
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	239,108	67,216	24	0.280	0.282	0.280	0.282	0.280	0.002	0.714	0.282	0.281	0.283	0.100	66,667,620
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,933,823	319,299	62	0.167	0.169	0.162	0.169	0.168	0.001	0.595	0.169	0.165	0.170	0.010	169,000,000
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	31,875,708	6,394,353	1,150	0.201	0.203	0.199	0.202	0.201	0.001	0.498	0.202	0.213	0.202	0.100	874,786,032
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	146,200	32,379	47	0.222	0.223	0.221	0.221	0.220	0.001	0.455	0.221	0.218	0.221	0.100	671,795,476
OM0000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	31,619,263	7,786,341	1,558	0.246	0.249	0.244	0.247	0.246	0.001	0.407	0.247	0.222	0.247	0.040	854,494,240
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INT'L DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	17,698	4,604	10	0.263	0.264	0.260	0.260	0.259	0.001	0.386	0.260	0.244	0.260	0.100	128,974,597
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	6,476,257	2,296,272	185	0.356	0.356	0.353	0.356	0.355	0.001	0.282	0.356	0.356	0.356	0.100	274,191,200
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	4,007,500	1,803,388	10	0.450	0.455	0.450	0.455	0.455	0.000	0.000	0.455	0.450	0.455	0.100	739,805,592
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	100	330	1	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	0.000	0.000	3.300	3.290	3.300	0.100	296,010,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	4,637	2,666	1	0.575	0.575	0.575	0.575	0.575	0.000	0.000	0.575	0.530	0.000	0.100	190,251,808
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	245,000	72,390	14	0.295	0.297	0.290	0.295	0.295	0.000	0.000	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.100	59,000,000
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	4,682	1,585	3	0.340	0.340	0.335	0.335	0.336	-0.001	-0.298	0.335	0.335	0.340	0.100	23,580,650
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	44,700,987	8,105,874	1,375	0.183	0.183	0.179	0.182	0.183	-0.001	-0.546	0.182	0.170	0.182	0.100	1,397,033,032
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	5,350	893	3	0.167	0.167	0.167	0.167	0.168	-0.001	-0.595	0.167	0.167	0.168	0.100	51,354,090
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	69,000	10,350	3	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.151	-0.001	-0.662	0.150	0.140	0.155	0.100	47,312,550
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	1,087	458	2	0.424	0.424	0.420	0.420	0.423	-0.003	-0.709	0.420	0.421	0.424	0.100	21,143,798
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	2,598,977	339,007	93	0.131	0.132	0.130	0.130	0.131	-0.001	-0.763	0.130	0.130	0.131	0.100	290,803,894
OM0000010120	ASYAD SHIPPING	5,364,189	1,297,559	768	0.247	0.247	0.239	0.243	0.245	-0.002	-0.816	0.243	0.245	0.243	0.000	1,265,724,860
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	140,683	16,187	22	0.116	0.116	0.115	0.115	0.116	-0.001	-0.862	0.115	0.114	0.117	0.100	20,125,000
OM0000003000	Al MAHA PETROLEUM PRODS MRKTNG	950	1,094	4	1.161	1.161	1.150	1.150	1.161	-0.011	-0.947	1.150	1.151	1.161	0.100	79,350,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	28,000	2,806	5	0.100	0.102	0.100	0.100	0.101	-0.001	-0.990	0.100	0.091	0.100	0.100	9,000,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	535,955	177,617	21	0.332	0.333	0.328	0.330	0.334	-0.004	-1.198	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.100	214,811,596
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	16,000	2,048	5	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.130	-0.002	-1.538	0.128	0.122	0.128	0.100	16,380,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	131,352	23,405	22	0.181	0.184	0.177	0.177	0.181	-0.004	-2.210	0.177	0.177	0.178	0.100	126,449,922
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	3,892	2,841	2	0.730	0.730	0.730	0.730	0.747	-0.017	-2.276	0.730	0.730	0.745	0.100	87,600,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	4,094,032	1,048,827	195	0.265	0.266	0.250	0.255	0.262	-0.007	-2.672	0.255	0.254	0.255	0.100	372,963,372
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	91,600	16,355	11	0.177	0.184	0.177	0.179	0.184	-0.005	-2.717	0.179	0.173	0.179	0.100	120,804,850
Total	34	168,204,659	48,485,351	7,742												

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	200	50	2	0.242	0.260	0.242	0.260	0.246	0.014	5.691	0.260	0.240	0.269	0.100	14,300,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	582,392	152,386	52	0.259	0.268	0.259	0.268	0.258	0.010	3.876	0.268	0.264	0.265	0.100	536,735,213
OM0000010823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	200	199	1	0.994	0.994	0.994	0.994	0.982	0.012	1.222	0.994	0.994	0.995	0.000	27,181,178
OM0000011151	OMIFCO	11,378,929	2,151,371	633	0.188	0.190	0.188	0.189	0.187	0.002	1.070	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.000	1,264,291,875
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	650	85	1	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.130	0.001	0.769	0.131	0.131	0.132	0.100	12,969,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	79,100	10,470	13	0.133	0.134	0.132	0.133	0.132	0.001	0.758	0.133	0.133	0.133	0.100	29,260,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	1,700	236	2	0.139	0.139	0.138	0.138	0.137	0.001	0.730	0.138	0.130	0.138	0.100	4,140,000
OM0000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	1,500	758	1	0.505	0.505	0.505	0.505	0.502	0.003	0.598	0.505	0.505	0.000	1.000	5,567,648
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	163	35	1	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.214	0.001	0.467	0.215	0.000	0.215	0.100	597,332,547
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	130	410	1	3.150	3.150	3.150	3.150	3.150	0.000	0.000	3.150	2.835	0.000	1.000	11,434,500
OM0000001095	DHOFAR INSURANCE	52,592	17,881	8	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.340	0.345	0.100	39,559,336
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	50,000	3,250	3	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.065	0.068	0.100	19,964,511
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	1,000	161	1	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.000	0.000	0.161	0.000	0.161	0.100	15,746,148
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	49,247	5,301	10	0.109	0.109	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.107	0.108	0.100	90,064,033
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	17,293	3,099	6	0.180	0.180	0.178	0.178	0.178	0.000	0.000	0.178	0.178	0.181	0.100	105,275,765
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	2,920	303	4	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.100	0.104	0.100	18,096,000
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	439,020	90,525	18	0.206	0.208	0.206	0.206	0.207	-0.001	-0.483	0.206	0.208	0.206	0.100	40,721,446
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	11,106	822	1	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.000	0.082	0.100	4,625,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	139,411	29,302	5	0.210	0.212	0.210	0.212	0.215	-0.003	-1.395	0.212	0.204	0.212	0.100	137,947,424
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	3,940	2,246	5	0.570	0.570	0.570	0.570	0.580	-0.010	-1.724	0.570	0.570	0.580	0.100	98,976,938
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	2,700	239	2	0.090	0.090	0.088	0.088	0.090	-0.002	-2.222	0.088	0.085	0.089	0.100	13,688,435
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	242,930	26,140	27	0.111	0.111	0.107	0.107	0.111	-0.004	-3.604	0.107	0.103	0.107	0.100	9,095,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	83,333	2,750	5	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.035	-0.002	-5.714	0.033	0.032	0.037	0.100	2,805,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	238,289	37,285	30	0.163	0.163	0.150	0.151	0.162	-0.011	-6.790	0.159	0.150	0.159	0.100	30,650,953
Total	24	13,378,745	2,535,303	832												

REPORT

Oman's real estate transactions rise 5.4% to OMR1.43 billion by June end

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's property market continued to demonstrate resilience during the second quarter of 2026, with property transaction values rising and foreign investment remaining on an upward trajectory despite ongoing regional geopolitical tensions.

The total value of property transactions reached OMR1.43 billion by the end of June 2026, representing a 5.4% increase compared with the same period last year, according to Savills latest Oman Property Market Q2 2026 report. The number of property contracts also increased by 12.2%, while mortgage activity remained broadly stable, declining marginally by 0.3%, the report added.

Meanwhile, foreign direct investment (FDI) in Oman's real estate sector also continued to grow, reaching OMR602.5 million by the end of first quarter (Q1) of 2026, up 1.2% year-on-year, reflecting sustained investor confidence in the Sultanate's long-term real estate market.

The report highlights that, while Oman experienced a modest economic slowdown during the first quarter, the country's medium-term outlook remains positive. Oxford Economics forecasts gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 6.3% in 2027 and 7.1% in 2028, supported by higher oil production, resilient non-oil activity, continued government investment and the country's business-friendly policy environment.

"Despite ongoing regional uncertainty, Oman's property market continues to demonstrate resilience, supported by improving investor confidence, a stable economic environment and continued government investment," said Ihsan Kharouf, Head of Oman at Savills Middle East.

"The increase in transaction values and sustained foreign investment highlight the market's long-term appeal, while ongoing infrastructure development and economic diversification continue to strengthen the country's investment proposition," he added.

"The market's medium-term outlook remains positive, with demand expected to be supported by Oman's strategic location, expanding logistics sector and continued policy initiatives aimed at attracting investment and sustainable economic growth."

Within the residential market, established communities continued to demonstrate differing performance across rental segments. Al Mouj maintained its position as Oman's premium residential destination, with average monthly apartment rents reaching OMR664, while remaining the market leader in the four-bedroom villa segment with average rents of OMR 1,700. Established residential areas also recorded notable rental growth during the quarter, with apartment rents in Qurum increasing by 16% and four-bedroom villa rents in Madinat Sultan Qaboos rising by 22%, reflecting sustained demand for well-managed accommodation alongside limited supply.

Muscat's office market also remained broadly stable during the second quarter of 2026. Rental rates across the Central Business District (CBD) and Qurum were unchanged, while Ghubra and Azaiba recorded modest rental growth of 4%, reflecting continued occupier demand across established office locations.

Looking ahead, the report expects Oman to remain well positioned to benefit from evolving regional trade patterns. With ports in Salalah, Duqm and Sohar strategically located outside the Strait of Hormuz, the country continues to strengthen its role as a regional logistics hub, supporting increased demand for warehousing, logistics and trucking services while reinforcing the long-term outlook for the commercial property sector.

COMPREHENSIVE PORTFOLIO

BankDhofar showcases financing solutions at Salalah Khareef Real Estate Exhibition

MUSCAT: BankDhofar participated in the Real Estate Exhibition held as part of Salalah Khareef Season 2026, reaffirming its commitment to supporting Oman's real estate sector while showcasing a comprehensive portfolio of financing solutions for individuals, homebuyers, investors and businesses.

The exhibition attracted leading real estate developers, investors, experts and industry specialists from across the Sultanate of Oman and overseas, providing a platform to explore investment opportunities and the latest trends shaping the property market.

BankDhofar's participation reflects its role as a trusted financial partner in advancing Oman's real estate and urban development sectors. It also aligns with the bank's strategy of fostering strong partnerships with government and private sector stakeholders to support sustainable development and stimulate investment in line with Oman Vision 2040.

During the exhibition, the bank highlighted its wide range of home financing solutions tailored to meet diverse customer requirements. The offerings are designed to support customers looking to purchase homes, build new properties, renovate existing homes, or transfer mortgage facilities from other banks.

The event also enabled BankDhofar to engage directly with developers, investors and prospective customers, while demonstrating how its financing products can help accelerate growth in the real estate sector, a key pillar of Oman's economic diversification agenda.

BankDhofar's home finance solutions offer competitive interest rates starting from 4.35%, with streamlined application procedures, quick processing times and flexible repayment tenures of up to 25 years, helping customers plan their finances with confidence and realise their homeownership ambitions.

The bank also provides financing of up to OMR 350,000 or 90% of the property's value, supported by a variety of financing options designed to accommodate different financial circumstances and investment objectives.

Through its participation in the exhibition, BankDhofar reinforced its commitment to supporting initiatives that strengthen the real estate market, promote investment and contribute to sustainable urban and economic development in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

BankDhofar serves customers through a network of more than 145 branches across the Sultanate, delivering a comprehensive suite of banking and financing solutions for individuals, SMEs and corporate clients.

DOLLAR HELD STEADY

Gold edges lower as markets eye Fed decision on rates

SINGAPORE: Gold prices edged lower yesterday as the dollar held steady and market participants awaited the Federal Reserve's monetary policy decision for signs on inflation and the trajectory of US interest rates.

Spot gold slipped 0.1 percent to $4,021.87 per ounce, while US gold futures for August delivery declined 0.4 percent to $4,021.70 per ounce.

The Fed is widely expected to keep rates unchanged at the conclusion of its policy meeting later.

The Bank of England and the Bank of Japan are also expected to hold rates steady on Thursday and Friday respectively, while cautioning over rising inflation.

A stronger dollar, hovering near a one-month high, made the greenback-priced metal more expensive for holders of other currencies. Among other precious metals, spot silver rose 0.1 percent to $57.20 per ounce, platinum gained 0.1 percent to $1,605.96 per ounce, while palladium dipped 0.1 percent to $1,268.35 per ounce. **-QNA**

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Contact : 91257663

PROCUREMENT
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Contact : 75123132

ENGINEER
Diploma holder, experienced MEP engineer with 12yrs of expertise in electrical, mechanical and plumbing works, possesses a valid D/L. Looking for a suitable opportunity in Oman.
Contact, WA +968 79880602, +91 7200747471

SUPPLY CHAIN
Indian, male, MBA with 17 yrs Oman experience in supply chain (procurement, warehousing & logistics) SAP knowledge, looking for suitable placement. Ready to join immediately.
Contact : 92813310

FINANCE
Senior finance professional CA(Inter) MBA expertise dynamic and results-driven finance professional with over 20 yrs of progressive experience in financial leadership roles across multinational corporations in Oman. Holds a strong track record in strategic financial planning,etc.
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ACCOUNTS/FINANCE
40yr female (MBA finance) as accountant 14 yrs experience in Oman with D/L & own car. Contact: 98582376

Indian finance professional, male, with 32+ yrs of experience in financial management, budgeting, and accounting, having Omani D/L with car & valid visa with NOC. Contact: +968-97078438. Email : santhu2006@hotmail.com

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE
Doing CA, 30 yrs experience in accounts, trading, FMCG, manufacturing unit, can handle accounts department individually till finalisation and Vat returns. Looking for a suitable position. Immediate joining Contact 74169035

ENGINEER
Mechanical Engineer with 11+yrs experience in projects & marketing in Oman having valid D/L. Seeking suitable placement. Contact : 91162085

ENGINEER
Pakistani male, Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, having 10+yrs experience as Sales Engineer in UAE,15 yrs experience as operation manager in Oman with D/L, looking for job. Contact: 99495131. Email : Manzoor.ahmed1997@gmail.com

Biomedical Engineer, Clinical engineer (B.Tech)- female skilled in MATLAB, Proteus, LabView. Contact: 79902099

ENGINEER
Cep electrical engineer seeks placement. Contact: 94768845

LOGISTICS
Experienced male seeking a position as Senior warehouse, logistics inventory lead position. Contact: +968 9583 9151 Email:jpeer78@gmail.com

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Sales Exe. 17+yrs GCC retail, outdoor exp. Any sales. Arabic, hindi, malayalam. Omani license. Contact: +96898353365

SALES/MARKETING
Indian M(36) MBA with Oman 10 yrs exp in FMCG industry in Oman Contact: 79755795

Indian male, BBA, 20 yrs experience in Sales & marketing in Oman,holding valid Oman D/L seeks suitable placement. Contact: 93011232. Email: jitinjoshua920@gmail.com

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Deteriorating situation in West Bank hampers relief efforts: UN

The UN Office of OCHA said the situation is so bad that some partners have had to resort to providing remote services, including mental health and psychosocial support, for people in hard-to-reach areas

UNITED NATIONS: Movement restrictions and increasing insecurity, including settler attacks, across the West Bank are constraining relief efforts, UN humanitarians said.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the situation is so bad that some partners have had to resort to providing remote services, including mental health and psychosocial support, for people in hard-to-reach areas.

OCHA said that since the weekend, settler attacks have been recorded mainly in Nablus, Qalqiliya and Jenin governorates.

"Israeli forces have reportedly imposed a closure on Nablus City and its surroundings, and on Tell village, where some of the recent killings took place," the office said. "Concerns have also been raised over the establishment of a settlement outpost closer to where Palestinians live."

Ramiz Alakbarov, UN deputy special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, on Tuesday warned the Security Council of the "rapidly deteriorating" situation in the West Bank.

He said the increasing violence has resulted in civilian casualties, displacement, damage to property, and growing insecurity across affected communities and that a wider escalation is increasingly likely unless immediate steps are taken to reverse course.

Alakbarov urged Israel to take immediate and effective measures to prevent settler violence, protect Palestinian communities, and ensure that all perpetrators are held accountable. He added that Palestinians must unequivocally reject violence and incitement and take all necessary measures to prevent attacks against Israelis.

OCHA said the reported instruction by Israeli leadership for the military to take over a fourth refugee camp in the West Bank could have a devastating humanitarian impact on thousands of people.

"Since last year, Israeli operations in the camps of Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams have displaced more than 30,000 people, including children, and destroyed homes, livelihoods and essential services," the office said. "These operations have also deepened humanitarian needs."

It said that the ability of local authorities and international humanitarian organizations, including the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to help is impeded by harsh restrictions and financial constraints.

OCHA said Israeli forces and municipal authorities on Monday forcibly entered UNRWA's oldest vocational training facility, the Kalandia Training Centre in East Jerusalem, where UNRWA reported they gathered and confined educational staff and students while conducting operations. It is the second incursion by Israeli forces into that compound in less than a month.

"Such actions are a violation of the inviolability of United Nations premises," the office said. "They also impede joint efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to people in need."

Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for the UN secretary-general, said that Israeli forces arrived at the UNRWA facility during class time. He said that Israeli personnel gathered staff and students together and confined them for the duration of the operation without presenting documentation to explain the purpose of the entry.

In the Gaza Strip, OCHA said that it remains deeply concerned over the impact of airstrikes on civilians.

The office said that since Friday, its partners have recorded military activities across all of Gaza's governorates. Airstrikes, shelling, gunfire and naval fire have been reported primarily in areas west of the so-called Yellow Line, spanning less than half of the strip, where most people are crowded in harsh conditions.

"Several incidents, including those resulting in fatalities and injuries, have reportedly affected civilians," OCHA said, adding that one of those airstrikes, on Saturday, hit the vicinity of Al Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, less than 200 meters away from two UN premises.

The office said that further encroachment of the "Yellow Line" into populated areas through the placement of yellow cement blocks had also been reported.

Israeli colonists graze livestock among homes in Bedouin community

Meanwhile, Israeli colonists grazed their sheep among Palestinian homes and along the internal roads of the Inkhayleh al-Kasarat Bedouin community near the town of Anata, east of occupied Jerusalem, on Wednesday, in yet another act of aggression and part of the ongoing violations against Palestinian residents.

The Jerusalem Governorate reported that colonists brought their livestock into the community, allowing them to graze between homes and on internal roads. They also positioned the animals in front of residents' houses, obstructing residents' movement and preventing them from reaching their workplaces.

It added that such actions coincide with ongoing daily harassment targeting women and children, as part of a systematic policy of harassment aimed at forcing residents to leave the village.

— Agencies

2026-2031 TERM

Keiko Fujimori sworn in as Peruvian president

LIMA: Keiko Fujimori was sworn in as president of Peru for the 2026-2031 term at a ceremony held at the Legislative Palace in Lima on Tuesday, where she outlined a "clear path" for the Andean country's development.

After receiving the presidential sash, Fujimori delivered her first speech as president, pledging to work toward measurable goals and maintain constant accountability.

In the "immediate term," her government will focus on "two fronts" of national emergency — mitigating the El Nino weather phenomenon and prioritising public safety.

She plans to launch a national contingency plan to "break with the logic of delayed response" and usher in an era of timely prevention. With that in mind, she said, her government will aim to "reclaim" every neighbourhood, highway and public space for Peruvian families, using all the tools the Constitution makes available to combat organized crime, drug trafficking and illegal mining.

To implement urgent measures against crime and extreme weather, she announced that the executive branch will issue emergency decrees and request that Congress grant the government legislative powers. — Xinhua

COUNTERTERRORISM

Could US airstrikes stop insurgency in Mali?

BAMAKO: For years,Mali has struggled to contain a growing insurgency, particularly in the country's northern region. Following the withdrawal of French troops and despite the authorities' close cooperation with Russia, JNIM continues to expand its influence. Now, a new actor could enter the conflict: the United States (US).

Over the past years, JNIM has developed into the most powerful force in the Sahel.

"We are no longer talking about a group that only carries out isolated attacks," explains Tobias Rüttershof, head of the Sahel Programme of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), which is affiliated with Germany's CDU party and has an office in Mali, in an interview with DW. "In many regions, JNIM effectively controls the security situation, collects taxes, mediates local conflicts and in some areas is more present than the Malian state."

Why the US is considering attacking JNIM

According to the US National Counterterrorism Centre, JNIM was responsible for more than 1,200 deaths in 2025, making it the second-deadliest terrorist organisation in the world. Particularly concerning is the group's geographic expansion: JNIM is now active not only in Burkina Faso and Niger, but increasingly in the coastal states of West Africa.

The US government is divided over the question of direct military strikes. Supporters such as Sebastian Gorka, senior director for counterterrorism at the National Security Council, argue that JNIM is one of the world's most dangerous organisations and that its advance must be halted.

Russia's security strategy in Mali has so far failed to deliver results, according to Rüttershof.

"After the withdrawal of French forces, the UN mission MINUSMA, and European training missions, Mali's military government argued that Russia could stabilise the security situation more effectively," Gorka told DW. "That expectation has not been fulfilled so far. On the contrary, JNIM appears stronger today than it was several years ago."

Following military coups in 2020 and 2021, Bamako increasingly distanced itself from Western partners and expanded cooperation with Russia.

Mali's lukewarm reaction to US potential airstrikes

The Malian government has responded cautiously to reports of possible US airstrikes.

"We have received absolutely no confirmation from the United States," Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop said. "But I can assure you that Mali is not simply sitting and waiting for others to come and solve our problem." Mali, he said, is relying on its own security forces and on preserving its sovereignty. Public opinion is also divided. One resident of Bamako told DW: "Anything that ultimately brings us peace, throughout the entire territory of the country, is welcome."

Another resident pointed to the close cooperation with Russia: "Russian forces are already present on our soil, and now the Americans also want to come. Our authorities know better than anyone else what is good for the population and what harms us. I think the option of an American military intervention in Mali is not a bad idea."

Risks of escalation, more radicalisation

Abdoulmoumouni Abbas, an expert on preventing radicalisation in the Sahel, warns against overestimating the effectiveness of US military strikes. Experiences from US-supported counterterrorism operations in Nigeria provide important lessons.

"The results of such operations, including those in Nigeria, raise many questions. The initial strikes actually failed to achieve their objective in northern Nigeria, in the states of Sokoto and Kebbi," Abbas told DW.

While targeted attacks could weaken JNIM's leadership structures, the underlying causes of the conflict, such as poverty, weak institutions, and ethnic tensions, would remain unresolved. Moreover, retaliation against Western interests in the region could follow.

"It becomes more problematic when military actions cause civilian casualties. Every civilian-related mistake can be exploited by JNIM for propaganda purposes and used to recruit new members", Rüttershof told DW.

In 2025, for example, the group carried out a months-long blockade of major fuel shipments to Bamako and in 2026 participated in coordinated attacks on military installations across several regions of Mali.

Mali's geopolitical importance for the US

A US intervention would have not only security implications but also geopolitical consequences. The Sahel has become an arena of international competition. Russia has significantly expanded its influence in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger in recent years.

"If Washington were actually to take military action, this would not only be about counterterrorism," said Rüttershof. "It would also be a signal that the United States wants to remain capable of acting as a security actor."

For Mali's leaders, this would raise the question of how to navigate the gap between the interests of external powers without losing their own political autonomy.

Foreign Minister Diop emphasised: "What we expect from a partner is that they come to Mali and ask Mali what Mali actually needs."

The conflict in Mali cannot be permanently resolved through military means alone, Rüttershof warned. In some regions, people experience the state only through corrupt security forces, while schools, healthcare and functioning courts are absent. — DW

FOREIGN MINISTRY

Bangladesh PM invited for BRICS Summit in New Delhi

DHAKA: Bangladesh's Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has been invited to attend the BRICS summit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the host country, according to the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry.

"We have received the invitation and forwarded it to the Prime Minister's office for consideration, and the decision will be made by the Prime Minister", a Bangladesh Foreign Ministry official told ANI.

"As the current BIMSTEC chair, Bangladesh has received an invitation for Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to take part in the BRICS Summit outreach session. This comes ahead of 2027, when BIMSTEC will mark its 30th anniversary, and Bangladesh is scheduled to host the BIMSTEC Summit in Dhaka", he added.

The official said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has invited Bangladesh's Prime Minister to join the outreach segment of the 18th BRICS Summit, scheduled for September 12 and 13 in New Delhi.

The BRICS group of emerging economies is a coalition of developing nations from various regions. The outreach session typically includes selected non-member countries and regional leaders. Currently, the eleven BRICS member states are Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia.

India's BRICS Chairmanship in 2026 is guided by the overarching theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability ".

BRICS serves as a useful platform for consultation and cooperation on contemporary issues having global as well as regional significance, and issues of global political and economic governance.

Bangladesh has expressed interest in becoming a BRICS member, with China and Russia voicing support.

Outreach session

In this context, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman is likely to join the outreach session of the BRICS Summit, and may also hold a bilateral meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Earlier on July 16, AKM Shamsul Islam, Defence Adviser to Bangladesh Prime Minister, hailed India's leadership role in advancing the security cooperation among BIMSTEC countries and urged deepening collaboration for enhanced maritime and cyber security.

He made the remarks at the 5th BIMSTEC National Security Advisor's Meeting here in New Delhi.

Islam said, "I commend India, as the Lead Country for the Security Sector, for its sustained leadership in advancing BIMSTEC security cooperation. Bangladesh remains committed to working closely with all Member States to translate our shared security vision into practical and measurable cooperation."

— ANI

LIFESTYLE

Fighting wildfires: Why one strategy won't fit all forests

With Spain declaring an emergency, France seeking EU help and Canada dealing with more than 900 hotspots, wildfires are out of control. Monocultures and climate change are partly to blame but can we stop the burning?

© Cole Burston/AFP

Intense, relentless heat waves and prolonged drought have triggered another severe wildfire season across Europe this summer, with crews battling massive blazes in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, the UK and even Norway.

Similar conditions have also fueled fires in the United States and Canada. For weeks, hundreds of wildfires have ripped throughout the vast boreal forest stretching from the Yukon in the north to Newfoundland in the east. As of July 24, they've wiped out at least 3.3 million hectares (8.1 million acres) — an area larger than Belgium.

As toxic smoke shrouded major cities, also in the US, President Donald Trump accused Canada on social media of "not properly maintaining their Forests" and deliberately neglecting "basic Forest Management and Debris Removal."

'No one-size-fits-all' solution

While eliminating flammable fuel is part of the job for fire experts, effective management goes beyond just clearing debris. And in Canada, clearing brush from such an extensive, remote area would be impossible. "There is no one-size-fits-all" solution, said Amy Duchelle, a senior forestry officer with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

"In forest and fire management, you have to work with the ecosystem type that you have by understanding its fire history," said Sophie Wilkinson, an assistant professor and wildfire expert at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. "There are many different ecosystem types, such as upland forests and wetlands, and each of those has a unique relationship with fire."

But even though Canada's boreal forests have adapted to live with fire, Wilkinson said frequent extreme heat waves and extended droughts linked to human-caused climate change are drying out trees and undergrowth, "making managing wildfires infinitely more difficult." High-intensity fires are more likely to "spread more rapidly and burn more aggressively, both of which hinder management options and efficacy" — even in places previously too humid to burn.

Tropical forests didn't evolve to coexist with fire — no thick, resistant bark or plants suited to germinate after a blaze. Here, it's crucial to stop deforestation linked to mining and agriculture, preserve the canopy and vegetation that creates the humid, fire-resistant habitat, and train people to immediately respond to any fire risk.

"Conversely, fragmented forests in Europe may not be fire-adapted, but may have other challenges [that weaken forests] such as invasive species," said Wilkinson.

In Europe, management solutions can include cross-border monitoring and protection, and prioritising fire-resistant vegetation instead of highly flammable conifers. That also means bringing back diverse tree species that contribute to more resilient forests, which have dwindled due to farming and exploitation over the centuries.

Fighting fire with fire

In some places, fire itself is key to preserving forests.

"Our boreal forest is a fire-dependent forest — it needs fire for health," said Amy Cardinal Christianson, an Indigenous Metis fire specialist in western Canada. She said a certain number of blazes are part of a natural cycle, creating natural firebreaks, stimulating fresh plant growth and restoring ecosystems — all of which can slow the spread of wildfires.

Research has shown that certain forests have evolved to live with periodic fires, which act as a sort of reset. The flames can clear the way for smaller plants struggling to compete with unchecked undergrowth, for example, and burned material also releases nutrients that enrich the soil.

But Canada's wildfire season is now accelerating the normal, healthy cycle — starting earlier, lasting longer and becoming harder to control.

It's also adding to Canada's carbon emissions: the 2023 record fire season, which wiped out five times the annual average of forestland, added 23% to the world's annual wildfire emissions. Some of the pollutants even made it as far as western Europe.

Christianson, a former research scientist with the Canadian Forest Service and now director of fire stewardship with the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, said older forest management practices ideas introduced by Europeans to support the timber industry — strict regulation, complete suppression and a focus on fast-growing monocultures — don't fit into the Canadian context.

"By excluding fire, we've actually accelerated the risk," she said, adding that periodic controlled burns can actually help reduce the risk of out-of-control infernos.

Global fire hub aims to share knowledge

Duchelle told DW how skilled pros who've dealt with forest fires for decades are now seeing blazes even they can't control — "the fire is moving too fast, the flames are too high, the heat is too intense."

Faced with these challenges, the focus has shifted from suppressing fires to reducing risk, preparing for changing conditions and building post-fire resilience. In 2023, the FAO set up the Global Fire Management Hub to help countries confronting wildfires to train and work together, sharing their knowledge.

A major focus is using new technology and data to direct monitoring and response, along with a digital platform to share information, and developing international interoperability and community-based management.

Christianson has worked with the Fire Hub to develop a network focused on Indigenous knowledge and practices, after setting up an independent network of more than 200 local guardians in Canada to help manage wildfire response.

That includes cultural burning — small, low-intensity deliberate blazes adapted to specific landscapes which help eliminate decaying organic matter in a controlled manner, protect wildfire and biodiversity and preserve local cultures.

Prescribed burns, which are generally done by government agencies, are also beneficial and have been employed for years. But they tend to be larger and don't always take the local environment into account. They may also be done in the summer when conditions are drier, to speed up the process, increasing the risk of escape.

Cultural burning usually happens in early spring or late fall, based on snow and other environmental factors. But climate change has also shifted that schedule, and Christianson said it helps to be familiar with the landscape to notice those changes. "We usually would burn in April or May," she said of her property. "This year, I burned a bunch in February."

'Healthy landscapes' key to living with fire

Speaking with DW from her home in Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, Christianson said while the same burning practices can't always be applied across diverse cultures, they've still been able to share proven ideas and techniques internationally.

"The really cool thing about Indigenous cultural burning practices is that there's a lot of overarching similarities, a responsibility that we all feel to steward the landscape, and that fire is one of those important ways that we can do that," said Christianson, who has also introduced the practice to her daughters.

"The overall goal for most Indigenous folks that I've talked to is achieving healthy landscapes."

That means looking at the bigger picture — restoring wetlands to make an ecosystem more resilient in the face of fires, or reintroducing native species like the bison in Canada, which once numbered in the millions and help control fires by grazing on vegetation encroaching on grasslands and forests.

The practice has also recently been reintroduced in Europe, with horses and European bison in Spain and Portugal.

"A healthy landscape [...] can more easily adapt to these fire events that we're seeing," said Christianson.

Amazon forest fires at historic low in 2025

One country that has seen recent success in tackling forest fires is Brazil.

"Brazil's been quite effective in bringing down not only their deforestation rate, but also the incidence of fires in the Amazon," said Duchelle, crediting cooperation between state, municipal and federal agencies and a national policy on integrated fire management. "[This success] didn't happen by accident."

In 2025, forest fires across South America's largest nation hit a historic low, burning around 12.7 million hectares, an area roughly the size of Greece.

New data from environmental monitoring network MapBiomas showed just under a quarter of the total burned area was in the Amazon rainforest, the world's largest and a key regulator of global climate. That's an 80% drop compared with 2024, and around 56% lower than the 40-year historical average.

The Cerrado savanna in central Brazil, however, where fire is part of the ecosystem, continued to burn at similar rates, due in part to prolonged drought. Experts have warned that the incoming El Nino weather pattern could bring even drier weather, amplifying the fire risk.

"While treating our forests can help us adapt to the rise in fire activity, addressing the root cause of that rise — climate change — is likely the best mitigation strategy available to us," said Wilkinson. - DW

SPORTS

WI captain Chase dedicates 90-run win over Pakistan to late Sobers

Sobers, who passed away on July 17, represented the West Indies in 93 Test matches between 1954 and 1974, scoring 8,032 runs at an average of 57.78, including 26 centuries, while also claiming 235 wickets

PORT OF SPAIN: West Indies Test captain Roston Chase dedicated his team's 90-run victory over Pakistan in the first Test to the late legendary all-rounder Sir Garfield Sobers, noting the coincidence between his age and the margin of victory.

Sobers, who passed away on July 17, represented the West Indies in 93 Test matches between 1954 and 1974, scoring 8,032 runs at an average of 57.78, including 26 centuries, while also claiming 235 wickets.

Speaking in a video shared by Cricket West Indies, Chase said the Cricket icon remained an inspiration for everyone in the West Indies dressing room and hoped the cricket great would be proud of the team's performance.

"On behalf of the West Indies senior cricket men's team, we'd like to dedicate this victory to the late great Sir Garfield Sobers. He's a legend of the game, a hero of everyone in this dressing room. He's done everything on the cricket field and is so iconic that he would have been 90 years old today and we won by 90 runs, so it was destined for him," Chase said.

The West Indies captain said the team had discussed making the victory special for Sobers and hoped the legendary cricketer was "smiling" on them.

"We had the chat about trying to make him feel special in his grave, and I hope he's smiling on us right now. So, Sir Garfield Sobers, I want to say thank you for everything that you've done for West Indies cricket. And we've tried to make you proud. We hope you're happy and may you continue to rest in peace," Chase added.

West Indies defeated Pakistan by 90 runs in the first Test to take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

Jayden Seales claimed five wickets as the hosts bowled Pakistan out for 120 while chasing 211. Pakistan suffered their eighth consecutive away Test defeat, while West Indies secured an unassailable lead in the series.

Babar Azam scored a half-century but ran out of partners, while injured Shan Masood struggled with a fractured finger.

The victory was dedicated to West Indies legend Sir Garfield Sobers on what would have been his 90th birthday.

The second Test between West Indies and Pakistan commences in Port of Spain on August 2. -ANI

CENTRE-BACK

Germany veteran Rudiger considered international retirement after WC exit

BERLIN: Germany and Real Madrid centre-back Antonio Rudiger considered retirement from international football after the four-time champions' shocking round of 32 exit in the recently concluded FIFA World Cup; however, he has not made any official decision yet.

As per a report from Sports Bild as quoted by Goal.com, Rudiger could now change his mind after the tournament. The 33-year-old is keeping his options open, whether to retire following manager Julian Nagelsmann's resignation and the appointment of Jurgen Klopp to the post or continue wearing the national shirt.

Also, whether Klopp wants to rely on the Real Madrid star is unclear, with the new head coach wanting to gradually call up current international players and the players he has taken a look at and inform them of his plans. The process, as per the report, has just started now, and the players who want to retire have so far held themselves back from making any statement about their international future.

During the FIFA WC, Rudiger was the third-choice centre-back behind the established duo of Jonathan Tah and Nico Schlotterbeck. When Nico suffered an injury during the second group stage game against Ivory Coast and had to be ruled out of the competition, Rudiger was a starter in the final group stage match against Ecuador and the group stage match against Paraguay, both of which Germany lost. Since his debut in 2014, the footballer has earned 86 national caps so far.

For Klopp, the question if the 33-year-old is still a part of his core, remains. During his introductory presser on being appointed as the head coach, the German hinted that he wants to carry out a personnel overhaul and opened the door to newcomers.

Alongside Tah and Schlotterbeck, who are likely to solidify their places under Klopp, several young centre-backs are also there who could be a part of the rebuild, such as Malick Thiaw (Newcastle United), Finn Jeltsch (VfB Stuttgart) and Yann Bisseck (Inter Milan). Rudiger still has a chance, as Klopp is still unclear on the experienced legs that he still wants in the squad to help build Germany's future.

Since his international debut in 2014, Rudiger has made consistent appearances for the national side. But before Euro 2016, he suffered a cruciate ligament rupture and had to watch the competition from the sidelines.

He was a part of the FIFA Confederations Cup triumph in 2017, but at the major tournaments, his track record has largely been disappointing, with group-stage exits at the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, a last-16 exit at Euro 2021, a quarter-final at Euro 2024 and now a round-of-32 exit at the 2026 World Cup.

Klopp will be naming his first squad as a Germany head coach in September for the UEFA Nations League and will be making his debut against the Netherlands. Three days later, Klopp will play his first home game in Augsburg against Greece. -ANI

ICC WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

Shan Masood's fractured finger affected us: Babar

PORT OF SPAIN: Pakistan captain Babar Azam has confirmed that former skipper Shan Masood suffered a finger fracture during the first ICC World Test Championship match against the West Indies in Trinidad.

Masood sustained the injury while batting in Pakistan's first innings during their 90-run defeat in the first Test match.

The injury forced him to move down to No. 8 in the second innings as Pakistan suffered their eighth consecutive Test defeat away from home, according to the ICC.

After the match, Babar was asked about Masood's change in batting position and revealed that the left-handed batter had fractured his finger.

"Yes, Shan Masood's injury affected us because, unfortunately, his finger is fractured, so we definitely missed him," Babar confirmed, as quoted by ICC.

"At the same time, when you're facing the new ball, you have to survive the first 20 overs, build partnerships, and then, as the ball gets older, the pitch becomes easier to bat on. We couldn't put together those partnerships."

Babar provided some brief resistance on Tuesday as Pakistan were skittled for just 120 in their second innings, with the experienced right-hander scoring his 32nd half-century in Tests only to run out of partners late as Jayden Seales (5/20) ran through the visitors' batting order.

The loss left Pakistan rooted to the bottom of the World Test Championship standings, and Babar suggested it was their top order that had let the side down.

"We played good cricket in the last few days, but today we were not up to the mark as a batting unit," Babar said.

"The surface is good and we expected the new ball to move for which we were prepared ... but I think they bowled very well and used the conditions nicely. We'll sit together and discuss these things because, while the result isn't go our way, we can certainly address our mistakes. We'll do our best to correct them and ensure we improve going forward," he added.

While Jayden Seales impressed for the West Indies on the final day of the Test, it was fellow fast bowler Justin Greaves who was named Player of the Match for his outstanding performance in Pakistan's first innings. Greaves made history by claiming his maiden five-wicket haul in Tests, including five consecutive wicket maidens, according to ICC.

He added two more wickets on Tuesday to help the West Indies secure victory and strengthen their eighth position in the World Test Championship standings. The right-arm pacer also said he gained valuable experience during the match by observing Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Abbas.

"We came in and tried to be just as disciplined as possible," Greaves said. "I mimicked Mohammad Abbas' fuller lengths when he bowled against us in the first and second innings and it pretty much worked out for us."

The second Test between West Indies and Pakistan commences in Port of Spain on August 2. -ANI

CALL TO BACK THE PLAN

FIFA plans to form new commercial subsidiary and sell stake

NEW YORK: FIFA plans to create a new commercial subsidiary valued at \$20 billion (roughly €17.5 billion) and sell non-controlling minority stakes to investors, world football's governing body announced on Tuesday. It called on its 211 member federations to back the plan, saying that if they voted in favor they "would benefit immediately from increased funding."

As soon as the news emerged, European football federation UEFA issued fierce criticism of the plan, saying it "crosses a line that football's governing institutions should never cross."

The push comes immediately after this summer's World Cup hosted primarily in the US, with FIFA listing a series of potential investors and advisors from the country. Infantino's close relationship with US President Donald Trump had already prompted criticism in some corners prior to Tuesday's announcement, which came a day after Infantino issued a fiery statement defending the tournament in the US and the controversies that accompanied it.

What did FIFA say about the plan?

FIFA said that it planned to set up a "new FIFA-owned and controlled subsidiary consolidating FIFA's commercial and event operations" that it would call the FIFA Forward Enterprise, or FFE.

It said this company would be valued at \$20 billion and that FFE would aim to raise up to \$4.2 billion "this year" by "carefully selecting long-term investors who will purchase minority, non-controlling interests in FFE."

FIFA claimed that "all net benefits of FFE will be reinvested back into football worldwide," without clarifying what constituted "net benefits," or what gains investors then stood to make.

FFE would be responsible for FIFA's commercial rights like broadcast, sponsorship, ticketing and licensing contracts, the statement said. By far the most valuable of these for FIFA are those connected to the World Cup, although other competitions like the recently and controversially relaunched FIFA Club World Cup also apply.

Ahead of this month's World Cup final in New York, FIFA President Gianni Infantino had told member associations that he wanted to "unleash the commercial potential and opportunity" of the organization.

Infantino tried to portray the changes as seeking to more evenly spread out football funding and to "democratise" the game, seemingly in a pitch aimed at less wealthy (and more numerous) football associations in particular.

"As its global governing body, FIFA is responsible for making sure the game reaches every corner of the world, and that the value it creates supports federations and communities everywhere. Our next stage of growth needs a structure built for it, one where the commercial side of the game operates as a focused, dedicated business, with its value shared more and better all around the world," Infantino said in FIFA's press release.

"We intend to invest heavily even in the smallest or most remote parts of the footballing world, places that are too often passed over," Infantino said, championing the new investment scheme dubbed the FIFA Fast Forward Programme, or FFFP.

How did UEFA react?

FIFA's press release was published soon after an article on the website of UK newspaper The Times — followed soon after by the Financial Times, Bloomberg and others — began attracting international attention.

The European football federation UEFA issued a scathing response online soon after the news broke.

"This crosses a line that football's governing insitutions should never cross," it said. "UEFA takes it extremely seriously. So should every National Football Association. So should every stakeholder: leagues, clubs, players, supporters, governments, and everyone who cares about the future of the game."

UEFA said that the "soul and governance of football are not assets to trade — especially with zero transparency as to who gains financially."

UEFA and FIFA have clashed repeated in recent months and years under Infantino's stewardship, including during the World Cup this summer.

"None of us are the owners of football. It is not FIFA's to sell," UEFA argued.

UEFA, however, only represents around one quarter of FIFA's member associations, so its opposition is by no means guaranteed to halt the plan.

What do we know about the proposed investors and advisors?

FIFA said its structure would be similar to "other sports governing bodies with dedicated commercial subsidiaries," and said that investors would be selected "against clear long-term, governance and strategic criteria."

It described ideal investors as long-term partners who could contribute capital and commercial expertise to help FIFA's goal of growing the game.

"Subject to these final agreements and required approvals, Thrive Eternal, a permanent capital holding company, is expected to lead the proposed investor group for FFE," FIFA said, referring to the holding company set up this year by Joshua Kushner, brother of US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior negotiator Jared Kushner.

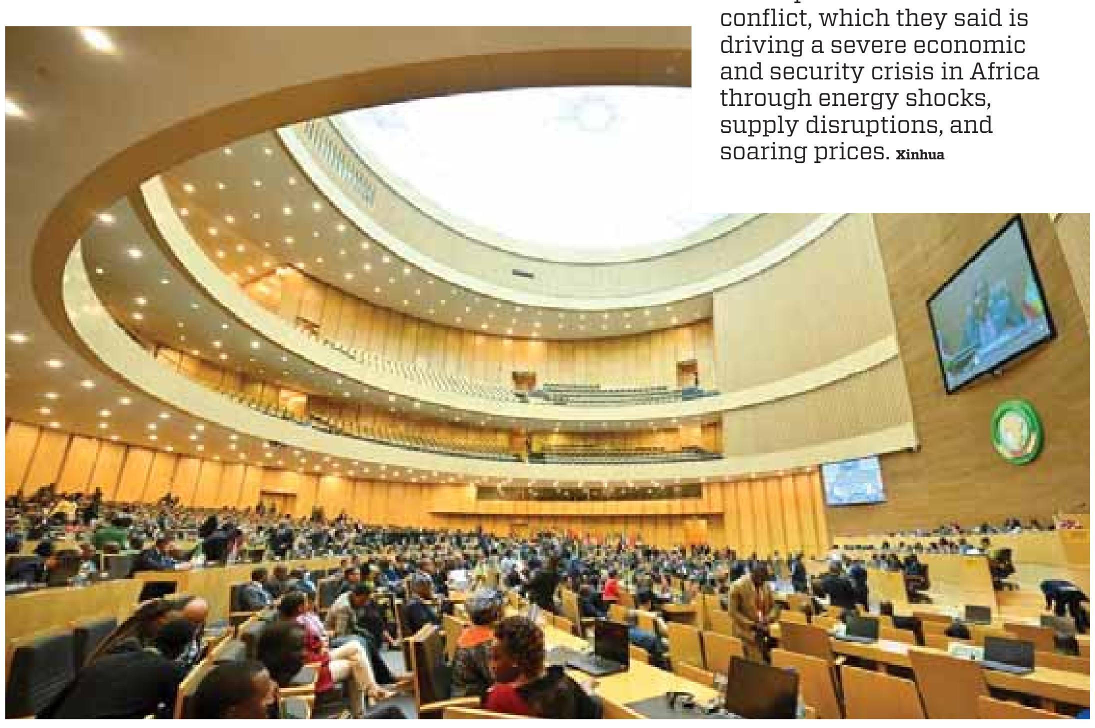
Infantino's relations with Trump came under scrutiny more than once amid the World Cup process — perhaps most notably when FIFA overturned the red card suspension of US striker Folarin Balogun ahead of defeat against Belgium, and when Donald Trump was given the inaugural "FIFA Peace Prize" in a much-mocked event last December.

This came weeks before the abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and then the war with Iran.

FIFA also said that Greg Maffei, the CEO of BANN Ventures and formerly "the CEO of Liberty Media during its acquisition and ownership of Formula 1" motor racing, "has been a key commercial advisor and will remain involved in the establishment of FFE in this next phase."-DW

IN PICTURES

Remains of houses re-emerging as reservoir's water level drops in Banten province, Indonesia
An aerial drone photo shows remains of houses re-emerging as the reservoir's water level drops in Lebak regency, Banten province, Indonesia. Due to the impact of El Nino, the dry season in Indonesia has been more intense and prolonged this year, with heightened risks of wildfires and droughts. Xinhua



African leaders raise concern over resumption of conflict in Middle East
This photo shows the 49th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union (AU) held in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. African leaders have raised alarm over the resumption of the Middle East conflict, which they said is driving a severe economic and security crisis in Africa through energy shocks, supply disruptions, and soaring prices. Xinhua

World Snooker Shanghai Masters 2026
Ronnie O'Sullivan of England reacts during the first round match between Ronnie O'Sullivan of England and Liu Linhao of China at the World Snooker Shanghai Masters 2026 in Shanghai, east China. Xinhua

Foreign students practice Tai Chi at a martial arts school
Foreign students practice Tai Chi at a martial arts school in Chenjiagou in Wenxian County, central China's Henan Province. This summer, numerous foreign enthusiasts of Tai Chi visited Chenjiagou, a small village in Henan Province where Tai Chi originated, to practice Tai Chi and experience Chinese martial arts culture. Xinhua

Film 'Batwara 1947' trailer launch in Mumbai
Bollywood actors Sunny Deol, Karan Deol, Abhimanyu Singh, Shabana Azmi, film director Rajkumar Santoshi, screenwriter and lyricist Javed Akhtar and others pose for a group photograph during the trailer launch of their upcoming Hindi film Batwara 1947, in Mumbai. ANI Photo

Renowned woodcarver showcases traditional alebrijes in Mexico
Isaias Jimenez introduces his experience participating in a woodcarving competition in China in San Antonio Arrazola, Oaxaca, Mexico. Isaias Jimenez, 65, is a renowned woodcarver from the Mexican state of Oaxaca. He learned the craft from his father, Manuel Jimenez, and continues to create vividly painted wooden sculptures of fantastical creatures using traditional carving and painting techniques. Known as "alebrijes," these colourful, distinctively shaped works have become an iconic expression of Oaxacan folk art. Xinhua

People explore exposed riverbed of the Danube River in Budapest
People explore the exposed riverbed of the Danube River in Budapest. The water level of the Danube River in Budapest fell to a record low of 31 centimetres on Tuesday, according to Hungary's General Directorate of Water Management. Xinhua

ROUND-UP

Ford Territory: Smart luxury meets modern performance for summer

Designed specifically for urban explorers and families who demand dynamic capability without sacrificing peace of mind, this SUV, designed specifically for urban explorers and families, is built to help motorists get the most out of their summer journeys across the Sultanate of Oman

MUSCAT: The compact SUV segment in the Sultanate has a clear standout this season.

The stylish Ford Territory has taken centre stage, offering a compelling blend of contemporary road presence, premium comfort and efficient performance.

Designed specifically for urban explorers and families who demand dynamic capability without sacrificing peace of mind, this SUV is built to help motorists get the most out of their summer journeys across Oman.

Visually, the Ford Territory is crafted to command attention on the road. Its bold front end is anchored by an integrated horizontal grille bar and signature full LED lighting that significantly improves night-time visibility. Inside, the cabin transforms into a premium, welcoming sanctuary shaped by a coast-to-coast design philosophy that maximizes openness and airiness. Elegant leather seating adds a touch of sophistication, while the driver's seat offers 10-way adjustability for a perfectly tailored fit. Practicality is seamlessly woven into this luxury, offering more than 20 storage compartments distributed across the cabin alongside a flexible 448-litre trunk that is perfectly suited for daily commutes, active lifestyles, and weekend getaways.

Refined exterior

Beneath its refined exterior, the Territory is powered by a responsive 1.8L EcoBoost engine that delivers 190 horsepower and 320 Nm of torque. Tuned for quick throttle response without compromising fuel efficiency, the engine is paired with a smooth seven-speed automatic transmission. Drivers can adapt instantly to changing environments using four selectable driving modes, including Eco, Normal, Sport, and Mountain, allowing the vehicle to seamlessly transition from city streets to tougher terrain.

This dynamic performance is ultimately complemented by the Ford Co-Pilot suite of driver-assist technologies. This advanced network of safety systems features tech like Lane Departure Warning, Lane Keeping Aid, and a Tyre Pressure Monitoring System to ensure passengers remain protected on every journey across the Sultanate.

In Oman, Ford vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

ISLAMIC BANKING

Meethaq savings plan offers flexible and long-term financial benefits

MUSCAT: As part of its commitment to delivering a comprehensive banking experience and reinforcing its leadership in the Islamic banking sector, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat continues to introduce innovative and exclusive banking products and services that meet the evolving needs of its customers.

Meethaq Savings Plan is one such product designed to benefit customers across different segments of society by offering valuable features that deliver and encourage consistent and long-term financial planning.

Sharia-compliant banking products

The Savings Plan forms part of Meethaq's strategy to provide Sharia-compliant banking products and solutions that help customers achieve their financial goals with confidence. Meethaq's Savings Plan is a flexible financial solution that enables customers to save regularly and systematically to achieve their future goals, whether for education, marriage, retirement planning or other important life events.

Customers can start contributing from as little as OMR 10 per month, with the flexibility to make monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual contributions through a free direct debit service. It also provides customers with greater financial flexibility by allowing additional fund placement to reach their goal faster, and one partial withdrawal of up to 10% of the accumulated savings balance once every calendar year, helping customers manage unforeseen financial needs while remaining focused on their long-term savings objectives.

> "Customers can subscribe to the Savings Plan seamlessly through Meethaq Internet Banking platform and mobile banking application, providing a simple and efficient banking experience while saving time and effort. We remain dedicated to delivering Sharia-compliant products and financial services that create sustainable value for our customers.

Commenting on the Savings Plan, Sami Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager of Meethaq Personal Banking, said: "The Savings Plan reflects Meethaq's vision of empowering customers to plan effectively for a secure financial future while managing their financial commitments more effectively. It encourages individuals to build their savings over the medium and long term while promoting a culture of regular saving to prepare for different stages of life.

"At Meethaq, transformation remains a strategic priority, and we continue to embrace the latest technological advancement to make our products and services more accessible and convenient.

"Customers can subscribe to the Savings Plan seamlessly through Meethaq Internet Banking platform and mobile banking application, providing a simple and efficient banking experience while saving time and effort. We remain dedicated to delivering Sharia-compliant products and financial services that create sustainable value for our customers."

Since its launch in 2012, Meethaq Islamic Banking has established itself as a leading provider of Sharia-compliant banking solutions in the Sultanate offering a comprehensive range of retail, corporate, and investment banking products and services.

Customers can also access Meethaq's services through a network of 30 branches, more than 64 ATMs, CDMs and FFMs, as well as over 90 Bank Muscat ATMS and CDMs. In recognition of its achievements, Meethaq has received numerous prestigious local, regional, and international awards.


10:38
Times of Oman
'SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS NOW NEEDED FOR A LASTING PEACE'
Made in Oman, for Oman.
Maal
The National Payment Card
The 'Workable' Peace – Diplomacy or a Tactical Trap?
OMR3.3bn investments in logistics
A5
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التوزيع الرقمي
Eshhar
Your Digital Distributor
TO CONTINUE READING THE FULL EDITION, PLEASE
FOLLOW
OUR OFFICIAL
WHATSAPP
CHANNEL