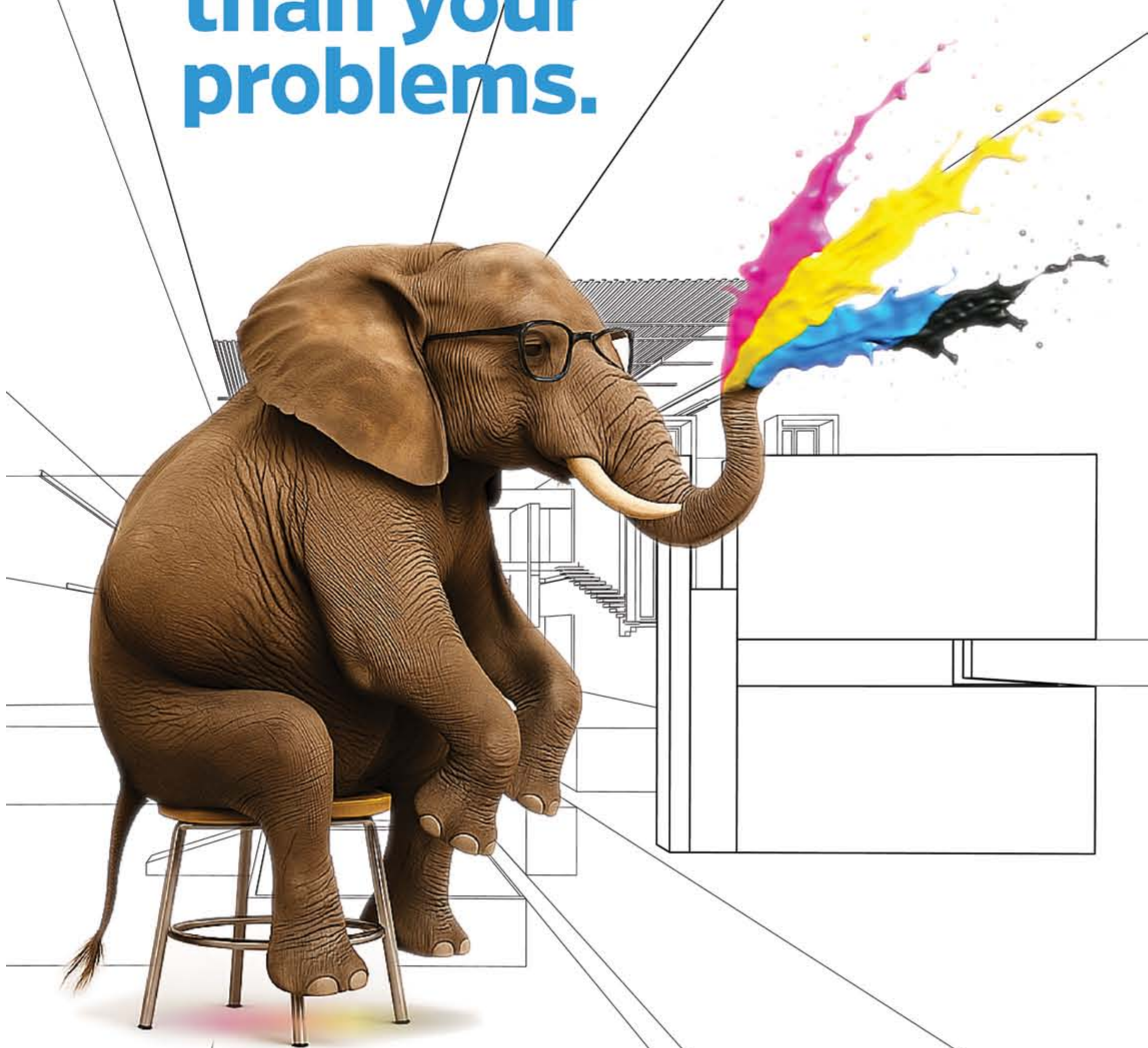


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WORLD CUP 2026
UPCOMING MATCHES



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30 June VS 12:30am

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30 June VS 5am

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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
Mango Gene Bank
boosts food security

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OMAN
Preparation for Khareef
season reviewed

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MARKET
Central bank issues
commemorative coins

3 The CBO has issued a set consisting of five commemorative coins. >B1

HM ARRIVES IN PARIS

An official reception ceremony will be held on Monday at Les Invalides ‘The House of Invalids’ in Paris

PARIS: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik arrived in Paris yesterday, on a two-day official visit, in response to an invitation by President Emmanuel Macron. Upon His Majesty’s arrival at Orly International Airport in Paris, he was received at the foot of the ramp by Roland Lescure, Minister of Economy, Finance, Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of the French Republic, Nabil Hajlaoui, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Sultanate of Oman, Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Araiimi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the French Republic, Amna bint Salim Al Balushi, Permanent Delegate of the Sultanate of Oman to the UNESCO, a number of senior French military officers and members of the Sultanate of Oman’s Embassy in the French Republic. An official reception ceremony will be held on Monday at Les Invalides “The House of Invalids” in Paris to mark the auspicious visit of His Majesty the Sultan. This visit comes within the context of enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries and expanding the horizons of co-operation and partnership across various fields, in a manner that serves mutual interests and benefits the peoples of both nation. His Majesty the Sultan was seen off at the Royal Airport by HH Sayyid Asa’ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Co-operation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Deputy Prime



Minister for Economic Affairs, HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, Khalid bin Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council, Sheikh Al Fadl bin Mohammed Al Harthy, Secretary General of the Council of Minis-

ters, Lt.Gen Hassan bin Mohsin Al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, Lt.Gen Said bin Ali Al Hilali, Head of the Internal Security Service, Dr. Mohammed bin Said Al Ma’amari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Dr. Hilal bin Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces, Maj.Gen Mattar bin Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman, Air Vice Marshal Khamis bin Ham-

mad Al Ghafri, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman, Rear Admiral Saif bin Nassir Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman and Maj.Gen Musallam bin Mohammed Jaaboub, Commander of the Sultan’s Special Force. During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan is accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs; Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of the

Royal Court; Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office; Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister; Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office; Abdul-salam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority; Anwar bin Hilal Al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion; and Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Araiimi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the French Republic. — ONA

MEMORABLE MATCHES

Chasing goals, losing sleep: World Cup fever rewrites bedtime routines

Times News Service

MUSCAT: It was well past midnight on Friday when Ousmane Dembélé completed a sensational hat-trick to inspire France to a commanding 4-1 win over Norway in their FIFA World Cup Group I game. As the final whistle blew, fans across Oman celebrated another memorable World Cup night—but many also knew they had traded a good night’s sleep for 90 minutes of footballing brilliance. From homes and cafés to majlis gatherings, bedtime has quietly become a casualty of the ongoing FIFA World Cup. With several matches kicking off late in the evening and stretching into the early hours, sleep patterns across Oman have shifted dramatically as supporters stay glued to television screens for every goal,



upset and penalty drama. For many, the routine has become all too familiar—sleep after midnight, wake up early for work, and repeat the cycle the next evening as another blockbuster fixture awaits. While the excitement of football’s biggest tournament is undeniable, medical experts caution that repeatedly sacrificing sleep can take a toll on both physical and mental well-being. “Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule is very important as it helps preserve our circadian rhythm,” said Dr Pradeep Maheswari, Senior



Internal Medicine Specialist at KIMSHealth Hospital, Muscat. “During occasional late-night events such as World Cup matches, people can compensate for reduced sleep by taking a short nap during their free time. “They should also reduce screen time on other platforms and avoid caffeine-containing drinks or other

stimulants late at night so they can fall asleep soon after the match.” According to Dr Maheswari, it is equally important to allow the body and mind to unwind after an emotionally charged encounter. “After an exciting game, reading a book or listening to calming music before going to bed can help induce sound sleep. Adequate sleep

every day is essential for relieving stress and maintaining good health,” he said. Doctors say the occasional late night is unlikely to cause lasting harm, but several consecutive nights of disrupted sleep can affect concentration, mood, productivity and decision-making, leaving many fans struggling to get through the following day. Simple lifestyle changes, however, can help football lovers enjoy the World Cup without completely derailing their sleep schedule. A 20 to 30-minute nap before a late-night kick-off can reduce sleep debt without interfering with nighttime rest. Fans are also advised to limit coffee and energy drinks to the early part of the match, as caffeine consumed close to bedtime can keep the brain alert long after the celebrations end.>A3

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COMMENTARY

Before We Dance, Can We Read the Room?

If you are an avid social media user (X addict) like me, you'd have come across the viral video of a group of Indian tourists gathered around a parked VietJet aircraft in Vietnam, performing the traditional garba dance native to the Indian state of Gujarat.

In fact, newswatchers would have surely noticed the recent surge in such impromptu dance performances at iconic tourist spots around the world. From the Great Wall of China to London's Tower Bridge, from the Burj Khalifa in Dubai to the World War II Memorial in Washington DC, these days Indians seem to be shedding their inhibitions and bursting into dance the first chance they get.

Some would say this is an effect of Indian tourists travelling more, spending more, and becoming more visible globally. However, if you are like me and cringed inside while watching those videos, you would also argue that such visibility comes with a sense of responsibility. The problem is not that Indians, as a people, are loud, expressive, festive, or proud of their culture;



the problem occurs when cultural expression becomes indifferent to location, local culture, and the mood around such performances.

India's outbound travel market is growing rapidly. Reports peg the total number of international trips from India in 2026 at 40-44 million, up from around 39 million in 2025. India has, in recent years, become Asia's largest source market for outbound travellers, so we are not talking about a few thousand travellers anymore; it is about a new class of tourists who are eager to occupy global public spaces but do not seem to know how to

go about it in a way that does not upset the locals and even a few fellow Indians.

The behaviour has, in fact, evolved. An earlier generation of Indian tourists abroad was often visibly uncomfortable and out of their element, loud in the way that people are loud when they are uncertain, seeking safety in numbers and noise. That boisterousness came from anxiety. What we see today is different in character. It comes from confidence, but of a particularly different kind: the confidence of the paying customer. Somewhere in the journey from aspiration to affordability, a transaction-



driven sense of entitlement has crept into the mind of the Indian tourist. The person who has spent significantly to be somewhere feels, consciously or not, that the spend confers rights: over the space, the moment, and the attention of everyone around them. The destination is no longer a place to encounter; it is a service that has been purchased. That shift in mindset, more than anything else, explains how a war memorial becomes a dance floor.

Earlier generations of tourists took pictures to remember a place. We've all seen photos of parents posing in front of tourist sites, marking the moment as a

quiet achievement rather than a performance. In this age of social media, such restraint does not make for viral content, and tourists who double as content creators are increasingly pushing the boundaries of acceptance in return for likes, comments, and shares. The destination becomes a backdrop. The local context disappears. The tourist becomes the main character.

Perhaps this is why these videos will find their fair share of apologists. "What is wrong with Indians having a little fun?" a friend asked me, before conceding the safety issue with the VietJet performance and the

deeper cultural problem with turning a site of mourning into a stage.

A rising Indian middle class is travelling abroad with confidence. That is a good thing. But confidence untethered by awareness is just a louder version of the old anxiety. Global mobility requires global manners: an instinct for when to celebrate and when to hold back, when your presence adds to a place and when it takes something away from it.

India does not need to become quieter to be respected. It needs to become more aware. The best cultural ambassadors are not those who perform everywhere, but those who know when to perform, when to participate, and when to simply observe. Each traveller must ask themselves one question before the music starts: have we learnt to carry our culture with grace?

Avinash Bhat is a Bengaluru-based communications professional and former journalist. His columns examine culture, technology, media and the changing habits of modern society.

Preparation for Khareef Dhofar season reviewed

The Municipal Council was briefed on the efforts to raise the governorate's readiness to receive visitors and tourists during the Khareef season



SALALAH: The Municipal Council of Dhofar Governorate reviewed the event locations and projects implemented by the Dhofar Municipality as part of the preparation plans for Khareef Dhofar (monsoon) tourist season.

Additionally, the Council examined the new tourism projects and the promotional and marketing plan carried out by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to attract visitors from within and outside

the Sultanate of Oman, along with the latest preparations and arrangements for the launch of the 2026 Khareef Dhofar season.

This came during the Council's meeting held on Sunday, chaired by HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar and Chairman of the Council.

The Council was briefed on the efforts exerted to raise the governorate's readiness to receive visitors and tourists during the Khareef Dhofar season.

It also followed up on the implementation of the season's program, which includes a diverse package of events distributed

across a number of locations and wilayats in the governorate.

This contributes to enriching the visitors' experience and enhancing Dhofar's position as a leading tourist destination.

Furthermore, the Council discussed a number of topics on the agenda, including the proposals of the Social Affairs Committee regarding the childhood benefit for separated families, and the proposals of the Health and Environmental Affairs Committee concerning the protection of the Khor Kharfot Archaeological Reserve.

This was in addition to a proposal to establish an association

for frankincense producers in Dhofar Governorate, which aims to contribute to preserving this heritage resource and enhancing its sustainability.

The Council also reviewed the latest updates on following up the recommendations of the Governorate Development Committee regarding the proposals to establish the Dhofar Dairy Center, and to prepare a comprehensive vision for developing the Aqabat Al Yasmeen road and enhancing traffic safety on it, in coordination with the competent authorities.

Within the framework of enhancing community partnership, the Council reviewed what has been accomplished in the first phase of the introductory meetings about the Council's work with school students, as well as the implementation plan for the second phase.

Additionally, the Council reviewed the statements received from the competent authorities regarding its previous recommendations related to water springs in Dhofar Governorate.

It discussed a number of development and service-related topics that contribute to supporting the growth and improving the quality of life in the governorate. -ONA

SOUTH AL SHARQIYAH

Plans to produce 3,200 tonnes of shrimp in 2026

JAALAN BANI BU HASSAN: Natural Shrimp Aquaculture (NSA) Company in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan, South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, is planning to produce 3,200 tonnes of white shrimps during 2026, as part of its efforts to enhance the aquaculture sector and support the food security system in the Sultanate of Oman.

Eng. Badr bin Nasser Al Rasbi, Farm Manager at the NSA, said that the company's production volume until the end of last week (26-27 June) stood at about 1,000 tonnes, noting that the company's output is progressing in accordance with the annual plan.

Al Rasbi added that the NSA adheres to global production standards in the field of fish farming and has accordingly been awarded the Best Agricultural Practices Certificate since 2024.

ISO 22000 certificate

The NSA also obtained the ISO 22000 certificate in food safety, said Al Rasbi, noting that the company's implementation of the food risks reduction system enhances the reliability of its products in global markets.

The NSA is also planning to raise its production rate over the next few years by about 175 per cent of the current output in line



with a vision to open up new European, Korean and Chinese markets, besides meeting local market needs, Al Rasbi explained.

He pointed out that the NSA is also endorsing an approach to develop value-added products that contribute to diversifying supply in local and regional markets.

Fish farming emerges as one of the most promising sectors in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate due to the fact that it offers a broad range of economic and investment opportunities, contributes to the diversification of food sources and supports industries related to fisheries in line with sustainable economic development goals in the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA



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NINTH EDITION

Registration opens for 'Upgrade' programme, announces RIA

MUSCAT: The Research and Innovation Authority (RIA) announced on Sunday the opening of registration for the ninth edition of "Upgrade" programme, which transforms student graduation projects into startup enterprises.

The programme targets Omani citizens and residents in the Sultanate of Oman who are enrolled in higher education institutions (holding a university diploma or higher). The registration will continue until 30 July.

Through this edition, the program seeks to build a knowledge-based economy by stimulating researchers and innovators, and supporting institutions in transforming student ideas into innovation-driven startups that generate added value and contribute to sustainable economic development.

The programme aims to disseminate a culture of research and empower project owners to achieve excellence in entrepreneurship.

This, in turn, contributes to elevating the Sultanate of Oman's ranking in global indicators, while strengthening partnerships with the private sector to provide diverse and strategically sustainable funding sources that ensure the growth and market sustainability of these enterprises.

The current edition features competition across three tracks, selected to align with the requirements of scientific advancement

and the applications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Emerging Technologies, Water, and Financial Technologies.

The launch of this edition builds upon the significant success and broad competition witnessed in previous cycles.

In the 2025 cycle, the number of competitors reached 202 participants, of whom 11 projects successfully secured programme incentives and dedicated support.

The winning teams in the current edition will receive a comprehensive support and development package, including incubation and specialised training in startup development, alongside

the refinement of their leadership and professional skills to ensure the success of their projects.

Regarding participation criteria, the programme requires that applicants be students in their final academic year at an academic institution, or graduates of academic institutions who have completed their studies no more than two years prior to the date of graduation certification.

The regulations further stipulate that each participant may submit only one application, with membership limited to a single project to ensure equal opportunities and focus on the quality of submitted ideas. -ONA

OFFICIAL RECEPTION FOR HIS MAJESTY TO BE ORGANISED IN PARIS TODAY



FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND

AmCham Oman launches inaugural tourism business exchange to strengthen industry collaboration



Times News Service

MUSCAT: AmCham Oman has successfully launched its Inaugural Tourism Business Exchange, a first-of-its-kind initiative designed to strengthen collaboration across Oman's tourism industry by connecting businesses, fostering strategic partnerships, and creating new commercial opportunities.

Held at the Grand Millennium Muscat, the event brought together hotels, tour operators, destination management companies, restaurants, cafés, suppliers, technology providers, consultants, and other tourism stakeholders from across the Sultanate for a dedicated business-to-business networking platform.

Developed as a structured business matchmaking initiative, the Tourism Business Exchange enabled participants to connect directly with potential clients, suppliers, and strategic partners in an environment focused on tangible commercial outcomes. Attendees generated qualified business leads, established new supplier relationships, increased brand visibility, and initiated discussions that have already progressed into follow-up meetings and potential collaborations.

The initiative was developed by the AmCham Oman Tourism Committee, under the continued guidance and valued support of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, whose partnership since the Committee's establishment has played a key role in advancing collaboration and sustainable growth within Oman's tourism sector.

"Our objective was to create an event that delivered measurable business value," said Mena Majeed, Director of Strategic Initiatives at AmCham Oman. "We wanted participants to leave with more than new contacts—we wanted them to leave with genuine business opportunities. Seeing companies identify new suppliers, generate qualified leads, increase their market visibility, and begin discussions that are already developing into future business partnerships demonstrate the impact this platform can have. This is only the beginning."

Samir Messaoudi, Chair of the AmCham Oman Tourism Committee and General Manager of JW Marriott Muscat, said: "The Tourism Business Exchange reflects the core mission of the Tourism Committee—to bring together businesses in ways that create meaningful value for the industry. By facilitating collaboration and encouraging new commercial relationships, we are helping strengthen Oman's tourism ecosystem and supporting its continued growth. We look forward to expanding this initiative and introducing further programs that deliver lasting value to the sector."

AmCham Oman extends its sincere appreciation to Grand Millennium Muscat for hosting the inaugural event and to Enterprise Rent-A-Car Oman for its sponsorship and valued support, both of which contributed significantly to the success of the initiative.

The Tourism Business Exchange marks the first in a series of initiatives planned by the AmCham Oman Tourism Committee to promote business collaboration, encourage investment, facilitate knowledge sharing, and create sustainable opportunities across Oman's tourism industry.

DEVELOPMENTAL MOMENTUM

Over 170 projects worth OMR37.5 million underway in Al Wusta

DUQM: Al Wusta Governorate is currently implementing more than 173 developmental, economic, and tourism projects at a total cost exceeding OMR37.5 million, distributed across the governorate's wilayats.

This reflects the scale of developmental momentum and the expanding scope of service-oriented projects. The data were presented during the Al Wusta Governorate media briefing held today in the Wilayat of Duqm, under the theme "Development in Sight & A Future Under Construction."

Sheikh Ahmed Musallam Al Kathiri, Governor of Al Wusta, stated that the governorate has emerged as one of the most promising regions in the Sultanate of Oman, endowed with strategic assets and comparative advantages, and witnessing a steady flow of developmental and investment projects and initiatives. He affirmed that the achievements realized reflect the integration of efforts among various stakeholders.

He further noted that the projects underway in the governorate align with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, contributing to the enhancement of quality of life, the promotion of balanced urban development, and the provision of an integrated infrastructure that meets community needs and keeps pace with future growth.

The media briefing showcased a number of infrastructure projects, including the design and execution of internal roads across the governorate's wilayats, as well as the development of main and waterfront facades.

These initiatives contribute to improving the urban landscape, enhancing service efficiency, and boosting the tourism and investment appeal of the governorate's wilayats.

In the transport and roads sector, the spotlight was placed on vital projects including the maintenance of asphalt roads in



Al Wusta Governorate at a cost of OMR6.4 million, the completion of the North Haima dual carriageway at OMR44 million, and the third phase of the South Haima dual carriageway project at OMR70 million.

These projects enhance road safety, support logistical connectivity, and facilitate the movement of people and goods between the governorate's wilayats and economic zones.

The media briefing also addressed achievements in the health sector, foremost among which is Mahout Hospital project at a cost of approximately OMR17 million, representing a qualitative addition to healthcare services in the wilayat and surrounding areas. Additional projects include the Emergency and Accident Unit at Duqm Hospital at OMR2.3 million, financed by OQ Group; the Emergency and Accident Unit in the Wilayat of Al Jazir at OMR300,000; and the establishment of a training centre at an estimated cost of OMR250,000.

In the tourism sector, the media briefing highlighted the unique natural and environmental assets of Al Wusta Governorate through distinctive projects, including Mahout Wetland Reserve project at OMR4 million and the Arabian Oryx Reserve project in

the Wilayat of Duqm at OMR9.2 million. These projects support the governorate's drive towards ecotourism development and enhance its presence on Oman's tourism map.

The media briefing also reviewed a number of projects in the fisheries, livestock, agricultural, and water sectors. These include aquaculture projects in the wilayats of Duqm and Mahout at a cost of OMR503.5 million, a shrimp and sea cucumber farming project in the Wilayat of Mahout at OMR1.6 million, and ice factories across various wilayats of the governorate at a total cost of OMR61.9 million.

In the livestock sector, the media briefing presented the broiler breeder project and fertilized egg production in the Wilayat of Haima at OMR61.5 million, a camel milk production project in the Wilayat of Mahout at OMR7.69 million, and the Nusra poultry project in Mahout at OMR300,000.

In the agricultural and water resources sector, projects included Wadi Al Sail water station in the Wilayat of Mahout at OMR500,000, a water purification plant in the wilayats of Duqm and Haima at OMR250,000, and a fodder project in Haima at OMR150,000. -ONA

Changan EADO Plus Wins Best Brand in Customer Experience Award in Sedan Category



Changan EADO Plus, distributed by Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipments, was felicitated with the 'Times of Oman Best Brand in Customer Experience (CX) Award in Sedan Category' at the Times of Oman CX Awards 2026. The awards presentation was co-located with Times of Oman CX Forum 2026, held at Hotel Kempinski, Muscat. The premier event was attended by over 325+ CX leaders across sectors in Oman.

Changan EADO Plus has earned recognition for delivering a compelling combination of modern design, advanced technology, comfort and value, making it one of the most preferred sedans among customers in Oman. With a strong focus on innovation and driver satisfaction, the EADO Plus offers a premium ownership experience that meets the evolving expectations of today's motorists.

Designed to enhance every journey, the EADO Plus features intelligent connectivity, advanced safety systems, refined

interiors, and efficient performance. Its commitment to providing quality, reliability, and convenience has helped build strong customer confidence and loyalty in a highly competitive automotive market.

Supported by responsive customer service, a growing dealership network, and a customer-centric approach throughout the ownership journey, Changan continues to strengthen its reputation for delivering exceptional experiences. The EADO Plus stands as a testament to the brand's dedication to understanding customer needs and exceeding expectations at every touchpoint. 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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Mango Gene Bank boosts food security

Oman has placed significant emphasis on establishing genetic banks for economic crops, viewing them as a strategic investment that safeguards genetic wealth



national—distributed across 708 trees, collected from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman and from 23 countries well-known for mango cultivation and production. This makes it one of the largest field genetic banks for this crop in the region.

Omani varieties take precedence within the gene bank's holdings, comprising 62 local cultivars that represent a national genetic treasure reflecting the agricultural diversity that distinguishes the Sultanate of Oman. These varieties exhibit notable diversity in fruit shape, size, color, ripening periods, and marketable characteristics, making them a valuable resource for enhancing local production and increasing its economic value.

The gene bank's function extends beyond preservation; all varieties are subject to continuous scientific evaluation programmes to study their productive characteristics, fruit qualities, and tolerance to different environmental conditions.

This contributes to the selection of promising varieties for agricultural expansion and serves as the foundation for genetic improvement programmes and the development of new cultivars distinguished by high productivity, excellent quality, drought tolerance, heat and salinity resistance, and resilience to agricultural pests.

The gene bank also serves as an advanced research platform supporting researchers and special-

ists by providing a rich genetic database utilised in studies related to phenotypic and genetic characterisation of varieties.

It leverages cutting-edge technologies such as genetic fingerprinting and artificial intelligence in variety evaluation and trait analysis, thereby enhancing the efficiency of agricultural research and accelerating the development of varieties suited to Oman's environment.

Eng. Mohammed Hamad Al Jabri, Senior Fruit Researcher, stated that the Mango Gene Bank is one of the most significant national projects for conserving horticultural crop genetic resources.

He noted that the gene bank has become a scientific reference supporting genetic improvement programs and the development of new cultivars adapted to Oman's environmental conditions, contributing to increased productivity and improved fruit quality.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), he explained that the gene bank maintains a broad genetic base encompassing local and international varieties collected from diverse mango-producing environments.

This enables researchers to evaluate these varieties and select the most suitable for commercial agricultural expansion, while simultaneously preserving distinctive Omani cultivars and ensuring their sustainability for future generations.

He further indicated that re-

search studies focus on evaluating productive traits, fruit quality, and the tolerance of varieties to drought, heat, salinity, and pests.

He affirmed that the results of these studies will positively impact the development of the mango sector, support investment projects, produce healthy, high-quality seedlings, and reduce reliance on imported propagation materials—thereby strengthening national food security.

The gene bank assumes growing importance in the context of climate change, serving as the first line of defense for preserving crop genetic diversity.

It provides a genetic reservoir that can be relied upon to develop varieties more capable of adapting to future environmental conditions, thereby enhancing the sustainability of agricultural production and ensuring the continuity of this vital sector.

The gene bank also constitutes an important pillar for supporting agricultural investment by providing promising varieties with economic viability, strengthening the capacities of local nurseries, and enabling farmers to access high-quality propagation materials.

This enhances production efficiency and boosts the competitiveness of Omani products in local and regional markets.

The Mango Gene Bank at the Sohar Agricultural Research Station is more than a field containing hundreds of trees—it is a national project investing in the future, preserving the genetic diversity memory of the crop and translating research into practical solutions serving farmers, investors, and the national economy.

The ongoing efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources to develop this research institution further consolidate Oman's standing in the field of genetic resource conservation and the development of a more innovative and sustainable agricultural sector capable of addressing food security challenges and climate change. -ONA

DECISION MAKING-13

Annual strategic drill begins at NDC



MUSCAT: The annual strategic exercise "Decision Making-13" began yesterday in the National Defence College (NDC) at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

The exercise is executed by participants of the 13th course from various military, security, and civil units, in the presence of a number of experts and advisors from military and security bodies, ministries, government authorities, and the directing staff of the National Defence College. Its activities will continue until 7 July.

Decision Making-13 is a result of the knowledge and intellectual output acquired by the partici-

pants during the course.

It serves as a practical translation of theoretical and academic knowledge and programs in the field of strategic studies, which incorporate the latest training techniques at the national, regional, and international levels, as well as a translation of academic skills and theoretical programs within the general curriculum plan and academic courses of the term.

Rear Admiral Ali Abdullah Al Shidi, Commandant of the National Defence College and Exercise Director, welcomed the representatives of the entities participating in the exercise. He emphasised the importance of



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5	Construction of common sunshade for Primary Play Area and Football Turf Pitch
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FOREIGN MINISTRY

Oman condemns attacks on Kuwait, Bahrain

MUSCAT: Oman has condemned the military attacks on the territory of Kuwait on Sunday.

The Foreign Ministry affirmed its full solidarity with Kuwait. It renewed its rejection of all acts that threaten the security and stability of the region, calling for restraint and the prioritisation of dialogue and diplomacy in a manner that contributes to containing



escalation and enhancing regional security and peace.

Oman has also condemned the attack that targeted Bahrain, affirming its full solidarity for measures undertaken to safeguard its security, preserve the integrity of its territories, and protect its sovereignty. Oman rejected all acts that threaten the security and stability of the region.



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Deputy Editor-in-Chief: **Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali**
Chief Executive Officer: **Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali**

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 22009004, E-mail: amcoman@choueirgroup.com
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Al Buraimi attracts over OMR13 million worth of tourism projects



This revitalisation is driven by a package of development and strategic projects currently being implemented in the infrastructure, tourism, hotel, and entertainment facility sectors



AL BURAIMI: Al Buraimi Governorate is witnessing an investment boom and remarkable economic growth, making it an attractive hub for investors by benefiting from its strategic location, as well as its rich natural and heritage resources.

This revitalisation is driven by a package of development and strategic projects currently being implemented in the infrastructure, tourism, hotel, and entertainment facility sectors.

This consolidates the position of Al Buraimi Governorate as a leading tourist destination and a promising economic center in the Sultanate of Oman.

Sayyid Dr. Hamad Ahmed Al Busaidi, Governor of Al Buraimi,

stated that the total volume of investments announced in the governorate's projects during the period from 2019 to 2026 reached approximately OMR13,850,301.

Al Busaidi added that in 2025, investments recorded approximately OMR2,148,000, while the volume of investments in the first quarter of the same year amounted to OMR1,700,000.

This confirms a clear development compared to previous years, as the governorate continues to attract new projects as part of its long-term plans to enhance sustainable development.

He explained that the governorate is witnessing the implementation and development of many projects and tourist sites that represent a significant addition to the tourism sector.

Prominent among these are the Al Buraimi Oasis project, which is considered one of the qualitative projects aimed at providing an integrated entertainment and tourism environment, and the Artificial Lake project, which represents a promising destination for family and entertainment tourism.

He pointed out that the governorate is working on developing and rehabilitating a number of heritage and historical sites, foremost among which is the project to rehabilitate the old market of Harat Hamasah and the proposals related to establishing a heritage village at the site.

This is in addition to developing a number of the natural and tourist sites that characterize the governorate, which enhances the diversity of the tourism product

and grants investors new opportunities in this sector.

He affirmed that these investments in Al Buraimi Governorate have a prominent impact on supporting the economic aspect.

They are not limited to creating job opportunities but also include supporting small and medium enterprises and enhancing their participation in investment projects, with a participation rate reaching 89 percent. This enhances their ability to compete and increases their contribution to the local economy.

He indicated that these investments also contribute to stimulating commercial traffic and increasing economic activity, which leads to revitalising local markets and raising the level of demand for goods and services.

Al Busaidi said that focusing on investment in the tourism and service sectors, such as the Al Buraimi Oasis project and tourist camps, opens new horizons for diversifying income sources and attracting tourists. This enhances the investment environment and encourages the attraction of new investments.

He added that benefiting from the economic and tourism components of the governorate is a fundamental pillar in achieving sustainable development, especially with the requirement for investors in new investment contracts starting from the year 2026 to provide job opportunities for Omanis. This enhances the social aspect of these investments, making them closer to the people and more connected to their daily needs.

He mentioned that in the field of infrastructure, Al Buraimi Governorate has witnessed in recent years the implementation of a number of improvements in infrastructure and public services that contribute to supporting the tourism sector and enhancing the governorate's attractiveness to visitors and investors.

The most prominent of these are the development of the internal road network connecting the wilayats and border crossings, the improvement of public facilities and services, the development of parks, gardens, and tourist sites, along with the enhancement of lighting and urban beautification. This has contributed to facilitating the movement of visitors and raising the quality of the tourism experience.

Furthermore, official authori-

ties are working to enhance partnership with the private sector, provide infrastructure and services that support investment, and accelerate licensing and permit procedures through electronic platforms.

He explained that tourism has a role in highlighting the cultural identity of Al Buraimi Governorate by introducing the civilizational heritage and authentic Omani customs and traditions, reviving traditional crafts and industries, and shedding light on the historical and heritage sites that abound in the governorate.

The Governor pointed out that the future vision of Al Buraimi Governorate is directed toward consolidating its position as a vital economic and tourism center, benefiting from its strategic location that connects it with the GCC countries.

This enhances its role as an important logistical and commercial hub in various sectors, primarily logistics, tourism, food security, mining, and manufacturing industries. Sayyid Dr. Hamad bin Ahmed Al Busaidi stated that the governorate seeks to develop tourism projects by utilizing its natural and heritage resources.

This helps highlight its cultural identity, provide sustainable job opportunities, and enhance its competitiveness in accordance with the targets of Oman Vision 2040. This is alongside achieving development according to a sustainable approach that balances economic growth with the preservation of the environment and natural resources. -ONA

MILAN

Oman addresses strategic plan of Supreme Judiciary Council

MILAN: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Supreme Judiciary Council, participated in the panel discussions of the heads of supreme courts, organised by the Arab Center for Legal and Judicial Research in Milan, Italian Republic, under the theme "Towards Enhancing Judicial Communication."

The event saw the participation of heads of judicial councils and supreme courts in Arab countries, alongside a number of experts and specialists in judicial affairs.

The Supreme Judiciary Council was represented at the session by Sayyid Khalifa Said Al Busaidi, Chairman of the Supreme Court.

The panel discussion addressed four main pillars, most notably the strategic plans of judicial councils and supreme courts in Arab countries, a forward-looking presentation of the most important regional experiences and practices, the pillar of Arab initiatives for judicial communication towards enhancing the capabilities of judicial councils and supreme courts, and the discussion of recommendations and their implementation mechanism.

The Arab Centr3 for Legal and Judicial Research indicated that conferences of supreme court heads constitute an important result of joint Arab action and embody the keenness of Arab countries to enhance judicial co-operation and exchange expertise between their judicial institutions.

It added that supreme courts represent the apex of the judicial pyramid in Arab judicial systems and undertake a pivotal role in consolidating the rule of law and achieving justice.

The Centre emphasised that enhancing communication between judicial councils and supreme courts in Arab countries aims to



identify the strategic plans and directions of these institutions.

The first pillar, dedicated to the strategic plans of judicial councils and supreme courts, witnessed a review of numerous Arab experiences, including a review of a number of working papers on the roles of the judiciary in some countries.

Under the same pillar, the Sultanate of Oman addressed the long-term strategic plan of the Supreme Judiciary Council 2024-2040, which was presented by Dr. Salim Zwaid Al Hashemi, Assistant Secretary-General for Planning and Digital Transformation.

Oman Vision 2040

The presentation covered several aspects, including the preparation and implementation of the strategic plan as an institutional model that aligns with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, enhances the efficiency of the judicial system, and consolidates the principles of justice and the rule of law.

Al Hashemi touched upon the most prominent digital transformation projects within the strategic plan, including electronic and virtual trials, digital integration with government entities, digital infrastructure development, the employment of emerging tech-

nologies, and the creation of electronic platforms for publishing judgments and studies, in addition to developing digital judicial services to contribute to improving the beneficiaries' experience.

He indicated that the plan seeks to raise the efficiency of judicial services by reducing litigation periods, developing the enforcement system, upgrading the services of courts and the notary public, improving case management, and expanding alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, in addition to developing judicial assistance, translation services, and services provided to persons with disabilities.

He also touched upon the governance and performance management system adopted by the Council, which includes project management, performance measurement, risk and quality management, and tracking the implementation of initiatives through measurable performance indicators, ensuring the achievement of strategic targets up to the year 2040.

The second pillar witnessed a forward-looking view of the most important regional and international experiences and practices, while the third pillar—the pillar of Arab initiatives for judicial communication towards enhancing the capabilities of judicial councils and supreme courts—of the panel discussion witnessed a discussion on the guiding Arab framework for governing the use of artificial intelligence in the judiciary towards a reliable digital justice, as well as a discussion on the Arab initiative for judicial communication towards capacity building.

The panel discussion concluded with a discussion on recommendations and their implementation mechanisms. -ONA

RIYADA

Student entrepreneurial training camp launched

AL BURAIMI: Acting in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (Riyada) on Sunday launched a week-long student entrepreneurial training and innovation programme titled "Future Leaders Camp 2026".

The camp, opened at Al Buraimi Centre for Sciences and Innovation, is being attended by 70 school students of classes 7, 8 and 9. The camp aims to foster a culture of innovative thinking and entrepreneurship in students and provide them with basic knowledge to convert their business ideas into real-world projects.

The programme comprises 5 integrated training modules, the first of which focuses on generating ideas and developing them



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Summer Initiative for students

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education will implement in the coming period the Summer Initiative, supervised by the Directorate General of Scouts, Guides and Student Activities.

This initiative aims to invest time optimally for the benefit of students and ensure the continuity of educational care within a safe and stimulating environment. It offers innovative activities that align with contemporary changes and meet the growing aspirations of students.

The programme targets students in grades 5 to 11, as well as students from the scout and guide units. The program encompasses social, voluntary, artistic, cultural, literary, sports, global, scouting,

guiding, and value-based aspects.

The programme aims to broaden horizons and develop cognitive, scientific, and intellectual skills, in addition to life and artistic skills.

It also seeks to enhance information technology skills, scientific innovations, and entrepreneurship among students to keep pace with the modern era.

Furthermore, it creates greater opportunities to discover and hone students' talents, bolsters their experiences in various fields such as cultural, scientific, artistic, scouting, and guiding domains.

It encourages innovative thinking through workshops, creative challenges, and diverse artistic

activities including drawing and theater. The initiative also involves applying certain scouting and guiding traditions related to camping and experiencing nature, developing participants' skills in exploration, challenge, and adventure, and training them in specific land navigation skills using scouting and guiding methods, such as utilising a compass, determining directions, estimating distances, and measuring heights.

Regarding personal and social development and student care, the program seeks to nurture and embrace students, pay attention to them and their ideas, and create a supportive environment for their growth. -ONA

England captain Ben Stokes announces shock retirement

The skipper told team-mates that he would be stepping down at start of fourth day in Nottingham

NOTTINGHAM: England captain Ben Stokes on Sunday made a stunning announcement to end his international career at the conclusion of the ongoing third Test against New Zealand.

All-rounder Stokes, one of the finest cricketers to ever play for England, was in the middle of a bowling spell at Trent Bridge when a statement was released confirming his intention to end a 15-year international career.

Incredibly, with the first delivery after news of his retirement was made public, Stokes took a wicket, having Zak Foulkes caught at second slip. The 35-year-old missed England's second Test after being involved in an incident in a London nightclub.

Before his return to leading the team in Nottingham, he referred only to leading the team "this week".



And Stokes told his England team-mates of his decision before the fourth day of the deciding Test against the Black Caps.

Clearly emotional as he spoke in the England dressing room, Stokes said: "The reasons can wait, why, but I've had many trips to the well before for this team, for you bokes, for people beforehand and I've got one more trip to do.

"The only thing that I ask, please, is can everyone do the same.

"We've got a lot of hard work to do and the only thing I want is to be

able to walk off that field, regardless of the result, knowing that I've had this group give everything for the last two days.

"That's the only thing I want, for everyone to give it not only for me, selfishly, but also for this team. I've got the emotional side out of it. Now it's time to go to work. Please, everyone else come with me."

For Stokes, it is an astonishing conclusion to stellar career that produced some of the most iconic moments in English sporting history. In the summer of 2019, his

incredible 84 helped England win the World Cup for the first time, defeating New Zealand in what many regard to be the greatest game of cricket ever played.

Six weeks later, Stokes was at it again, this time defeating Australia in the third Ashes Test at Headingley almost single-handedly with 135 not out. His exploits that summer led to Stokes being named as the BBC Sports Personality of the Year.

Overall, the Durham man will have played 122 Tests for England, 44 of which were as captain. He

played 114 one-day internationals and 43 T20s, including a starring role in the T20 2022 World Cup final.

Stokes' status as one of the best all-rounders to play Test cricket are underlined by a career haul of 7,243 runs and 251 wickets. Legendary figures Sir Garfield Sobers of West Indies and South Africa's Jacques Kallis are the only two men to have achieved such a double. Stokes' 136 sixes in Test cricket is also a record.

Kiwis extend lead beyond 300

England fought back again in a see-sawing third Test, taking four wickets between lunch and tea against New Zealand on day four.

No. 9, Zak Foulkes was the fourth New Zealand batter to be dismissed, but he had at least hung around for almost 13 overs alongside Daryl Mitchell, whose unbeaten half-century formed the main roadblock for the touring side.

Their lead at tea sat at 318 runs with two wickets standing, which was likely to present a considerable challenge for England to chase on a wearing surface.

New Zealand added just 54 in the session, having accrued 60 in the morning, as batting became a struggle.

At the interval, the crowd stood to applaud Stokes again as he walked off the field, having bowled

throughout the session for figures of 11-1-16-2.

After being frustrated for almost the entirety of the morning session, England snapped up three wickets in the space of 10 balls after lunch. Jofra Archer claimed his third and fourth of the innings, having Tom Blundell caught in the deep and Nathan Smith at the wicket, either side of Mitchell Santner edging Stokes behind.

Mitchell had ticked over to his fifty, from 170 balls, after the dismissal of Blundell but refused to change his approach and found another dogged partner in the shape of Foulkes, who soaked up 41 balls for his 6 and checked England's momentum as they threatened to wrap up New Zealand with the lead below 300.

Until the dismissal of Ravindra, five minutes before the lunch break, New Zealand's fourth-wicket pair had weathered everything that England could throw at them during the morning session.

Ravindra and Mitchell only scored 60 runs across 23.4 overs. That batting fourth is likely to be challenging was only highlighted when Stokes turned belatedly to spin and Shoaib Bashir trapped Ravindra lbw going back to one that kept low with his fourth ball. Brief scores (At tea, day four): New Zealand 438 and 234 for 8 (Mitchell 63*, Ravindra 94) lead England 354 by 318 runs.

TWO-MATCH T20I SERIES

Ireland upset India by one run to clinch historic series

BELFAST: Ireland's historic weekend continued as they inflicted a first T20I series defeat on India since 2023 with a dramatic one-run victory at Stormont.

After a first-ever win over India by 34 runs on Friday, Ireland stunned the world champions for a second time as Jai Moondra and Matthew Holland starred with three wickets each to bring to a grinding halt India's streak of 16 consecutive T20I series wins.

A late charge from India left the visitors requiring eight off the final two balls in a grandstand finish, but Harshit Rana was caught by Tim Tector, bowled by his brother Harry, with the penultimate ball to secure a historic victory.

On Friday, a day many had expected and hoped for India's 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi to make his record-breaking international debut, Ireland stunned the T20I world champions to kick-start a historic weekend.

It was a first win over India in any format in 12 attempts, and at the ninth time of asking in T20s.

On Sunday, the 4,000 strong, sold-out crowd at Stormont were left disappointed as Sooryavanshi was again on the sidelines for the second T20, and an Indian response was expected.

They are, after all, world champions - and scorned ones at that.



On his 100th cap, Harry Tector was Ireland's top scorer with 53 as Indians restricted the hosts to 154-8. But the response was led by Moondra, who made his debut on Friday but has become the new hero of Irish cricket, as he took out Sanju Samson for lbw with the first ball of the innings.

Moondra, who was born in Rajasthan, India, but moved to Dublin to study in 2021, then claimed the wickets of Abhishek Sharma and captain Shreyas Iyer to leave India toiling on 19-3.

The wickets of Ishan Kishan and Azar Patel also fell, but, led by Tilak Varma, India kept themselves in

contention with a required run rate of 10 heading into the final six overs. Tilak's six from Holland's first ball of the 17th put pressure back on Ireland, but he was dismissed when caught by Liam McCarthy off the following ball to leave India on 117-7.

A late rally from Harshit Rana was not enough to rescue the game for India, and Ireland held on to win by one run.

The win was made all the more remarkable given debutants Moondra and Holland, were only playing after injuries to key players like Mark Adair, Curtis Campher and Josh Little. - Agencies

FIRST TEST VS SRI LANKA

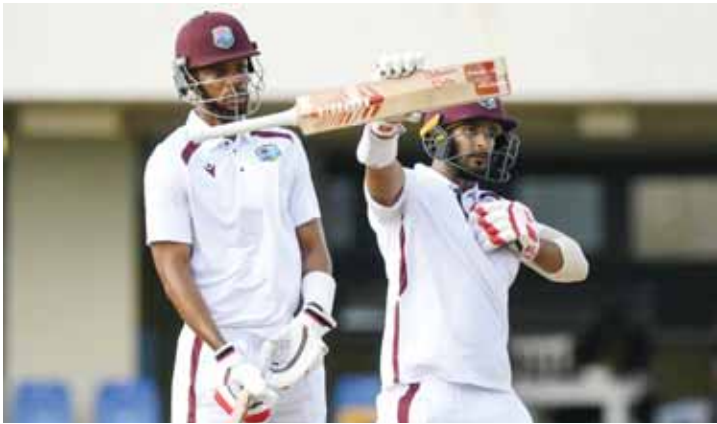
Jangoo 233, Chase 194 put WI in driver's seat

NORTH SOUND: West Indies' Amir Jangoo amassed 233, Roston Chase hit 194, and through a record-breaking 401-run partnership, the pair slow-roasted Sri Lanka on day three of the first Test in Antigua on Saturday.

Their gargantuan stand delivered the hosts to a position of extraordinary strength, securing them a 318-run first innings lead. That in the four overs they got to bowl at Sri Lanka, West Indies dismissed the dangerous Pathum Nissanka, and created other chances, buoying them further heading into day four. Jangoo and Chase now not only have the highest sixth-wicket stand in the history of Test cricket, they also have the second-highest partnership for West Indies, behind only Garfield Sobers and Conrad Hunte.

Both batters improved on their previous first-class high scores, Chase easily beating his 137 not out, and Jangoo surpassing his domestic 218. That Jangoo produced a knock of such astonishing concentration, and expansive range, in just his third Test innings was especially impressive.

Until he got out attempting to accelerate about midway through the last session, his innings was largely chanceless. He batted 373 deliveries on his own, and he and



Chase batted 100.2 overs, seeing out three complete sessions together.

Sri Lanka's quicks were earnest in the first hour, but once Jangoo and Chase saw out the second new ball (the ball was four overs old when day three began) with a period of disciplined batting, Sri Lanka's quicks lost some venom, and captain Dhananjanaya de Silva went increasingly to his spinners - Sonal Dinusha in particular.

The one exception for Sri Lanka was Milan Rathnayaka, who was intense in each of his day three spells, and created chances even in a dreary second session, having Chase dropped by a diving wide slip for 108.

Later in the day, it would be Rathnayaka who would break the enormous stand, and would go on to complete a well-deserved five-wicket haul, finishing with 5 for 124. Dinusha, the left-arm spinning all-rounder, conceded 234 runs himself in this innings, though he did also pick up two wickets, including that of Chase.

Having come into the XI only as a replacement player for the injured Shai Hope, Jangoo has essentially made himself undroppable for the second Test.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 308 and 15 for 1 (Rajitha 4*, Madushka 2*, Seales 1-5) trail West Indies 626 for 9 dec (Jangoo 233, Chase 194, Rathnayaka 5-124) by 303 runs.

AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX

Russell holds nerve to edge Verstappen and seal win



SPELBERG: Mercedes' George Russell held on to win a tense battle with Red Bull's Max Verstappen for victory at the Austrian Grand Prix on Sunday. Russell boosted his title bid by seizing victory, the Mercedes driver taking his seventh career win ahead of a chasing Verstappen and championship leader Kimi Antonelli.

Russell made a smooth getaway from pole position when the lights went out, while Verstappen also bounced back from the disappointment of his crash in Qualifying to make gains in the early laps. Antonelli did not have an entirely smooth start, the Italian running wide on several occasions.

While Russell held a solid lead for much of the following laps, Verstappen - after engaging in more than one feisty battle with Lewis Hamilton along the way - made his way up to P2 as the race progressed, resulting in the Dutchman putting increasing pressure on Russell later on.

A tense end to the Grand Prix followed as, after his final pit stop,



Verstappen set about cutting into Russell's lead - just as Antonelli was also trying to chase down the Dutchman from third.

But Russell ultimately crossed the line by 1.611s from Verstappen, the Briton also moving back up to P2 in the standings in the process.

Verstappen held off Antonelli by just 0.375s, bringing to an end an impressive day for the four-time world champion, while Antonelli had to settle for third - meaning that he now leads the champion-

ship by 40 points.

Oscar Piastri was fourth for McLaren, ahead of the Ferrari of Hamilton in fifth and Red Bull's Isack Hadjar in sixth. The other McLaren of Lando Norris claimed P7, followed by Charles Leclerc in P8. The Audi duo of Gabriel Bortoleto and Nico Hulkenberg both missed out in 11th and 12th, as did Alpine's Pierre Gasly in 13th. Haas' Ollie Bearman was P14, followed by the other Alpine and Haas cars of Franco Colapinto and Esteban Ocon respectively.

Williams' Alex Albon and the Aston Martin of Fernando Alonso were the final classified runners in 17th and 18th. The latter's teammate Lance Stroll retired from the running due to a suspected ERS issue, while Carlos Sainz's race came to an abrupt halt when his Williams stopped on the main straight with a suspected electrical problem.

Finally it was a bad day for Cadillac, as both Sergio Perez and Valtteri Bottas retired in the opening laps because of overheating brakes. - Agencies

All-Omani team’s feat will inspire new generation: OC chief Khimji

The home-grown team, which included 13 international debutants, finished fourth in the Asian Games Men’s T20I Qualifiers in Singapore earlier this month to book a spot in the continental extravaganza

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket (OC) chairman Pankaj Khimji has hailed the country’s all-Omani men’s cricket team for achieving a “momentous” milestone after becoming the first all-Omani squad to qualify for the Asian Games, describing the feat as a defining moment for the sport’s future in the Sultanate.

Speaking during a felicitation ceremony honouring the history-making squad at OC headquarters in Al Amerat recently, Khimji said the achievement extended far beyond qualification for the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, and reflected years of investment in nurturing local talent.

“It is a momentous achievement, and we at Oman Cricket are proud of our Omani youth who have brought laurels to the sport of cricket through this remarkable accomplishment,” Khimji said.

He said the qualification was even more remarkable by the fact that 13 of the 14 members of the squad were making their international debuts.

“What makes this qualification even more special is that this young side featured 13 players making their international debuts.



They displayed tremendous character and composure to defeat an established Singapore team in the opening match.

“The team then capped off their campaign with an exemplary performance against Bahrain to secure qualification by reaching the semi-finals.”

The all-Omani side created history by becoming the first team from the Sultanate to qualify for

the Asian Games through cricket earlier this month, securing one of four available berths at the qualifying tournament in Singapore. Led by experienced captain Su-fyan Mehmood, the youthful team booked qualification before bowing out in the semi-finals.

For Oman Cricket, the breakthrough also vindicates its long-term strategy of building a sustainable pathway for home-grown

players to represent the country at the highest level.

Khimji credited the players, coaching staff and the wider cricket fraternity for the landmark achievement and expressed hope that it would encourage more young Omanis to embrace the sport.

“This achievement is a testament to the hard work of the players and the support staff, along with the support of the entire Omani crick-

eting fraternity in Oman. We hope this historic milestone inspires more young Omanis to take up the sport and dream of representing the nation on the international stage.”

The players were honoured by Jaber Al Shabibi, Project Manager for Developing the Sports Preparation System at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, during a special ceremony attended by senior OC officials Madhu Jes-

rani (secretary), Chaitanya Khimji (board member) and Duleep Mendis (chief development officer).

The men’s T20I competition at the 2026 Asian Games will be held from September 24 to October 3. Oman, along with Nepal, Malaysia and Hong Kong, joined automatic qualifiers India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and hosts Japan in the battle for the gold medal.

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GCC COMMERCIAL MEET
Oman participated on Sunday in the extraordinary joint meeting of the Commercial Cooperation Committee and the Industrial Cooperation Committee of the GCC.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 7402.65 points, up by 1.18% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.93% at 589.92 points. Galfar Engineering, up 9.40%, was the top gainer while, Al Hassan Engineering, down 14.29%, was the top loser.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

CBO issues commemorative coins

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced the issuance of a commemorative set consisting of 5 commemorative coins, in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of its establishment (1975-2025).
This edition embodies a distinctive period in the journey of the Central Bank of Oman and documents its fundamental contributions to strengthening the pillars of the national economy and developing the banking sector. The commemorative set is a tribute to the journey of giving and an af-



firmation of the CBO's pioneering role in the economic development of Oman for five decades. Designed to the highest technical standards, the commemorative coins are made of pure silver

with a face value of One Rial, a diameter of 60 mm, and a weight of up to 50 grams for the large coin, while each of the smaller coins made of silver-plated brass carries a face value of 100 Baisa, a diameter of 38.61 mm, and a weight of 28.28 grams. These commemorative coins are legal coins with their face values and can be purchased from the Central Bank of Oman (Ruwi, Salalah and Sohar) or through Oman Post sale window at the Opera Galleria starting from 19/07/2026. -OMA

INVESTMENT BANKING EVENT



Sohar International participates as gold sponsor at Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East in Dubai

MUSCAT: Sohar International participated as a Gold Sponsor at Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East 2026, the region's premier corporate and investment banking event. Held at the Madinat Jumeirah Conference & Events Centre in Dubai, UAE, it brought together more than 2,000 senior decision-makers from over 46 countries, including sovereign issuers, institutional investors, financial institutions, regulators, corporates, and leading legal and advisory firms from across the regional and international debt capital markets ecosystem.

Through a dedicated exhibition presence and active participation in the event's discussions, the bank reinforced its role in the industry's ongoing dialogue, while a series of strategic one-to-one meetings provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships across the global financial community and deepen engagement with key stakeholders in the capital markets ecosystem. Hisham Hassan Moosa, Senior Executive Vice President and Head of Project Financing and Global Banking at Sohar International, participated as a speaker in one of the event's signature Oxford-style debates, 'Renewables & the Energy Transition in the GCC: Building Bankable Capacity'. The session brought together senior industry leaders to examine the evolving financing landscape underpinning the region's energy transition, with discussions centred on the development of investable pipelines across solar, wind, battery energy storage systems (BESS), and hydrogen, as well as the role of utility and corporate power purchase agreements.

ture projects will be critical to attracting long-term capital and ensuring successful execution. This requires strong collaboration across governments, financial institutions, developers, and capital markets participants to create robust financing structures that support sustainable growth. Industry forums such as Bonds, Loans & Sukuk Middle East provide an important platform for exchanging insights, strengthening strategic partnerships, and advancing the financial ecosystem needed to support the region's energy transition ambitions. Sohar International remains committed to contributing to these discussions and supporting the development of innovative financing solutions that enable long-term economic growth across the GCC."

Hisham Hassan Moosa, Senior Executive Vice President and Head of Project Financing and Global Banking at Sohar International, participated as a speaker in one of the event's signature Oxford-style debates, 'Renewables & the Energy Transition in the GCC: Building Bankable Capacity'. The session brought together senior industry leaders to examine the evolving financing landscape underpinning the region's energy transition, with discussions centred on the development of investable pipelines across solar, wind, battery energy storage systems (BESS), and hydrogen, as well as the role of utility and corporate power purchase agreements.

Oman disburses OMR213.8mn in development loans in 2025

The industrial sector topped the list of beneficiary activities, receiving OMR71 million — accounting for 33.2 percent of total lending



MUSCAT: The total value of loans disbursed in the Sultanate of Oman during 2025 reached OMR213.8 million, distributed across 7,106 projects, compared to OMR234.9 million allocated to 7,398 projects in 2024, reflecting an annual decline of approximately 9 percent. According to data from the 2026 Statistical Yearbook issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), the industrial sector topped the list of beneficiary activities, receiving OMR71 million—accounting for 33.2 percent of total lending. The tourism, professional, and public services sec-

tor ranked second with OMR66.3 million, representing 31 percent, while the fisheries sector came in third with OMR31.6 million, or 14.8 percent. In contrast, the mining sector recorded a notable surge, rising from 0.7 percent in 2024 to 4.8 percent in 2025, with disbursements exceeding OMR10.3 million. At the regional level, the Governorates of South and North Al Batinah maintained the largest share of Oman Development Bank loans in 2025, accounting for 24.9 percent of total lending at OMR53.3 million, spread across 1,617 projects. The Governorate of Muscat ranked second with 23.5

percent (OMR50.2 million) allocated to 762 projects, followed by South and North Al Sharqiyah at 16.6 percent (OMR35.5 million). Al Dakhiliyah Governorate accounted for 9.3 percent, while Dhofar represented 9 percent. The data further indicate notable growth in the Governorate of Al Wusta, where the share increased from 3.6 percent in 2024 to 6.5 percent in 2025. Conversely, the Governorate of Al Buraimi recorded the lowest share among all governorates at 1.8 percent. **Housing finance** The figures also reveal an upward

trend in housing finance, with total housing loans rising from OMR145.1 million in 2024 to OMR151.8 million in 2025, marking an annual increase of over 4.6 percent. The number of beneficiaries grew from 3,250 to 3,277 over the same period. The Governorate of South Al Batinah led in housing loan value with OMR40.4 million, representing 26.6 percent of the total and distributed across 902 loans, followed closely by Muscat with OMR41.7 million—27.5 percent—allocated to 842 loans. North Al Batinah ranked third at 14.6 percent, followed by Al Dakhiliyah at 10.6 percent, while the Governorate of Musandam registered the lowest share at just 1.2 percent of total bank lending. The data further indicate that the majority of Oman Housing Bank loans in 2025 were concentrated within the monthly income bracket of OMR701 to 1,000, which accounted for 75.8 percent of total housing finance—equivalent to OMR115 million—distributed across 2,456 loans. The income category "up to OMR400" ranked second with 16.8 percent, while the "above OMR1,000" bracket did not exceed 6.7 percent of the total. -OMA

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Images shown for illustrative purposes only.

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Galfar Engineering, up 9.40%, was the top gainer while, Al Hassan Engineering, down 14.29%, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,402.65 points, up by 1.18% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.93% at 589.92 points. Galfar Engineering, up 9.40%, was the top gainer while, Al Hassan Engineering, down 14.29%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 7851 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 50.38 million, with more than 165.73 million shares changing hands. Out of 76 traded securities, 33 advanced, 11 declined, and 32 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 1161K while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 816K, followed by foreign investors for RO 345K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 12,939.77 points, up 1.36%. Prices of Bank Dhofar, Financial Corporation, Ahli Bank, Bank Muscat, Al Anwar Investment were up by 4.10%, 3.09%, 2.56%, 2.52%, 2.50% respectively. Prices of Muscat Insurance, Al Sharqia Investment were down by 3.00%, 0.98% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 9,597.77 points, up 0.67%. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Al Maha



Ceramics, A'Saffa Foods, Jazeera Steel Products, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 9.40%, 8.00%, 2.23%, 0.98%, 0.24% respectively. Prices of Al Hassan Engineering, Oman Flour Mills, Al Anwar Ceramics, Muscat Thread Mill, Oman Cables Industry were down by 14.29%, 1.25%, 0.67%, 0.48%, 0.31% respectively. Services Index was up by 0.86% before closing at 3,004.41 points. Prices of National Gas, OQ Exploration & Production, Al Jazeera Services, Al Suwadi Power, OQ Gas Networks were up by 4.72%, 3.75%, 2.22%, 2.11%, 1.88% respectively. Prices of Renaissance Services were down by 0.32% respectively.—United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	7,414.80	7,316.65	7,402.65	7,316.65	86.00	1.18%
FINANCIAL INDEX	12,939.77	12,777.91	12,939.77	12,766.71	173.06	1.36%
Industry Index	9,630.49	9,534.31	9,597.77	9,534.31	63.46	0.67%
Services Index	3,011.63	2,978.94	3,004.41	2,978.94	25.47	0.86%
MSX Shariah Index	592.54	584.49	589.92	584.49	5.42	0.93%
MSX TR INDEX	11,459.29	11,317.48	11,450.50	11,317.48	133.03	1.18%
FINANCIAL TR IDX	15,876.90	15,678.30	15,876.90	15,664.56	212.34	1.36%
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,334.22	12,211.03	12,292.30	12,211.03	81.27	0.67%
SERVICES TR IDX	4,035.02	3,991.22	4,025.35	3,991.22	34.13	0.86%
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
165,737,596	50,379,244	7,851	36,473,704,110	33	11	32	76

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JUNE 28

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST RD	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM00000002549	BANK DHOFAR	56,500	11,448	58	0.199	0.203	0.199	0.203	0.195	0.008	4.103	0.203	0.190	0.208	0.100	617,079,102
OM0000000758	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	8,074,824	3,861,148	388	0.427	0.448	0.427	0.443	0.427	0.016	3,747	0.443	0.430	0.443	0.000	3,544,000,000
OM0000000786	BANK MUSCAT	23,984,746	9,376,229	1,327	0.859	0.906	0.858	0.907	0.897	0.010	2,519	0.907	0.910	0.907	0.000	3,055,103,624
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	94,200	15,456	9	0.168	0.168	0.164	0.164	0.160	0.004	2,500	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.100	48,962,681
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	1,025	792	6	0.761	0.778	0.761	0.778	0.761	0.017	2,234	0.778	0.770	0.778	0.100	93,360,000
OM0000002236	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	3,980	574	3	0.276	0.276	0.276	0.276	0.270	0.006	2,222	0.276	0.270	0.276	0.100	11,834,666
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	15,346	2,956	8	0.191	0.194	0.190	0.194	0.190	0.004	2,105	0.194	0.189	0.196	0.100	138,594,830
OM0000000325	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	154,212	45,955	18	0.295	0.302	0.295	0.301	0.295	0.006	2,034	0.301	0.298	0.301	0.100	60,200,000
OM0000000072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	27,107,943	5,854,657	1,321	0.213	0.218	0.213	0.217	0.213	0.004	1,878	0.217	0.216	0.217	0.100	939,745,391
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	8,100	973	5	0.121	0.121	0.120	0.120	0.118	0.002	1,695	0.120	0.120	0.125	0.100	21,000,000
OM0000000908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SF2)	49,279,446	11,890,783	1,269	0.240	0.245	0.240	0.242	0.238	0.004	1,681	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.040	837,196,786
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	380,073	123,524	13	0.325	0.325	0.325	0.325	0.320	0.005	1,563	0.325	0.321	0.325	0.100	34,125,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	629,655	84,199	57	0.135	0.136	0.134	0.136	0.134	0.002	1,493	0.136	0.135	0.139	0.100	394,225,612
OM0000000341	BARKA WATER AND POWER	6,000	990	1	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.163	0.002	1,227	0.165	0.160	0.165	0.100	26,400,000
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	186,860	152,213	31	0.815	0.823	0.805	0.823	0.815	0.008	0,882	0.823	0.830	0.830	0.100	102,791,021
OM00000003000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODT'S MKRTNG	6,687	7,643	7	1.140	1.150	1.140	1.150	1.140	0.010	0,877	1.150	1.140	1.150	0.100	79,330,000
OM00000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,053,884	399,839	145	0.377	0.383	0.377	0.380	0.377	0.003	0,796	0.380	0.378	0.380	0.100	292,676,000
OM00000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGG & INVESTMENT	11,901	1,785	1	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.149	0.001	0,671	0.150	0.149	0.163	0.100	22,500,000
OM00000003026	OMAN TELECOM	7,890,164	10,209,819	68	1.297	1.305	1.289	1.305	1.298	0.007	0,539	1.305	1.305	1.305	0.100	978,750,000
OM00000003386	SOHAB INTERNATIONAL BANK	28,160,697	5,389,734	1,372	0.194	0.195	0.190	0.193	0.192	0.001	0,521	0.193	0.193	0.193	0.100	1,277,126,530
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	10,842	2,809	5	0.260	0.260	0.258	0.258	0.257	0.001	0,389	0.258	0.248	0.265	0.100	246,279,563
OM00000001509	DHOFAR INT'L DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	9,005	2,693	5	0.300	0.300	0.299	0.299	0.298	0.001	0,336	0.299	0.291	0.300	0.100	148,320,786
OM00000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	61,501	25,438	25	0.413	0.414	0.413	0.414	0.413	0.001	0,414	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.100	20,841,744
OM00000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	100,100	49,550	4	0.485	0.485	0.485	0.485	0.485	0.000	0,000	0.485	0.491	0.489	0.100	804,843,446
OM00000001533	OMINVEST	5,619	2,079	15	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.000	0,000	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.100	415,455,949
OM00000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	15,600	2,532	2	0.163	0.163	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.000	0,000	0.162	0.155	0.162	0.100	19,743,750
OM00000001749	OMAN CEMENT	15,775	8,604	6	0.545	0.550	0.545	0.550	0.550	0.000	0,000	0.550	0.540	0.550	0.100	181,979,991
OM00000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	837	904	1	1.080	1.080	1.080	1.080	1.080	0.000	0,000	1.080	1.080	1.080	0.100	66,177,000
OM00000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	733,516	129,269	116	0.178	0.180	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	0,000	0.175	0.174	0.176	0.010	175,000,000
OM00000003963	OOBROOC	23,982	7,748	8	0.323	0.325	0.323	0.325	0.325	0.000	0,000	0.325	0.323	0.325	0.100	211,556,875
OM00000004348	SMN POWER HOLDING	17,055	3,309	8	0.194	0.194	0.194	0.194	0.194	0.000	0,000	0.194	0.194	0.213	0.100	38,729,306
OM00000004925	ALBATHINAH POWER	16,111	3,114	5	0.193	0.194	0.193	0.194	0.194	0.000	0,000	0.194	0.190	0.194	0.100	130,928,161
OM00000005063	PHOENIX POWER	178,211	43,046	23	0.243	0.243	0.238	0.242	0.242	0.000	0,000	0.242	0.240	0.242	0.100	853,949,553
OM00000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	5,000	698	1	0.349	0.349	0.349	0.349	0.349	0.000	0,000	0.349	0.340	0.349	0.100	24,566,110
OM00000001020	ASTAD SHIPPING	3,409,368	955,652	1,039	0.288	0.288	0.275	0.280	0.280	0.000	0,000	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.000	1,458,448,398
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	19,803	60,571	64	3.225	3.225	3.220	3.220	3.230	-0.010	-0.310	3.220	3.220	3.220	0.100	288,834,000
OM00000003234	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	297,781	82,816	19	0.309	0.311	0.309	0.309	0.310	0.001	-0.323	0.309	0.308	0.309	0.100	73,050,690
OM00000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	223,900	22,685	22	0.102	0.103	0.101	0.101	0.102	-0.001	-0.980	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	9,990,000
Total		38	151,497,309	48,537,234	7,475											

Parallel Market

OM00000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	1,679,036	256,554	45	0.150	0.163	0.150	0.163	0.149	0.014	9,396	0.163	0.163	0.163	0.100	33,086,791
OM00000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	252,500	67,223	16	0.260	0.270	0.260	0.270	0.250	0.020	8,900	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.100	14,850,000
OM00000001160	NATIONAL GAS	35,474	38,662	40	0.106	0.111	0.106	0.111	0.106	0.005	4,717	0.111	0.111	0.111	0.100	9,435,000
OM00000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	1,010	101	1	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.097	0.003	3,093	0.100	0.088	0.101	0.100	7,002,996
OM00000002200	AHLI BANK	15,000	3,000	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.195	0.005	2,564	0.200	0.200	0.206	0.100	556,658,183
OM00000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	130,741	8,629	3	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.065	0.001	1,538	0.066	0.066	0.067	0.100	20,271,657
OM00000008868	THE PEARL REIF	1,321	234	3	0.179	0.179	0.177	0.177	0.175	0.002	1,143	0.177	0.170	0.177	0.100	104,684,328
OM00000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	47,558	5,136	6	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.107	0.001	0,935	0.108	0.105	0.110	0.100	70,452,965
OM00000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	95	266	1	2.800	2.800	2.800	2.800	2.800	0.000	0.000	2.800	2.700	0.000	1,000	10,164,000
OM00000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	206	247	1	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	1.200	0.000	0.000	1.200	1.200	1.200	0.100	60,000,000
OM00000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	6,495	857	2	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.000	0.000	0.132	0.130	0.136	0.100	13,068,000
OM00000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	9,800	1,617	2	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.149	0.000	0.100	11,798,959
OM00000002580	OMAN EDUC & TRAINING INVESTMENTS	100	180	1	1.800	1.800	1.800	1.800	1.800	0.000	0.000	1.800	1.800	1.800	0.100	136,000,000
OM00000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	174	37	1	0.212	0.212	0.212	0.212	0.212	0.000	0.000	0.212	0.206	0.212	0.100	13,797,424
OM00000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	300,000	71,400	31	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.000	0.000	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.100	476,652,913
OM00000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	19,800	1,841	1	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.083	0.000	0.100	13,999,536
OM00000007407	DHOFA GENERATING	6,500	533	2	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	18,223,680
OM00000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	3,000	626	2	0.209	0.209	0.208	0.208	0.209	-0.001	-0.478	0.208	0.208	0.212	0.100	3,849,008
OM00000002016	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	3,067,739	459,855	78	0.150	0.157	0.149	0.149	0.150	-0.001	-0.687	0.149	0.150	0.149	0.100	32,780,000
OM00000006609	JABAL REIF	7,292,628	740,282	51	0.150	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.000	-0.952	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.100	18,966,000
OM00000000400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	1,350	1,358	2	0.555	0.555	0.555	0.555	0.550	-0.007	-1,246	0.555	0.555	0.555	0.100	96,972,741
OM00000001178	MUSCAT GASES	1,600	237	1	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.150	-0.002	-1.332	0.148	0.145	0.150	0.100	4,444,000
OM00000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	7,000	4,074	3	0.582	0.582	0.582	0.582	0.600	-0.018	-3.000	0.582	0.576	0.582	1.000	6,416,577
Total	23	13,199,177	1,662,979	294												



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CONTACT : 75156709

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Email: azamca7@gmail.com

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Finance & commercial professional with over 20 yrs of experience in Oman (OACPA Certified) Seeking suitable placement. Contact : 96791053, Email: jibinpetern@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION

Indian male, 15 yrs experience in Oman seeks job for admin, secretary , HR or any suitable post, holding Oman D/L Contact 94019955

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

B.Tech grad (F), experienced in admin, business development, operations, contracts, logistics & budgeting. Seeking a suitable placement. Contact: 97732903

ENGINEER

Civil Engineer with 10 yrs GCC experience having valid visa and D/L seeks placement contact : +968 79585378, Email ID: vineesh.v35@gmail.com

Sr. Project engineer MEP/Mech 19 yrs experience in construction Contact/WA: 97135658

Sudanese Civil engineer with over 17 yrs of experience, including 1 year in Oman seeking a position in Project management or any administrative role. OSE membership and a valid Omani D/L. Contact: 92323037

IT

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

MANAGER

Business development & operations manager, MBA, Indian male, 13+ yrs exp, working in Oman with Omani D/L seeking opportunity Contact 77648022

Construction manager, Sr. mechanical engineer (MEP & HVAC), Indian male 20+yrs of experience seek placement. Contact: 97639094, Email: srinivasan20031@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

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GROUP A	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Mexico	3	3	0	0	6	0	6	9
	South Africa	3	1	1	1	2	3	-1	4
	South Korea	3	1	0	2	2	3	-1	3
	Czech Republic	3	0	1	2	2	6	-4	1
GROUP B	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Switzerland	3	2	1	0	7	3	4	7
	Canada	3	1	1	1	8	3	5	4
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	4
	Qatar	3	0	1	2	2	10	-8	1
GROUP C	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Brazil	3	2	1	0	7	1	6	7
	Morocco	3	2	1	0	6	3	3	7
	Scotland	3	1	0	2	1	4	-3	3
	Haiti	3	0	0	3	2	8	-6	0
GROUP D	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	USA	3	2	0	1	8	4	4	6
	Australia	3	1	1	1	2	2	0	4
	Paraguay	3	1	1	1	2	4	-2	4
	Türkiye	3	1	0	2	3	5	-2	3
GROUP E	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Germany	3	2	0	1	10	4	6	6
	Ivory Coast	3	2	0	1	4	2	2	6
	Ecuador	3	1	1	1	2	2	0	4
	Curaçao	3	0	1	2	1	9	-8	1
GROUP F	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Netherlands	3	2	1	0	10	4	6	7
	Japan	3	1	2	0	7	3	4	5
	Sweden	3	1	1	1	7	7	0	4
	Tunisia	3	0	0	3	2	12	-10	0
GROUP G	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Belgium	3	1	2	0	6	2	4	5
	Egypt	3	1	2	0	5	3	2	5
	Iran	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	3
	New Zealand	3	0	1	2	4	10	-6	1
GROUP H	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Spain	3	2	1	0	5	0	5	7
	Cape Verde	3	0	3	0	2	2	0	3
	Uruguay	3	0	2	1	3	4	-1	2
	Saudi Arabia	3	0	2	1	1	5	-4	2
GROUP I	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	France	3	3	0	0	10	2	8	9
	Norway	3	2	0	1	8	7	1	6
	Senegal	3	1	0	2	8	6	2	3
	Iraq	3	0	0	3	1	12	-11	0
GROUP J	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Argentina	3	3	0	0	8	1	7	9
	Austria	3	1	1	1	6	6	0	4
	Algeria	3	1	1	1	5	7	-2	4
	Jordan	3	0	0	3	3	8	-5	0
GROUP K	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Colombia	3	2	1	0	4	1	3	7
	Portugal	3	1	2	0	6	1	5	5
	Congo DR	3	1	1	1	4	3	1	4
	Uzbekistan	3	0	0	3	2	11	-9	0
GROUP L	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts	
	Uzbekistan	3	2	1	0	6	2	4	7
	Croatia	3	2	0	1	5	5	0	6
	Ghana	3	1	1	1	2	2	0	4
	Panama	3	0	0	3	0	4	-4	0

GROUP L: 2-0

Bellingham, Kane secure top spot for England

EAST RUTHERFORD: England ensured first place in Group L as second-half goals by Jude Bellingham and Harry Kane undid the resistance of Panama in rainy New York New Jersey Stadium. Thomas Tuchel had made five changes, including first starts in North America for the attacking trio of Morgan Rogers, Marcus Rashford and Saka.

It was Rashford who produced their most notable threats of the first period, cutting inside and prodding in on the volley from Bukayo Saka's corner after 62 minutes.

The England No.10 then crossed

the far post from Elliot Anderson's cross.

The wet conditions were familiar to England but so too the scenario of dominating the ball yet struggling to break down well-drilled opponents.

Indeed Panama might have nicked a goal just after the first hydration break, when Jose Luis Rodriguez broke into space on the left and tested Jordan Pickford with a strong shot turned behind at the near post

The main direction of travel continued towards Panama's goal in the second half with Mosquera

making a flying save from Kane before Bellingham's second goal of the tournament broke the deadlock.

Panama, who saw a late Jose Fajardo strike ruled out for offside, will head home without a point or a goal (despite reaching double figures for goal attempts here).

Thomas Tuchel, England coach, told ITV after the match, "We did what we needed. It was as we expected against a difficult opponent. We were the only team to create this amount of chances against Panama.

"Everyone did what we needed

to do and Jude was a big part of that. There's more to build on and you have to get so many details right with the aggressive approach we take. But the tournament starts again now with the knockouts. We collect our strengths and our energy and we build on what we have. We will step up. The bigger the games, the better we'll get."

Bellingham said: "The first job achieved: we came here to do it in sections and now we've achieved that first objective to get through the group and to top it as well. Every game we've got to improve and it's up to us to achieve that." - Agencies



GROUP L: 2-1

Croatia leapfrog Ghana with battling victory

PHILADELPHIA: Petar Sucic and Nikola Vlasic were the goal-scoring heroes as Croatia beat Ghana 2-1 to leapfrog the already-qualified Black Stars into second spot in Group L.

Zlatko Dalic's side could have qualified as one of the best third-placed teams by playing out a draw, but signalled their desire for a win from the first whistle.

The warning signs were there for Carlos Queiroz's side as early as the 17th minute, when Vlasic found space 20 yards from goal and clipped the outside of the post with a powerful right-foot shot.



It was certainly no more than the head just after the half-hour,

with Sucic crashing a stunning 30-yard drive through a couple of attempted blocks and just in-

side the left-hand post. The Black Stars improved significantly in the second half, however, and

their pressure was rewarded 17 minutes from time when Derrick Luckassen snuck in at a free-kick to side-foot home the equaliser.

But having profited from poor marking at one end, Ghana paid for it at the other ten minutes later when Vlasic stole in unmarked at a Luka Modric corner to head home the winner off the inside of the left-hand post.

Sucic, at 22 years and 245 days, became the second-youngest player to score for Croatia at the World Cup, after Josko Gvardiol (20 years, 328 days against Morocco in 2022). - Agencies

MESSI STRIKES AGAIN IN ARGENTINA WIN OVER JORDAN



The star lashed home an 80th-minute free-kick to net for the seventh successive World Cup game, setting a new record

DALLAS: Lionel Messi came off the bench to score his sixth goal of the FIFA World Cup 2026 as Argentina beat Jordan 3-1 in Dallas on Saturday.

He lashed home an 80th-minute free-kick to net for the seventh successive World Cup game, setting a new record.

Argentina fielded World Cup starting XI without Messi for the first time since 30 June 2006, when La Albiceleste were beaten in a quarter-final by host nation Germany

With top spot already confirmed ahead of the match, Messi was named among the substitutes as Lionel Scaloni made nine changes from the team that started their 2-0 win over Austria on Monday.

He was brought on after an hour and, predictably, stole the show with another fine goal.



Giovani Lo Celso gave Argentina the lead early on with a sweetly struck free-kick of his own, before Lautaro Martinez doubled their advantage from the penalty spot.

Jordan, who went into the game knowing they could no longer qualify, refused to buckle and pulled a goal back shortly after half-time. Moussa Altamari was the scorer, emphatically converting Ehsan Haddadi's cross to spark joyous celebrations.

Messi was brought on soon after and it was the genius No.10 who restored Argentina's two-goal cushion. He is now two strikes ahead of

Teams in last 32

Mexico, South Africa, Switzerland, Canada, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Morocco, USA, Australia, Paraguay, Germany, Ivory Coast, Ecuador, Netherlands, Japan, Sweden, Belgium, Egypt, Spain, Cape Verde, France, Norway, Senegal, Argentina, Austria, Algeria, Colombia, Portugal, Congo DR, England, Croatia, Ghana.

superstar quartet Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele, Vinicius Junior and Erling Haaland in the Adidas Golden Boot race.

Next up for Argentina is a Round of 32 clash with Cabo Verde in Miami on Friday.

Speaking after the match, Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said: "I'm happy because we gave everyone minutes, and that's very important for us."

"Especially for Lo Celso, who couldn't be at the previous World Cup, and for Lautaro, who hadn't scored yet and had a good night. And Leo's goal. I'm happy, and now the good part begins." - Agencies

GROUP K: 0-0

Colombia finish first after Portugal stalemate

MIAMI: Chances flowed with regularity in Miami but not one of the 36 efforts on goal by Colombia and Portugal rippled the net on Saturday.

The point ensured Colombia, who defeated Uzbekistan and Congo DR in their first two matches, topped the section, while Portugal advanced as runners-up.

The tone for this one was set in the very first minute, as Luis Diaz's deflected shot was headed just over the bar by Jhon Cordoba. He had the game's next chance as well, brushing off Bruno Fernandes en route to goal before letting fly, but Diogo Costa repelled the shot with a strong right hand.

Colombia continued to probe and came even closer in their next attack. James Rodriguez bought himself a yard on the edge of the area and fed Jhon Arias with a superb reverse ball. The Palmeiras man charged into the area and drilled an effort towards the bottom corner, only for Ruben Neves to clear it from beneath the crossbar.

That chance woke Portugal up and they almost took the lead themselves. Joao Cancelo cut the ball back for Bruno Fernandes who took a touch and rifled towards goal from 12 yards out, but he was denied by a superb Camilo Vargas save. Joao Felix was next to try his luck, getting in behind the Colombian backline and volleying over.

Colombia continued to create the lion's share of the chances after the break and ought to have



opened the scoring on the stroke of the hour. Santiago Arias was fed down the right and cut the ball back for substitute Richard Rios, and while he got good purchase on the ball, his side-footed effort flew past the near post.

The Arias' then combined shortly after. Jhon laid the ball off to Santiago who cut it straight back to the No.11 whose deflected effort was tipped wide by Costa. Gustavo Puerta was next to try his luck, firing a powerful long-range

effort just past the post from the resulting corner.

Davinson Sanchez thought he'd won it for Colombia in added time as he headed home an inch-perfect Juan Quintero cross. The captain's celebrations were cut short, though, by the linesman's flag.

Second place ensured Portugal will take on Croatia in Toronto on July 3. Colombia, meanwhile, have a Kansas City showdown with Ghana to look forward to a day later. - Agencies

Congo DR come from behind to set up tie against England

ATLANTA: Congo DR completed a sensational comeback to secure progression to the knockout stage of the FIFA World Cup for the first time in their history, as goals from Yoane Wissa (2) and Fiston Mayele delivered a 3-1 win over eliminated Uzbekistan on Saturday. England will be their Round of 32 opponents in Atlanta on July 1.

After back-to-back defeats, debutants Uzbekistan were clearly intent on claiming a positive result in their third World Cup outing, and the White Wolves thought they had taken an incredible lead after just 20 seconds at Atlanta Stadium.

That lightning effort from Eldor Shomurodov was ruled out for offside but the forward did break the deadlock shortly afterwards, as he looped home a delicious finish from a tight angle in the 10th minute.

Congo DR started to apply more pressure as the game wore on, and Wissa drew



them level from the penalty spot in the 68th minute.

Ten minutes later a pair of substitutes combined to put Congo DR ahead, as Meschack Elia's shot was deflected into the path of Fiston Mayele, who applied just enough of a connection to dink the loose ball over Abduvohid Nematov and into the net.

Wissa added his second in injury time with an excellent finish from the edge of the box to ensure Congo DR's progress as one of the best third-place finishers. - Agencies

Venezuela quake: Death toll rises to 1,430 as rescuers continue search for survivors

Almost seven million people may have been impacted by the twin earthquakes in Venezuela, the United Nations estimated. The International Organisation for Migration said “up to 6.76 million people could be affected,” adding that the calculation was based on available population and damage data

CARACAS: The death toll from the twin earthquakes in north-western Venezuela has risen to 1,430, a top lawmaker said. The figure is 55% increase from the previous 920 toll. National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez told state television that another 3,200 people were injured and 3,100 left homeless by the disaster. Earlier, the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre (EMSC) detected an earthquake of magnitude 5.6 off the coast of Venezuela. The 5.6-magnitude earthquake impacted the waters off the coast of Aragua with the seismic event occurring days after the region experienced twin earthquakes that reportedly resulted in the deaths of nearly 1,500 individuals. Residents, meanwhile, have complained of a lack of organisation in the government's recovery efforts, with the situation made worse by mobile and internet outages in some areas. Several aftershocks and smaller



quakes have been reported after Venezuela was hit by two major earthquakes on Wednesday, one with a magnitude of 7.2 and the other 7.5. Rescuers are still on their toes to rescue possible survivors of those earthquakes. At least 1,430 people have been confirmed dead so far after Wednesday's quakes. Another 51,000 have been reported missing, as per Al Jazeera. Authorities have said that recovering survivors will become increasingly unlikely if they are not found within the first 72 hours after an earthquake strikes. Many people are believed to be buried under the rubble from collapsed

buildings, and the death toll is expected to climb. As per UNDP, the earthquakes that struck Venezuela on June 24 caused significant human suffering and loss of life, while also severely affecting livelihoods, infrastructure, and essential services. This includes a preliminary estimate of USD 6.7 billion in direct physical damage, equivalent to around 6% of GDP, according to a satellite-based Rapid Digital Assessment (RAPIDA) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). While the economic impact is substantial, the greatest loss is borne by the people and communities.

Venezuela earthquake may have impacted nearly 7 million, says UN Almost seven million people may have been impacted by the twin earthquakes in Venezuela, the United Nations estimated. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said “up to 6.76 million people could be affected,” adding that the calculation was based on available population and damage data. The projections include up to two million people in Caracas alone. The IOM said the estimate highlights “the potentially vast humanitarian impact of the disaster.”

The national death toll stands at 920, while thousands of people remain missing, many of them trapped under the rubble in the coastal city, La Guaira, and elsewhere. The UN migration agency urged a bigger response from the international community, adding that the country's needs were “immediate and significant.” IOM called for emergency shelter, safe water and sanitation, as well as health care. **Venezuela receives aid from 24 countries** Meanwhile, Venezuela's Acting President Delcy Rodriguez, on

Saturday, said that 24 countries have extended assistance to the country following the devastating twin earthquakes that rattled the South American country a few days back by sending humanitarian aid, specialised rescue teams and thousands of emergency response personnel. In a statement posted on Telegram, Rodriguez said the international community has so far provided 521 tonnes of relief supplies, deployed 86 specialised canine search teams, and sent more than 2,741 search, rescue and technical support personnel, who have already joined Venezuelan teams in responding to the disaster. “At this time, we have received support from 24 countries in the international community who have sent a total of 521 tons of supplies, 86 specialised canine teams and more than 2,741 members of search, rescue and technical support personnel, who are already integrated with our teams to respond jointly to the emergency,” Rodriguez said. She added that the international personnel are working alongside Venezuelan authorities in ongoing search, rescue and relief operations in areas affected by the twin earthquakes. He added that 3,238 people have been injured, while 3,142 families have been displaced after losing their homes. Rescue teams continue to search for survivors as the critical rescue window narrows, with operations being hindered by a shortage of heavy equipment and persistent aftershocks. — Agencies

LIMITED-EDITION



Trump unveils new US passport featuring his image

WASHINGTON, DC: United States President Donald Trump revealed a fresh design for a limited-edition American travel document produced to honour the country's 250th anniversary, displaying a unique variant that incorporates his own image. Publishing the template on Truth Social on Friday, Trump posted, “The U.S.A.'s New Passport, which says, ‘Welcome, but be good!’” The prototype passport page distributed by Trump exhibits a depiction of the President positioned prominently over the Resolute Desk, overlaying the text of the historic Declaration of Independence, with his signature embossed at the base. The facing page presents John Trumbull's renowned artwork, “The Declaration of Independence.” The newly publicised layout seems to utilise a depiction of Trump inspired by his portrait displayed at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington. This version contrasts with

previous mock-ups put forward by the US Department of State earlier this year, which represented the President using an alternate graphic. Later on Friday, the White House published the identical document layout on X, with the caption, “New U.S. Passport to Commemorate America's 250th.” The commemorative travel document was initially published in April as a component of the nationwide events celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States. Authorities had previously characterised the release as “a limited-edition U.S. passport to commemorate the historic occasion of America's 250th anniversary,” boasting “custom artwork and enhanced images on the front, back, and inside covers.” During the initial rollout, an American official told CNN that the special edition “will be the default passport out of the Washington Passport Agency when available” for individuals seeking in-person renewals at that specific facility. — ANI

LATEST IN A SERIES OF GLOBAL HONOURS

Seychelles confers ‘Guardian of the Blue Horizon’ title on Indian PM Modi

VICTORIA: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on Sunday conferred ‘Guardian of the Blue Horizon’, by Seychelles, the highest distinction of the country for leadership in environmental conservation and sustainable development. The award acknowledges PM Modi's long-standing push for sustainable growth and his green vision. This is the latest in a series of global honours recognising PM Modi's work on climate action, sustainable development and green growth. Just last month, in May 2026, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) presented him with the Agricola Medal for strengthening food security, transforming agriculture and promoting sustainable farming. Earlier, in 2018, he received the Seoul Peace Prize for advancing sustainable economic growth, global cooperation and inclusive development. In 2018, the United Nations conferred upon him the prestigious Champions of the Earth Award. Seychelles President conferred the award to PM Modi. In his remarks during the press statement with PM Modi, President Herminie said the two countries are committed to a collective vision for a stable, secure and prosperous Indian Ocean region. “I am honoured to have concluded bilateral meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi today. Our discussions were comprehensive and forward looking reflecting the deep bonds of friendship and mutual trust that unite Seychelles and India. As we mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations, our two countries have recom-



mitted to a partnership rooted in common geography, history and a collective vision for a stable, secure and prosperous Indian Ocean region.” “A centrepiece of our talks was the implementation of the Joint Vision for Sustainability, Economic Growth and Security through Enhanced Linkages, Seychelles adopted earlier this year. This framework provides strategic direction for cooperation across all sectors. I express my deep appreciation for India's steadfast support in translating this vision into tangible outcomes that benefit the people of both nations,” he added. Earlier, PM Modi and the Seychelles President held delegation-level talks. The Indian delegation included External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri. The Seychelles delegation included Vice President Sebastien Pillay, Principal Minister and Minister for Fisheries, Agriculture and the Blue Economy Wallace Cosgrove and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Diaspora Barry Faure. PM Modi and President Herminie also held bilateral-level talks with each other.

PM Modi is on a three-day visit to Seychelles. He will address the National Assembly of Seychelles and also interact with the Indian community. Earlier in the day, PM Modi received a ceremonial Guard of Honour at the State House. On Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented a ‘Made in India’ Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV), PS LESPWAR, alongside six ambulances, 10 utility vehicles and five laser radial boats to Seychelles to strengthen the island nation's maritime surveillance and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) patrol capabilities. The high-level hand-over ceremony was conducted in the presence of Seychelles President Patrick Herminie at the Seychelles Coast Guard Base in Victoria on the initial day of the Prime Minister's official State Visit to the island nation. Detailing the milestone engagement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) posted on X, “Together as partners. Stronger as one. In a special gesture, PM Narendra Modi handed over the ‘Made in India’ Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) PS LESPWAR to President Dr. Patrick Herminie. The FPV will contribute to strengthening Seychelles' maritime surveillance and EEZ patrol capabilities.” “PM also handed over six ambulances, 10 utility vehicles and five laser radial boats, which will further contribute to the development and security of Seychelles. Guided by India's Vision MAHASAGAR, India and Seychelles continue to strengthen their robust defence partnership, contributing to security and stability in the Indian Ocean region,” the ministry added in its social media statement. — ANI



ROUND-UP

Audi Oman hosts exclusive drive experience for all-new Audi Q3



The experience began at the Audi showroom in Ghala Heights with a welcome session and product briefing, before participants set off behind the wheel of the all-new Audi Q3

MUSCAT: Audi Oman hosted an exclusive drive experience for the all-new Audi Q3, offering media representatives, guests, and automotive enthusiasts the opportunity to experience the latest generation of Audi's premium compact

SUV across some of Oman's most scenic destinations. The experience began at the Audi showroom in Ghala Heights with a welcome session and product briefing, before participants set off behind the wheel of the all-

new Audi Q3. The route combined city roads, open highways, and destination stops at Al Sharqiya Aviation Center and St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat, highlighting the Q3's versatility, comfort, and advanced driving dynamics throughout the journey. During the stop at Al Sharqiya Aviation Center, guests were also treated to a helicopter ride experience, offering breathtaking aerial views of the city and adding a memorable touch to the drive experience. Designed to suit modern lifestyles, the third-generation Audi Q3 combines progressive styling, advanced digital technology, and refined performance in a premium compact SUV that delivers both

practicality and sophistication. The experience allowed guests to explore the vehicle's enhanced connectivity features, intuitive digital cockpit, improved cabin comfort, and confident road handling in real driving conditions across Oman. Speaking about the experience, Christian Nehme, General Manager of Audi Oman, said: "The all-new Audi Q3 has been developed to meet the expectations of customers seeking a premium SUV that combines technology, versatility, and refined design for everyday driving. Through this immersive drive experience, we wanted our guests to experience first-hand how the new Q3 per-

forms across different road conditions while showcasing the innovation and comfort that define the Audi brand." The all-new Audi Q3 features Audi's latest digital cockpit experience, combining an intuitive touchscreen interface with advanced driver assistance technologies and enhanced cabin comfort. The vehicle is available with powerful and efficient TFSI engine options, including quattro all-wheel drive variants designed to deliver a smooth and confident driving experience across different terrains. Throughout the journey, guests had the opportunity to interact with Audi Oman representatives and product specialists while

exploring the vehicle's features, design details, and premium ownership benefits available in the Sultanate of Oman. Muhammed Faisal Nawaz, Strategy Manager at Audi Oman, added: "The response to the all-new Audi Q3 has been very encouraging since its launch in Oman. Experiences like these help customers connect with the car beyond the showroom and understand how well it fits into both daily life and weekend adventures." The all-new Audi Q3 is now available for test drives at the Audi Oman showroom, represented by Premium Motors, in both SUV and Sportback body styles, with prices starting from OMR 17,900.

SEAMLESS BANKING

Bank Muscat joins spirit of Khareef Dhofar as main sponsor



MUSCAT: Reaffirming its commitment to national responsibility and active participation in Oman's cultural and social landscape, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced its sponsorship of Khareef Dhofar 2026. The season officially opened on 21 June 2026 and runs through 21 September 2026. This sponsorship is an extension of the Bank's longstanding support for tourism development and the goals of Oman Vision 2040. Bank Muscat firmly believes that tourism is a cornerstone of a diversified national economy and a driver of sustainable development; values that are at the heart of what the bank does every day, as captured in its vision "To serve you better, every day." Khareef Dhofar 2026 is shaping up to be the biggest edition of the season yet, with over 125 cultural, artistic, sporting and entertainment events spread across Dho-

far Governorate. The programme is designed to cement Dhofar's standing as one of the premier seasonal destinations, drawing visitors from across Oman and the wider region. This year's highlights include the second edition of the Dhofar International Theatre Festival, the inaugural Dhofar International Sculpture Festival, traditional symphony and coral performances and a varied lineup of Stand-Up Comedy shows featuring Arab artists. Events are spread across multiple key locations throughout the governorate, including the beloved Ittin Square in Al Saada, Waqt Al-Tifl at Awqad Park and Salalah Public Health Garden, as well as activations in the wilayats of Mirbat, Taqa and Sadah, offering something for every visitor. Speaking on the occasion, Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager - Interior Regions at Bank Muscat, said: "We see Khareef Dhofar as far more than a sponsor-

ship, it is a genuine platform for us to connect with the society. Our participation is rooted in a firm belief that a thriving national economy is built through the active engagement of all its stakeholders. This season plays a vital role in elevating cultural and social awareness, showcasing the rich diversity of Dhofar's heritage and natural beauty, and ultimately strengthening tourism across the Sultanate. As always, we are committed to ensuring that both customers and visitors to Dhofar have seamless access to Bank Muscat's full range of banking services, wherever they are and whenever they need us. We are proud to be part of this iconic national occasion and to reinforce the Bank's presence at some of Oman's most important public and cultural events." Bank Muscat operates 13 branches and 3 Hisaby service centers across Dhofar Governorate, distributed in line with population density and commercial

activity. This is backed by a nationwide network of over 200 branches including retail, corporate and Meethaq branches, 23 banking centers and 916 ATMs and cash deposit machines spanning all governorates of the Sultanate, providing customers with convenient access to cash withdrawal and deposit services around the clock. Customers and visitors to Dhofar can also reach the bank through multiple channels at any time, including the 24/7 Contact Centre and the Bank's social media platforms, reinforcing Bank Muscat's commitment to making banking accessible to everyone during the Khareef season and beyond. Throughout the Khareef season, the Bank is focused on providing visitors with a complete and seamless banking experience. Whether at one of its branches across the governorate, at an ATM, or through the Bank Muscat mobile app, customers can carry out all their banking needs – anytime, anywhere.

ROUND-UP

Al Mouj Muscat marks 20 years of distinction with OMR878mn contribution to Oman’s GDP

From a bold vision to one of Oman’s most impactful economic platforms delivering over OMR 1 billion in revenue and OMR 880 million in foreign direct investment

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat, Oman’s flagship integrated tourism complex, has unveiled the findings of a comprehensive independent impact study showing it has contributed OMR 878 million to the Sultanate’s GDP over the past two decades. This milestone marks twenty years of distinction and reflects the evolution of a living legacy defined by sustained socio-economic creation, investment resilience, and strategic alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

Conducted by leading Omani research company, The Firm for Business and Economic Consulting, the study positions Al Mouj Muscat as a national benchmark for integrated destination development. It demonstrates how large-scale mixed-use projects can accelerate economic diversification, stimulate private sector growth, and create long-term value for the Sultanate.

Over the past two decades, Al Mouj Muscat has generated more than OMR 1 billion in total revenue and facilitated OMR 880 million in foreign direct investment and ownership. The development continues to record approximately OMR 385,000 in daily transactions, reinforcing its role as a dynamic economic engine across the tourism, real estate, and lifestyle sectors. The study also highlights Al Mouj Muscat’s significant in-country value delivery, with estimated 43.6% of expenditure retention within Oman’s economy, alongside support for 167 small and medium enterprises (SMEs).



As a globally connected destination, Al Mouj Muscat has attracted buyers and residents from over 90 nationalities, shaping a diverse and vibrant community while enhancing Oman’s appeal as a destination for investment and premium living. Its long-term financial performance further reflects this strength, delivering a 337 per cent shareholder return through a diversified model spanning residential, hospitality, retail, marina, and leisure assets.

Commenting on the milestone, Ahmed Al Massan, Acting CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said: “Al Mouj Muscat was never intended to be a conventional development; it was designed to demonstrate what integrated destinations can deliver for a national economy. Twenty years on, the results are clear, with sustained investment, measurable economic contribution, and a thriving ecosystem that continues to grow in scale and complexity. As we enter our next phase, our priority is to build on this momentum by unlocking new investment pathways, raising delivery standards, and positioning Oman even

more strongly on the global map for tourism and integrated living.”

His Highness Dr. Adham bin Turki Al Said, Founder of The Firm, added: “Our research shows that what distinguishes Al Mouj Muscat is the consistency and breadth of its impact over time. The data demonstrates a development that not only generates direct economic returns, but also activates wider value chains, which are critical pillars of the country’s long-term development agenda, from SME growth to tourism demand and foreign investment inflows. Few projects operate with this level of integration and measurable economic and social impact. It is this combination that positions Al Mouj Muscat as a prime example of a mature and economically significant integrated tourism developments in the region.”

Diversified engine of economic value

Tourism remains a central pillar of Al Mouj Muscat’s offering, supported by a year-round calendar of events, hospitality assets, and integrated lifestyle experiences that

attract almost four million visitors annually. At the heart of this offering is the hospitality segment, where five branded hotels form a 1,196-key integrated complex, which has contributed OMR 274 million to Oman’s tourism GDP to date.

The development’s award-winning marina further strengthens its appeal as a year-round destination. With 400 berths, 31 tour operator SMEs, and a vibrant waterfront retail and dining offering, Al Mouj Marina supports marine tourism, entrepreneurship, and local business growth, while contributing between OMR 2.5 million and OMR 3.8 million annually to tourism revenues.

Al Mouj Golf, recognised among the world’s top 100 golf courses on nine occasions over the past two decades, has hosted 11 international championships and played a key role in establishing Al Mouj Muscat as a premier sporting destination in the region.

The tourism offer is further reinforced by a dynamic events programme, spanning 142 events to date. These have ranged from international sporting competitions

to world-class lifestyle experiences, generating OMR 245 million in economic impact from events alone. Collectively, these pillars position Al Mouj Muscat as one of Oman’s leading tourism, leisure and lifestyle destinations, while strengthening the Sultanate’s visibility on the global stage.

National catalyst for talent and capability

Beyond its physical footprint, Al Mouj Muscat has become a platform for capability building and knowledge transfer across key sectors, including real estate, urban planning, hospitality, marina operations, and destination management. This expertise increasingly extends beyond the development itself, with professionals engaged in projects across Oman and supporting the growth of the wider real estate and tourism ecosystem.

To date, Al Mouj Muscat has created more than 2,200 direct and more than 5,700 indirect jobs and invested approximately OMR 1 million in human capital and learning. Its 88% organisational health score, as measured by McK-

insey & Company, places it among high-performing organisations globally, reflecting a strong culture of delivery and continuous capability development.

Delivering social and environmental value at scale

Al Mouj Muscat has also set a benchmark for integrated community living in Oman, combining residential, leisure, and public spaces within a cohesive coastal environment. Designed to balance quality of life with long-term sustainability, the destination fosters social cohesion through cultural programming, community engagement, and accessible public spaces that celebrate both Omani heritage and global diversity.

Its commitment to social impact is reflected in over OMR 6.3 million invested in corporate social responsibility initiatives spanning education, health, culture, sports, and environmental stewardship.

Sustainability is embedded across the development, with initiatives including artificial reefs, district cooling, and water efficiency systems enhancing biodiversity and reduced resource consumption. These measures have contributed to a 37% reduction in carbon emissions. Marine life has increased eleven-fold, while terrestrial ecosystems, including Al Mouj Golf, support approximately 140 bird species, reinforcing the ecological value of the destination.

Looking ahead

As Al Mouj Muscat enters its next phase, it does so not simply as an established destination, but as a proven model for what integrated development can achieve at scale. Over two decades, it has built far more than physical infrastructure. It has created a blueprint defined by operational excellence, deep expertise, and the ability to consistently deliver complex, high-quality mixed-use environments.

This next chapter is about extending that leadership. Al Mouj Muscat is set to shape the future of integrated tourism development in Oman and the wider region, setting new standards for how destinations are conceived, delivered, and sustained as long-term drivers of economic and social value.

CAMPAIGN

Experience ‘Own the Momentum’ rewards campaign on the ‘Creative Urban Explorer’ Lexus UXh



MUSCAT: The luxury crossover experience in Oman is reaching new heights this season with the introduction of exclusive rewards on the premium Lexus UXh. Through the newly launched “Own the Momentum” summer campaign, individual retail buyers can easily step up to a sophisticated vehicle designed for modern city life. Running until 8th July 2026, this seasonal initiative gives premium car buyers an excellent opportunity to upgrade their daily drives while enjoying substantial ownership benefits that bring total confidence to every journey.

To make ownership smooth and worry-free, this limited-time summer promotion includes a great package of advantages tailored specifically for the Lexus UX HEV range. Every new UXh purchased during the campaign period comes with 1 year of comprehensive insurance (Oman only), 1 year of free vehicle registration and a 3-year or

30,000 km service package. These excellent benefits ensure complete peace of mind and professional care during the warm summer months, allowing drivers to focus entirely on the pleasure of the drive.

Known as the “Creative Urban Explorer,” the Lexus UXh stands out on the road with its bold design and expressive styling. At the heart of the vehicle is an advanced self-charging hybrid system that pairs a responsive 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine with a high-torque electric motor. This system uses regenerative braking to charge itself automatically while you drive, delivering a highly efficient performance that is perfect for both daily city commutes and long coastal road trips across the Sultanate.

Inside, the cabin serves as a quiet and luxurious retreat from the summer heat, blending beautiful craftsmanship with intuitive technology. The driver-focused cockpit features premium ventilated

leather seats and the Lexus Climate Concierge for personalized temperature control. The modern dashboard houses a stunning 8 inch high-resolution touchscreen, a color head-up display and seamless smartphone integration, along with a convenient wireless charging pad to keep you connected on the move.

Family safety is deeply integrated into the Lexus UXh through the advanced Lexus Safety System+ 3.0 suite. This collection of active safety features includes a Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian Detection, Full-Speed Range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control and Lane Departure Alert with Steering Assist to help protect you at every turn. Luxury car enthusiasts and drivers looking for a perfect balance of style and sustainability are invited to visit their nearest showroom to experience the exceptional Lexus UXh firsthand before the summer offers wrap up.

THIS SUMMER



Dhofar Islamic Credit Cards: Your ideal travel companion

MUSCAT: As the summer travel season gets underway, Dhofar Islamic is empowering customers to travel with greater convenience, flexibility, and peace of mind through its range of Sharia-compliant credit cards, designed to enhance every stage of the travel experience.

Offering an attractive suite of travel-related benefits and lifestyle privileges, Dhofar Islamic credit cards provide customers with access to selected airport lounges, a global network of ATMs, and a host of exclusive offers that make travel more rewarding and enjoyable.

Cardholders can also earn valuable rewards on purchases made both within and outside the Sultanate of Oman, allowing them to maximize benefits while managing travel-related expenses. In addition, customers enjoy an interest-free grace period of up

to 52 days, with no monthly fees, providing greater financial flexibility and convenience during their journeys.

Recognizing the growing importance of digital transactions, Dhofar Islamic has incorporated advanced security features into its credit card offerings. Secure online shopping is enabled through authentication codes that provide enhanced protection for electronic payments, ensuring customers can shop confidently and safely wherever they are in the world.

Dhofar Islamic credit cards are structured in accordance with the principles of Qard Hasan (benevolent loan), offering customers a Sharia-compliant financing solution through a transparent service-fee model based on fixed monthly charges. This approach enables customers to enjoy modern banking conveniences and travel benefits while remaining fully aligned

with Islamic banking principles.

Through its innovative card portfolio, Dhofar Islamic continues to deliver value-added financial solutions that respond to the evolving needs of customers and support contemporary lifestyles. The cards are specifically designed to complement the travel aspirations of individuals and families seeking a seamless blend of convenience, security, and rewarding benefits.

As the Islamic banking window of Bank Dhofar, Dhofar Islamic serves a broad spectrum of customers, including children, youth, women, entrepreneurs, and premium banking clients through its Al Raffa and Al Riadah offerings. The institution remains committed to advancing the Islamic banking sector by introducing innovative products and services that combine excellence, convenience, and full Sharia compliance.



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