

Times

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OF OMAN



51

YEARS OF LEGACY

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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
Development of palm sector discussed

1 Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, hosted yesterday the sixth session of the International Dates Council. >A2

OMAN
Repair of Muttrah Corniche wall on

2 Muscat Municipality is implementing a project to address damage to coastal protections on the Muttrah Corniche, as part of the first phase programme. >A6

SPORTS
Excellent P3 Bronze Cup finish in Portugal

3 Ahmad Al Harthy wrapped-up the GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Endurance Cup season with a richly deserved return to the Bronze Cup podium. >A8

ENHANCED CREATIVITY

Bilarab bin Haitham Initiatives to organise Muscat art exhibition

MUSCAT: Bilarab bin Haitham Initiatives, in partnership with Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, announced the organisation of the fifth edition of the Muscat Art Exhibition 2026, from 28-30 October at the exhibition hall.

This partnership comes as an extension of the Initiatives' mission to empower individuals, enhance creativity, inspire innovation, and expand its journey that began with architecture to encompass visual arts, reaffirming their close connection to the identity of both place and human.

Through the organisation of the exhibition, Bilarab bin Haitham Initiatives aims to support artists, highlight their works, make the artistic experience accessible to various segments of society, and open a space for dialogue among artists, architects, and designers, thereby enhancing the presence of arts in the Sultanate of Oman's cultural landscape.

Eng. Iyad Al Rowas, representative of the Initiatives, pointed out

GRACIOUS INVITE

Oman, UK flags adorn Windsor for His Majesty's visit

WINDSOR: Preparations continue in the United Kingdom (UK) to receive His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik who will be paying a state visit in response to the gracious invitation received by His Majesty from King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth.

The streets of Windsor are adorned with the flags of the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom – a scene that reflects the bonds of friendship and the

historic relations uniting the two friendly countries, and that embodies the manifestations of welcome for the Royal visit of His Majesty the Sultan – a visit that stands as a landmark station in the journey of Omani-British relations.

The visit will advance bilateral cooperation in various fields in a manner that serves mutual interests and boosts the achievement of the two countries' aspirations of further partnership and cooperation. -ONA



OMAN, UK STRENGTHEN HISTORIC TIES THROUGH CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Both the countries have centuries-old relations through education, arts, heritage preservation and people-to-people connections, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation



the arts, heritage preservation, and people-to-people bonds. These deep-rooted ties have been reflected in the context of key institutions and have continued, thanks to active cooperation in contemporary cultural fields.

Cultural cooperation between the two friendly countries represents an extension of long-standing historical relations, emerging within a context of particular official interest and being pursued to be more present and of a qualitative nature along clear tracks, including official meetings and the Oman-UK Joint Working Group.

One of the clauses of the Comprehensive Agreement on

Enduring Friendship and Bilateral Cooperation, signed by the two friendly countries in 2019, includes support for co-operation in education and the strengthening of ties between universities, alumni networks, and youth exchanges.

Within the context of cultural relations between the two friendly countries, the Sultanate of Oman produced a documentary film in 2017 entitled "Crossing the Empty Quarter," reenacting the story of two Omani travellers and a third British explorer who together covered 1,300 kilometres on foot and on camelback across the Empty Quarter. >A5

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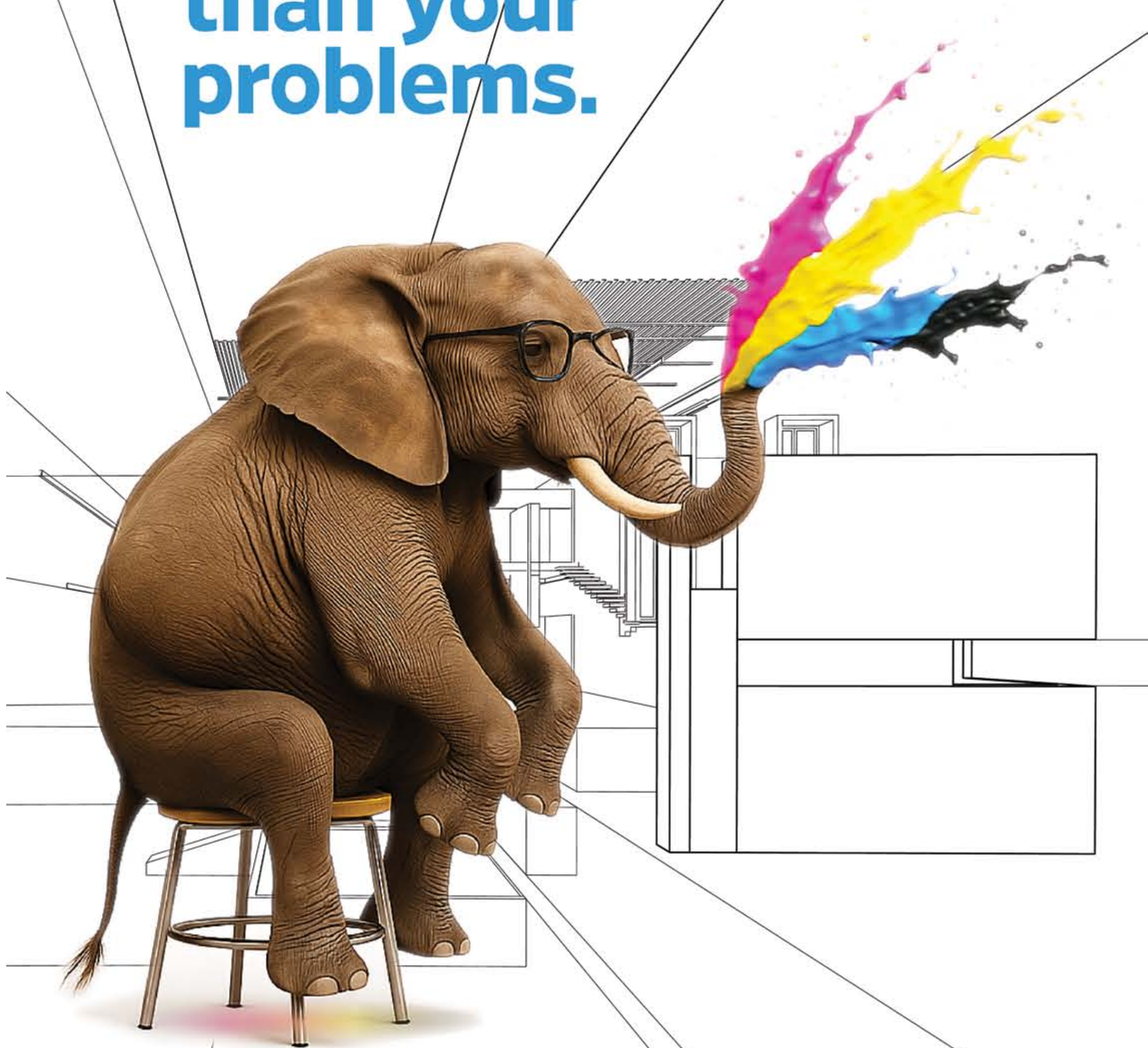
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OMAN

COMMENTARY

My exotic holiday with a bunch of ladies

When I packed my suitcase to embark on my holiday, I never thought there would be surprises once I reached my destination.

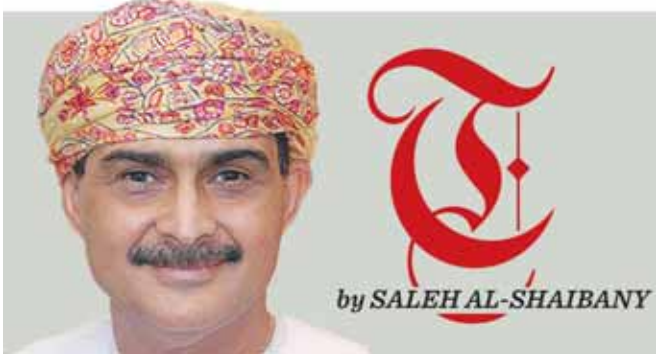
First, the plan was just to travel with my wife and then it all changed. She told me, with pleading eyes, that could we take two of her friends with us? I rubbed my chin, not because it was just a challenge, but looking after three women, perhaps it would be like a mountain to climb. But I assure myself it would be challenge to test my escorting skills.

When she saw my hesitation, she told me “they are lonely” and they needed a break somewhere exotic. They cannot do it by themselves since they needed an escort. I said “yes” so I started the plan.

I was more than happy to do it all. From ticket bookings, hotels, taxis, trains and tours. It was all an adventure and we did not have to cross choppy rivers, climb jagged mountains or trekking the spikey tracks. It was all safe adventure.

But what I did not bargain for was that, I would also be a tour guide throughout the duration of the holiday. I would also be a “body guard” when suspicious people walked behind us during the dark.

But trust me, it all was fun. Why? Because it was different. Something I have not done before while on holiday abroad. It was even hilarious at times. As the days went by, I began to enjoy the “adventure” of taking



by SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

them around. For men who usually take a group of women on holiday will testify to this experience. Shops and bazars are on top of women’s list when they travel. They flashed their money around and I really thought we were going to be mugged. But miraculously, that did not happen. I would like to think that I was around and muggers kept away.

When finally, they let me loose to be on my own for a couple of hours, I found a coffee shop on a busy roadside. So, finally, I started writing this column. At least, I thought, they gave me a topic to write about this week.

On that coffee shop, not only I had a nice hot brew, but an exotic brown bread like the Omani “mandazi.” As I was drinking and eating it, I was wondering where the other “mandazis” were while I was sitting out there.

Since I was relaxing and had time for myself, I watched the crowd, the traffic and even the birds that were chirping

on the tree branches. Then an old couple stopped and started talking to me in their language. I motioned that I was not a local person and they walked away with a smile.

A young man, who was listening, came to me and translated. He said the old couple were asking why I was sitting alone and where was my wife?

I told him somewhere in the jungle of shops escorting her friends. He smiled and said, “good for you and enjoy your free time.”

Ten minutes later, my wife sent me a message to join them for dinner. As usual, they picked a restaurant and I obliged in the same spirit of the holiday mood. When the holiday was over, I was glad of the experience because it was different.

My mother used to say, “men do not think but women think for them.”

There you are. So next time you take a bunch of women on holiday, leave your brains home.

DHOFAR GOVERNORATE

Radio transmission station inaugurated in Muqshin

MUQSHIN: The Ministry of Information opened on Sunday a radio transmission station in the Wilayat of Muqshin, Dhofar Governorate, in a step aimed at expanding the scope of radio coverage in the governorate and enhancing the reach of Oman Radio broadcasts to areas located along the vital road connecting the Governorates of Al Wusta and Dhofar.

Dr. Mohammed Said Al Sha'ashai, Director General of the Directorate General of Information in Dhofar Governorate, stated that the opening of the radio transmission station comes within the framework of the Ministry of Information's efforts to expand radio broadcast coverage and enhance the radio broadcasting system and its technical efficiency, in keeping with the requirements of expanding media services and allowing listeners to benefit from the diverse radio content broadcast by the General Channel, Youth Channel, Holy Quran Channel, and Oman FM English Channel.

For his part, Eng. Ali Ahmed Al Kathiri, Head of the Transmission Section at the Engineering Department in the Directorate General of Information in Dhofar Governorate and Project Manager, explained that the implementation stages of the project included conducting technical tests and necessary preparations to operate



the equipment, ensuring its readiness for radio broadcasting.

He pointed out that this station represents an important addition to the radio broadcasting stations in the governorate, clarifying that Dhofar Governorate currently houses 17 stations broadcasting digital terrestrial television (DVB-T2) and 9 radio transmission stations for the FM

wave, alongside one radio transmission station for the medium wave (AM).

The transmission station in the Wilayat of Muqshin broadcasts across the following frequencies: the Holy Quran Channel on 96.7 MHz, the General Program on 103.9 MHz, the Youth Program on 101.3 MHz, and the English Programme on 92.8 MHz. -ONA

Development of palm and dates sector discussed at meeting

The Council also discussed several topics concerning the enhancement of cooperation among member states, and the exchange of expertise

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, hosted on Sunday in Muscat the sixth session of the Members' Council of the International Dates Council.

The session aimed to discuss a number of topics related to the development of the palm and dates sector and the enhancement of international cooperation in this field.

The meeting, featuring the participation of a number of member states, addressed a range of organizational and technical topics.

It reviewed the Council's annual report, the most prominent achievements during the recent period, and matters related to the Council's plans, programmes, and initiatives aimed at supporting and developing the palm and dates sector at the regional and international levels.

The Council also discussed several topics concerning the enhancement of cooperation among member states, and the exchange of expertise, knowledge, studies, research, technologies, and promising practices in the areas of production, quality, manufacturing, marketing, and international trade. This contributes to raising the competitiveness of date products and enhancing their presence in global markets.

Dr. Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, stated in his speech that hosting the proceedings of the sixth session of the Members' Council of the International Dates Council stems from the Sultanate of Oman's keenness to enhance its role in supporting the Council's decisions to reach the desired level. It also affirms its continuous support for the Council's efforts and cooperation with member states in implementing



the Council's strategic initiatives and projects, and coordinating joint efforts.

Al Habsi affirmed that the palm and dates sector holds special strategic importance, representing a historical, cultural, social, and economic heritage deeply rooted in history. It is a fundamental pillar for food security, an important source of income and employment opportunities, and a key element in the sustainability of rural communities and agricultural oases.

He clarified that data indicates global dates production amounts to approximately 10 million tons annually, with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region accounting for 80 percent of this production. This reflects the strategic importance of this sector and the promising capabilities and opportunities it possesses to enhance international trade, develop manufacturing industries, and expand the scope of agricultural and food investments.

He pointed out that maximizing the economic return from this sector requires shifting from focusing solely on increasing production to building integrated value chains based on improving productivity and quality, devel-

oping sorting, packaging, manufacturing, and marketing processes, enhancing innovation, and opening new markets for dates and their products. This will raise their competitiveness and achieve greater economic returns for producers and investors.

Al Habsi reported that the International Dates Council is considered an effective platform for developing research, investment, and commercial partnerships among the member states and organizations of the Council. It enhances the exchange of information and data, encourages innovation and modern technologies, and adopts joint initiatives that contribute to raising the economic value of dates and improving the sector's competitiveness at the international level.

He indicated that the meeting of the sixth session of the Members' Council of the International Dates Council represents an important opportunity to continue building on the achievements realized at the country level. It aims to enhance joint institutional work and translate the International Dates Council's strategy into initiatives and programs with an economic impact that keeps

pace with the aspirations of our countries and peoples toward a more productive, sustainable, and competitive sector.

He called for the importance of enhancing private sector participation in the Council's programs and initiatives, considering it a key partner in developing manufacturing industries, growing exports, innovating new products, and creating sustainable job opportunities, thereby achieving the shared interests of the member states.

Al Habsi concluded by affirming the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in supporting the Council since its establishment, and its contributions to enhancing its role and standing regionally and internationally. This is in addition to the continuous efforts of the member states to develop the palm and dates sector and enhance its contribution to achieving food security and sustainable development.

For her part, Princess Sarah Bandar Al Saud, Executive Director of the International Dates Council, delivered a speech via video conferencing. She clarified that the proceedings of the sixth session of the Members' Council of the International Dates Council, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, come to continue joint work in the palm and dates sector and explore ways enabling the Council to respond to the priorities of member states, in light of the developments the sector is witnessing in production and international trade.

She added that the Council's work during the recent period has established a base of knowledge and expertise and made progress in the areas of research, capacity building, and international cooperation. This outcome confirms the importance of prioritizing inter-

national references and approved standards, given their impact on the quality of dates and market confidence, and the convergence of specifications and exchange of data and experiences among member states that this requires.

She affirmed the Council's keenness to make the needs of member states the basis for selecting projects and setting priorities, and that the success of the Council's programs should be measured by what they add to the capabilities of the member states. She expressed her hope that the Council becomes a reliable international reference for knowledge and standards, and a platform where the expertise of member states integrates to meet their interests, making cooperation among them a pathway to the growth and enhanced competitiveness of the dates sector.

In a related context, Eng. Abdulrahman Abdulmohsen Al Fadhli, Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Members' Council of the International Dates Council, delivered a speech during the sixth session meeting via video conferencing, in which he expressed his thanks and appreciation for the distinguished efforts of the Sultanate of Oman in hosting and organizing the proceedings of this session.

He stated that the palm and dates sector is currently witnessing an important stage of transformation, moving beyond production growth to maximizing value, raising competitiveness, developing markets and industries, and enhancing sustainability. He pointed out that these transformations highlight the real capabilities the sector possesses to contribute to enhancing food security, supporting agricultural sustainability, raising resource utilization efficiency, and creating sustainable economic and developmental opportunities. This contributes to consolidating the position of dates as a food and economic sector of growing global importance.

He added that the dates sector has recorded increasing global growth over the past five years, with exports rising by approximately 6 percent, driven by changing consumption patterns and growing demand for healthy food products. This represents a strategic opportunity for the International Dates Council to link the capabilities and expertise of member states with the growth in global demand, especially since the production of these countries accounts for about 60 percent of global production, with an annual output

approaching six million tons. This provides the Council with an opportunity to contribute to developing production, manufacturing, and marketing, and enhancing the competitiveness of dates and their products in global markets.

He pointed out that the Council, since its establishment, and with the support and cooperation of member states, has been able to achieve many gains. It has also worked to translate its decisions into practical and executive steps that have contributed to developing the palm and dates sector at various levels. He noted that the adoption of the strategic plan during the extraordinary meeting held in the first quarter of the current year came to form an important step in drawing a clear framework to guide the Council's work and priorities during the upcoming phase, transitioning from planning to execution, and from objectives to results.

He reported that this session is held to continue the work and make decisions that enable the Council to perform its role more effectively, transforming the goals of the strategic plan into a practical reality that opens new horizons for the global growth of the dates sector in the fields of production, manufacturing, and marketing. Achieving these targets requires further cooperation, coordination, exchange of expertise and experiences, and the unification of joint efforts within the framework of the Council's work and strategic priorities. This enhances its contribution to food security, supports economic growth, and achieves a sustainable impact that benefits member states, with its impact extending to the whole world.

The meeting touched upon the importance of the Council's role in providing data and indicators related to production, trade, and markets, and supporting member states in developing joint projects and building partnerships with the private sector, universities, research centers, and relevant institutions. This is alongside developing national capacities and exchanging expertise in the areas of innovation, sustainability, and value chains.

The meeting also addressed the topic of state membership and the opportunities it provides to enhance the participation of member states in formulating trends, strategies, and initiatives related to the future of the palm and dates sector, in addition to enhancing cooperation in the areas of standards, quality, food safety, and access to international markets. -ONA

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Sustainable Energy Research Centre Laboratory opened at SQU

It constitutes a qualitative addition to the national research infrastructure and an integrated platform for developing innovative technologies



MUSCAT: The Sustainable Energy Research Centre Laboratory at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) was opened on Sunday in a step that enhances integration between scientific research, innovation, and national capacity building. The opening was held under the auspices of Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals. The opening of the Sustainable Energy Research Centre Laboratory comes as a fruit of the strategic partnership between Sultan Qaboos University and Oxy Oman, with a total investment of nearly OMR1.5 million across an area of approximately 774 square meters. It constitutes a qualitative addition to the national research infrastructure and an integrated platform for developing innovative technologies and solutions in sustainable energy fields, strengthening research and technical capabilities, and supporting cooperation between academic and industrial institutions. The laboratory comprises a set of specialised research units, including alternative fuels, energy materials, energy efficiency, thermal energy, carbon capture,

utilization, and storage (CCUS) and hydrogen, a smart grids and renewable energy systems modeling and simulation laboratory, and a dedicated studio for training and capacity building, allowing scientific research to be utilized in developing practical solutions that support sector efficiency and sustainability. In a related context, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, represented by Oman Sustainability Centre, and Sultan Qaboos University signed an agreement to execute the second edition of the “Kafa’a” (Efficiency) training program for a duration of three years. The agreement was signed by Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, and HH Sayyid Dr. Fahad Al Julanda Al Said, Vice-Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University. It aims to expand the scope of specialised professional qualification in energy efficiency and connect training outputs with practical application, entrepreneurship, and market needs. The agreement aims to train and qualify 275 participants in energy auditing and 20 participants in measurement and verification, as

well as incubate at least three national teams—each consisting of four members—and support them to develop solutions and services and establish startups specialized in energy efficiency. This contributes to building a national base of professional expertise, developing a local market for specialised services, and creating new economic and job opportunities. The Minister of Energy and Minerals, emphasized that investing in scientific research, innovation, and national capacity building represents a strategic pillar for developing the energy sector and enhancing its competitiveness and sustainability. He pointed out the importance of integrating efforts among government, academic, and private sector institutions in developing innovative technologies and solutions, as well as building national capabilities capable of deploying them to develop the sector and keep pace with its future transformations. Al Aufi explained that the opening of the Sustainable Energy Research Centre Laboratory and the renewal of the “Kafa’a” training program agreement reflect

this orientation by connecting scientific research with practical application, as well as qualifying Omani talents and empowering them to utilize scientific research outputs and specialised knowledge in creating new investment and economic opportunities. This enhances entrepreneurship and local content (in-country value), while contributing to raising energy consumption efficiency and reducing emissions in support of the targets of Oman Vision 2040 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Prof. Amer Saif Al Hinai, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies and Research at Sultan Qaboos University, said that the official launch of the Sustainable Energy Research Centre Laboratory at the university represents a pivotal step in the ongoing cooperation between the university and various national sectors. He added that it serves as a true embodiment of active partnership in supporting scientific research and innovation and qualifying national talents to serve the strategic directions and priorities of the Sultanate of Oman in vital sectors, foremost of which is the energy sector.

He explained that the opening of the laboratory at the university’s Sustainable Energy Research Centre, established with an investment of nearly OMR1.5 million and co-funded by the university and Oxy Oman, comes as an extension of the centre’s efforts since its establishment in 2017. The centre has executed around 61 research projects and attracted research funding of approximately OMR2.39 million, to which industry and external entities contributed about OMR1.95 million, reflecting the importance of partnerships with the industrial sector in supporting scientific research and developing solutions relevant to sector needs. Furthermore, the total scientific publications of the centre reached nearly 100 research papers indexed in the Scopus database, receiving over 2,100 scientific citations, in addition to its contribution to qualifying more than 300 individuals in various energy fields. He affirmed that the laboratory is expected to contribute to enhancing these efforts by providing a research and training environment that allows researchers and trainees to benefit from specialised equipment and technologies and develop their scientific and practical skills, supporting the transfer of knowledge into practical applications that serve sector needs. The agreement to execute the second edition of the “Kafa’a” training program, signed between the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, represented by the Oman Sustainability Centre, and Sultan Qaboos University, continues efforts to qualify national talents in energy efficiency. The agreement targets training 275 participants in energy auditing, 20 participants in measurement and verification, and incubating at least three national teams and supporting them in developing special-

ised solutions and establishing startups in this field. He added that the laboratory seeks to reflect the university’s keenness to continue harnessing its research capabilities and academic expertise in supporting effective national partnerships, as well as developing innovative solutions that respond to the needs of vital sectors and contribute to achieving the targets of Oman Vision 2040 and reinforcing paths of sustainability and net zero. For his part, Eng. Mohsin Al Jabri, Director General of the Oman Sustainability Centre, explained that expanding energy efficiency projects requires building a national base of specialised expertise and services, and that the “Kafa’a” programme supports this direction by linking qualification with execution needs and enhancing the ability of Omani talents to provide economically viable solutions with measurable impact in reducing consumption and emissions. He added that renewing the partnership with Sultan Qaboos University solidifies the continuity of this path and supports the development of a national sector for energy efficiency services, enhancing the Sultanate of Oman’s ability to execute its targets and capitalise on associated economic opportunities. The renewal of the “Kafa’a” program agreement builds on the results achieved in its first edition, which lasted six training weeks with the participation of 50 male and female trainees. It covered the fundamentals of energy auditing, field application, and qualification for the Certified Energy Auditor (CEA) examination awarded by the Association of Energy Engineers (AEE), where 38 participants obtained the certification, representing a success rate of 76 percent of total participants. -ONA

31 OCTOBER

Deadline set for registration of Municipal Councils’ polls

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Interior recently announced that 31 October 2026 has been set as the final date to submit registration applications or to transfer contestants’ registration within the electoral register of Municipal Councils elections (of the 4th term). The Ministry said that voters



who wish to register to the forthcoming Municipal Councils elections, or want their registration be transferred from one wilayat to another, should submit their applications via “Intikhab” mobile application or via the official Elections Website (elections.om) before the aforementioned deadline. -ONA

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING

Discussion on initiatives to enhance local content

MUSCAT: The Local Content Executive Committee on Sunday held its second annual meeting during which it reviewed performance indicators regarding local content development within establishments that come under the supervision of the executive panel. The meeting looked into sectoral efforts and initiatives aimed at expanding the use of local products, the improvement of public services and means of empowering the national workforce. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Minister of Economy.

During the meeting, the committee followed up the implementation of outcomes of its previous meetings, assessed the performance of the local content during the first half of the year (2026) and discussed national efforts and initiatives aimed at enhancing the contribution of local content to the development of the national economy. The participants stressed the importance of integrating the roles of government units, the military and security sectors, companies operating in the oil and gas sector and affiliates of Oman Investment Author-

ity (OIA). They also underscored the need to promote cooperation, exchange expertise and share insights from successful practices across different sectors, with the prime objective of developing the local content system. The meeting falls within the mandates of the Local Content Executive Committee. The panel’s mandates include providing strategic guidelines for national efforts, monitoring performance, promoting cross-sectoral integration and leveraging benefits gained from successful initiatives and experiences. -ONA

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A shared maritime legacy shapes Oman-UK relations

Oman has remained a trusted partner, a channel of communication on sensitive files, a mediator in complex regional issues, and a source of stability in a turbulent region

MUSCAT: Omani-British relations draw their historical roots from the convergence of two maritime powers in the Indian Ocean, a beginning embodied in the Treaty of 1800 that enshrined a framework of “permanent friendship” between the two countries. On 18 January of that year, Sayyid Sultan bin Ahmed and Captain John Malcolm, envoy of the British Governor-General in India, signed a supplementary agreement affirming the Treaty of 1798 and stipulating that “the friendship of the two States may remain unshook till the end of time, and till the sun and moon have finished their revolving career.”

The first half of the nineteenth century is regarded as the golden age of this relationship. During the reign of Sayyid Said bin Sultan (1806–1856), the Omani fleet possessed major vessels, among them the ship “Liverpool,” built in Bombay in 1826 and armed with seventy-four cannons—specifications rivalling those of the great European powers of the time. Sayyid Said later presented it to King William IV, and it was incorporated into the Royal Navy. This parity reflects the depth of Oman’s maritime tradition, for the Omanis, after expelling the Portuguese from Muscat in 1650, had come to dominate the trade routes of the western Indian Ocean.

In this context, Oman News Agency (ONA) presents the views of a number of researchers and specialists in historical affairs, offering a historical narrative of the most prominent features of the friendship between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, with a focus on how this relationship began in the nineteenth century and continues to the present day under the Renewed Renaissance of the Sultanate of Oman, led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Dr. Nasser bin Abdullah Al Sagri, Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), said that the anticipated state visit by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom acquires exceptional historical and civilizational significance. It comes as an extension of relations whose roots reach back to the late eighteenth century, evoking a long legacy of political communication and civilizational interaction between the two countries, and carries profound symbolic meaning as the first state visit to the United Kingdom since 1982, embodying the continuity and renewal of relations across generations and eras.

He explained that Omani-British relations are read as a unique or exceptional model within the context of Britain’s relations with the countries of the region—a distinction owed not merely to their antiquity, but to the historical and diplomatic characteristics that set them apart in both quantity and quality.

He added: “At a time when Britain’s relations with a number of countries in the region crystallized during the twentieth century, the official roots of relations between Oman and Britain extend back to 1798, reflecting more than two centuries of continuous communication and interaction. This historical extension was not merely a chronological succession of events and interests; across multiple phases it contributed to the formation of what can be described as a historical-diplomatic balance in which mutual expertise, interests, and a level of trust and political understanding accumulated, granting this relation-



ship a degree of particularity, flexibility, and continuity not equally available in many other regional relationships.”

He indicated that the continuity of Omani-British relations across disparate historical periods is explained as the product of conscious diplomatic engineering, having succeeded in transcending historical phases marked by tensions and major events that swept the region—from the Cold War and the post-colonial era, to the emergence of oil and the transformations it wrought, to globalization and the rise of new powers, and on to the crises the region currently witnesses. At every stage, the relationship between the two countries was redefined in keeping with the context.

He pointed to several factors that contributed to the relationship’s endurance across decades, foremost among them the intersection of deep interests between the two sides in security, trade, and energy; the accumulation of trust and understandings; and the strategic flexibility that made the relationship adaptable to change without rigidity or binding dependency, in addition to the human dimension embodied in deeply rooted personal and institutional ties that gave the relationship another dimension lacking in many alliances and relationships.

He noted that a clear Omani influence on British policy toward the region can be observed, as the Sultanate of Oman has remained a trusted partner, a channel of communication on sensitive files, a mediator in complex regional issues, and a source of stability in a turbulent region. Britain, in turn, benefited from Oman’s geostrategic location in securing international navigation corridors, and from cultural and educational cooperation that reinforced the British presence in the region. He explained that this mutual influence reflects the nature of a relationship that has never been one-directional but rather mutually beneficial, making it a rich case study for understanding the dynamics of mutual influence in asymmetrical international relations.

He pointed out that this relationship offers an important lesson: that history, as strategic memory, helps in understanding the present and envisioning the future. Hence the value of the Omani-British experience lies not only in its longevity, but in its abil-

ity to move across different historical phases while retaining an essence of communication, dialogue, and mutual interests.

In a related context, Dr. Badriya Mohammed Al Nabhani, a researcher in history, affirmed that the nineteenth century constitutes a pivotal phase in the history of Omani-British relations, noting that she tends to read this century in three stages. She explained that the first stage began in an international context, as on 12 October 1798, the first cooperation agreement between the Sultanate of Oman and Britain was signed by Sayyid Sultan bin Ahmed and the envoy of the East India Company, Mehdi Ali Khan. On 18 January 1800, Captain John Malcolm affirmed this agreement, under which the presence of an agent of the Company in Muscat was approved.

She noted that the second stage is the era of Sayyid Said bin Sultan (1806–1856), which in her view was the most mature phase of Omani diplomacy in that century. She explained that the third stage began with the death of Sayyid Said, and noted that during the reign of Sultan Faisal bin Turki, the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation was signed on 19 March 1891. She explained that the milestones of cooperation between Oman and Britain can be summarized in four: first, the security of navigation in the Gulf, where Omani forces participated in the campaigns of 1809 and 1819–1820 that culminated in the General Treaty of 1820; second, cartography, where the Indian Navy conducted precise surveys of the Omani coasts in the 1830s, accompanied by travellers such as Lieutenant James Wellsted, who published his book on his travels in Oman in 1838, and these maps served commercial navigation for long decades.

Third, communications, where a telegraph station was established in 1864 on the island of Maqlab in Khasab, Musandam, as part of the line linking India to Europe. Fourth, steamships, where vessels of the British India Steam Navigation Company began calling regularly at Muscat from the 1860s, connecting it to Bombay and Basra.

She noted that under the Renewed Renaissance led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the relationship has acquired a clear economic dimension consistent with Oman Vision

2040, as the United Kingdom was in 2025 the largest foreign investor in the Sultanate of Oman, with its direct investments amounting to nearly \$42 billion, an increase of 11 percent over the previous year. In January 2022, a Sovereign Investment Partnership was signed between Oman Investment Authority and the British Office for Investment, targeting clean energy and technology. On 20 May 2026, negotiations for a free trade agreement between the United Kingdom and the GCC countries, which began in June 2022, were concluded.

For her part, Dr. Bahiya Said Al Athobi, a researcher in Omani military history, explained that when speaking of Omani-British military relations, it is necessary to distinguish between the early beginnings of political and maritime relations between the two countries and the phase in which military cooperation took on a direct character in organizing forces and establishing military units.

She added that the most prominent shift in the nature of military relations began in the second decade of the twentieth century, specifically from 1913, when Oman witnessed internal political developments that necessitated a reconsideration of the organization of forces in Muscat.

She noted that British documents revealed the role played by the British Political Resident in the Gulf, Percy Cox, who in 1913 presented a conception for forming a military force in Muscat. This was followed by the Omani military statement issued by Sultan Taimur bin Faisal in 1914, and then the Political Agent and British Consul in Muscat, Robert Benn, advanced a plan for the formation of the Muscat Levy Corps, encompassing the organizational and financial aspects necessary for its establishment.

She explained that these plans reveal the beginning of the transition from reliance on traditional military formations and auxiliary forces to thinking about establishing a more regular force subject to a defined military organization.

She pointed out that among the most prominent milestones worth pausing at is the Battle of Bayt Al-Falaj in 1915, which represented an early model of joint military operations between the forces of the Sultanate of Oman and British forces within the framework of the internal military conflict in Oman. She explained that the phase of establishing the Muscat Levy Corps in 1921 came to form a foundational milestone in the history of modern military organization in the Sultanate of Oman, after a series of military plans and proposals put forward during the preceding years.

She said that the relationship between the two countries was not based on entirely identical motives: Oman sought to enhance its security and stability and build forces capable of confronting internal challenges, while the Brit-

ish position was also linked to protecting its strategic interests in the Gulf and securing the position of Muscat. Therefore, she believes that 1913 marked the beginning of a new phase in Omani-British military relations, while 1921 constituted an important milestone in the transformation of this relationship into institutional cooperation linked to the building of regular forces in the Sultanate of Oman.

She noted that documents relating to joint military exercises in the 1960s acquire particular importance because they provide precise details about the nature of training cooperation between the two countries. Among the important examples of this are British reports relating to the series of field exercises known as (OMEX), carried out during 1961 and 1962, in which British units participated in cooperation with units of the Sultan’s Armed Forces, including the Muscat Battalion, the Northern Frontier Battalion, and the Air Force.

She explained that the role of British expertise and experience contributed to accelerating certain aspects of modernization, particularly in the fields of leadership, training, and technical specializations, but it is important to emphasize that this development came within the framework of specific Omani needs imposed by security and military circumstances, and was then reinforced by the national orientation toward building modern armed forces.

She revealed that training cooperation between the two friendly countries preceded Al Saif Al Sareea “Swift Sword” maneuvers by decades, and that Omani and British forces had been conducting joint field exercises since the early 1960s. She believed that the Omani experience in military training was not merely a direct transfer of British expertise, but was based on benefiting from this expertise and re-employing it in a local environment of a different geographical and military nature, for Oman possesses diverse terrain from towering mountains to vast deserts and coastal areas, which necessitated the development of skills and training methods suited to these environments.

She noted that these maneuvers reflected an advanced level of coordination between the armed forces of the two countries, especially in the areas of operational planning, logistical support and joint command. They also highlighted the importance of benefiting from Oman’s diverse geographical environment in conducting military exercises. She explained that among the important milestones that followed these maneuvers was the signing of the joint defence agreement between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom in 2019, which reinforced the institutional framework for defence cooperation between the two countries.

She added that under the Renewed Renaissance led by His

Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Omani-British military relations have continued to develop, among the most prominent manifestations of which is the joint military exercise “Khanjar Oman,” which included joint field exercises aimed at developing combat and training efficiency and enhancing the ability to coordinate and carry out joint military tasks.

She concluded by affirming that the study of Omani-British military relations reveals a long historical trajectory of transformations, beginning with understandings linked to maritime security and commercial interests, then developing into direct cooperation in organizing, training, and arming military forces, and culminating in modern defence partnership. Historical documents have shown that this cooperation was not constant in its nature or objectives, but was influenced by the political and military circumstances through which Oman and the region passed, and by the strategic interests of each party.

For his part, Dr. Younis bin Jamil Al Nu’amani, a researcher in historical affairs, said that trade played a pivotal role in Omani-British rapprochement, particularly given Oman’s strategic location on global trade routes, and that the economic aspect, especially commercial exchange, was the gateway to the convergence of the two countries. He added that the agreement signed by Britain with Oman in 1798 is among the most prominent and earliest agreements that paved the way for Omani-British rapprochement, as dangers were closing in on Oman both internally and externally. Sayyid Sultan bin Ahmed therefore renewed the treaty with Britain in 1800, with new clauses added, and commercial agreements between the two countries followed thereafter in what later became known as the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce.

He explained that with regard to missions and diplomatic representation, Sayyid Said bin Sultan bin Ahmed Al Busaidi signed the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce with Britain in 1839, whose third clause stipulated the exchange of consular representation between the two countries. After this treaty, Omani-British relations became alliance relations. He noted that the voyage of the Omani ship “Sultana” to London in 1842, carrying the envoy and ambassador Ali bin Nasser, is among the most important stages of diplomatic representation between Oman and Britain, as he carried with him letters and lavish gifts addressed to Queen Victoria.

He said: “The relationship between Britain and Oman can be described as one of mutual respect, for neither imposed its culture on the other; rather, each respected and came to know the other, unlike some countries that imposed their policies and culture at the same time.”

He noted that there are indicators pointing to the depth of cultural relations, among them the Omani-British Friendship Association, the British Council, and partnerships between educational institutions, such as the adoption of curricula like the Cambridge curriculum, as well as the cooperation of Sultan Qaboos University with several British universities, and the scholarships offered by both countries.

He noted that museums play a prominent cultural and educational role, and that there is cooperation between the National Museum of Oman and British museums (such as the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum) in many respects. He believes that this civilizational acculturation is important and serves the interests of the two countries, which are bound by historical relations extending over four centuries.

Dr. Younis believes that political and economic interests were—and still are—the main driver in relations between the two countries. Accordingly, these relations must be invested in light of the existence of great opportunities for economic, cultural, and scientific exchange; other aspects must also be developed, and partnerships built in diversifying income sources, environmental protection, net zero, and benefiting from all expertise in both countries.

Omani-British relations are read as a unique or exceptional model within the context of Britain’s relations with the countries of the region—a distinction owed not merely to their antiquity, but to the historical and diplomatic characteristics that set them apart in both quantity and quality.

OMAN-UK BOND

British Council has been a pivotal pillar of cultural ties

<FROM A1 This journey retraced the first documented crossing of the Empty Quarter desert in 1930, recorded by an Omani named Sheikh Saleh bin Kalut and a Briton named Bertram Thomas—an unprecedented achievement that made headlines around the world.

This documentation reflects one facet of the civilisational interconnectedness between the two friendly countries and peoples, affirming the depth of historical communication across past decades, concretely embodied in reality across various fields and at different levels.

There are also joint projects between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, most notably the exploratory journey project “Oman: Jewel of Arabia,” launched in London in November 2024 under the patronage of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, and His Royal Highness Prince William of Wales.

Cultural cooperation extends prominently into the museum sector, as Omani institutions and the British Museum have established a sustainable relationship, exemplified by the British Museum’s International Training Programme, through which Omani museum specialists acquired specialized skills in collections care, valuation work, museum practices, and institutional governance.

Exhibitions such as “Jewellery and Identity,” which featured Omani jewellery and costumes gifted to the British Museum, have allowed British audiences to explore Omani heritage and highlighted the close cultural ties between the two countries.

This cooperation continues to flourish, with dialogue ongoing between Omani and British museums to explore new horizons for knowledge exchange and cultural understanding, in addition to the cultural and heritage exhibitions organized by the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in London and cultural tourism promotion campaigns in various British cities.

The British Council has been a pivotal pillar of this relationship since opening its office in the Sultanate of Oman in 1972. Over the past decades, the Council has facilitated educational and cultural exchange on a wide scale, providing English language training to more than 6,000 people annually and enabling more than 16,000 people to obtain British qualifications. Its programmes extend to encompass the arts, education, and society.

The Council also runs the UK alumni network in the Sultanate of Oman, which comprises more than 1,500 graduates and offers events for networking and professional development. In parallel with these efforts, the British Omani Society, founded in 1976,



works to strengthen the historical and cultural ties between the two countries through lectures, publications, and outreach in both Muscat and London. In 2011, the Society established the “Next Generation Group” to ensure the continuation of this deep friendship across younger generations.

Among the Society’s most prominent activities is the “Arts Group” project, which began in 2024 and focuses on intellectual and artistic exchange between Omani and British artists. Omani artists travelled to Britain in 2024, and in January 2026 British artists visited the Sultanate of Oman to participate in workshops in Muscat and the desert, with an art exhibition held at the British Embassy in Muscat in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

By bringing together Omani and British artists, the project fosters the exchange of ideas, techniques, and perspectives, contributing to the building of a vibrant artistic community that reflects the shared commitment of both countries to cultural development.

The British Omani Society also hosted last September a series of introductory sessions for the “Live Oman” initiative, held on Oxford Street in London, to introduce the Sultanate of Oman as an integrated destination for living, working, and investing, with the participation of a number of local and international institutions and companies investing in the Sultanate of Oman.

Michelle Potts, Director of the British Omani Society, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the Royal visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the United Kingdom embodies the strength of Omani-British relations and the shared commitment to building a bright future, as the Society celebrates its golden jubilee, marking fifty years of supporting friendship, understanding, and cooperation between the two countries.

She noted that the visit reflects the growing cooperation in the fields of education, culture, innovation, and trade, and that through the Society’s programmes, events, and networks—which help trans-

form these aspirations into firmly rooted people-to-people bonds—it has reached thousands of individuals over fifty years through educational exchanges, cultural initiatives, and commercial engagement.

She added that the Society has evolved over fifty years from an organization founded by 86 members into a community bringing together individuals, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and more than 80 corporate members.

She explained that the Society’s role lies in fostering the personal and institutional relationships that form the foundation of the broader bilateral partnership. By bringing together policymakers, academics, business leaders, cultural organizations, and young professionals, the Society contributes to creating opportunities for cooperation, mutual understanding, and shared success.

She said: “The bonds between our two countries far transcend official relations, and we feel them in friendships, educational exchanges, cultural partnerships, and the desire of people in both the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom to learn from one another. These people-to-people bonds are what make the ties more resilient and sustainable.”

She noted that while governments, institutions, and companies play an important role, it is the personal relationships formed through study, culture, work, and shared experiences that create lasting understanding.

She explained that over fifty years the Society has supported educational programmes, cultural initiatives, research projects, youth exchanges, and scholarships that have enhanced understanding between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom.

She noted that among the Society’s most prominent achievements is its support for the preservation of more than 120 archival collections related to the Sultanate of Oman, the building of a specialized library containing more than 700 publications on Oman, and enabling hundreds of young people to experience the Sultanate of Oman

directly through its educational programmes.

She noted that as the Society looks to the future, Oman Vision 2040 provides a clear ambition and a platform to continue strengthening the relationships underpinning the broader partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom.

She noted that the Society’s focus will increasingly centre on engaging younger generations, creating opportunities for cooperation in areas such as innovation and sustainability, and ensuring that cultural and educational exchange remains at the heart of bilateral relations. She affirmed that the next chapter will be about building on fifty years of success while keeping pace with the aspirations of future generations.

She explained that among the Society’s most prominent roles is introducing the British public to the diversity of Omani culture, achieved through lectures, exhibitions, artistic collaboration, publications, and cultural events that celebrate Oman’s heritage and contemporary achievements.

She noted that with regard to upcoming events, and within the framework of the 2026 British Autumn Festival organized by the British Embassy in Muscat, the “Stal Gallery” will host an art exhibition by the British Omani Society showcasing works by British and Omani artists who participated in an initiative to promote artistic exchange and development.

On another front, relations between the friendly peoples of the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom enjoy a venerable history, having transcended official ties to reach an authentic human friendship, as Omani and British students exchange academic and cultural visits, fostering mutual understanding between the new generation.

Omanis and Britons are also bound by numerous commercial and social relationships, in addition to tourism exchanges that are witnessing continuous growth. Additionally, the resident communities in both countries contribute to strengthening these bonds through cultural activities

and community initiatives, making the relationship between the two countries’ peoples a model of firmly rooted friendship and fruitful cooperation.

In this context, Luke Sands, a British student who studied at the Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers in the Wilayat of Manah in A’Dakhiliyah Governorate, said: “I chose the Sultanate of Oman because I was initially drawn to the diversity of its nature; I watched videos of trips to the Sultanate of Oman and was amazed by the variety of nature in this country, from valleys and mountains to deserts and beaches.”

He added: “As someone from outside the Sultanate of Oman, I initially found traditional Omani dress somewhat unfamiliar. But during my time in this venerable country, I grew to love this attire greatly and decided to wear it myself on many occasions.”

Reflecting on his days in the Sultanate of Oman, Luke Sands said: “We would spend the morning attending classes, while we spent the afternoons completing our homework, and in the evening we would go out to play various sports as well as shop at shopping centres. I truly miss those beautiful days in the Sultanate of Oman very much.”

He extended an invitation to all his peers to visit the Sultanate of Oman, whether to study or for tourism, affirming that he spent wonderful times in the Sultanate of Oman with one of the kindest peoples he has met in his life, as he described them.

Regarding relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, he said: “The friendship between the Sultanate of Oman and my country is firmly rooted in history, and I hope that reciprocal visits between officials of both countries will contribute to driving these relations toward broader horizons.”

He added: “I have spent sufficient time in the Sultanate of Oman and have come to feel that I am an unofficial ambassador for Omani-British relations, because people-to-people relations are an integral part and a complementary element of official relations.”

For her part, Luna Holden, a British student who also studied at the Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers, said: “I chose the Sultanate of Oman to develop my Arabic by using it daily, and because I have an academic interest in the history of travel and communication between Oman and India, and in the cultural and commercial interactions between different regions of the world. I studied Arabic alongside Hindi and Urdu at the University of Oxford, and I am interested in how ideas, customs, and knowledge are transmitted between societies. Therefore, I wanted to

learn about Oman’s history and culture through books, as well as through daily life and direct communication with people.”

She added: “The experience of forming friendships was beautiful, because I learned a great deal through talking with people. At times it was difficult to express my thoughts in Arabic, but I learned not to fear mistakes. I realized that communication depends on respect and curiosity, not merely on mastering the language. I came to appreciate the culture of hospitality, especially the serving of coffee and dates to guests. I realized that this custom expresses generosity, respect, and that everyday details can reveal much about a society’s culture.”

Speaking about relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, she said: “I see the relations between the two countries as founded on history, trade, education, and cultural exchange. I believe that learning the language and getting to know people helps build stronger relationships, because understanding does not come from political agreements alone, but also from shared human experiences. Stereotypes are sometimes influenced by the media, which may focus on conflicts more than on daily life. My experience in the Sultanate of Oman helped me understand the diversity of society and the importance of listening to people directly rather than relying on stereotypes or generalizations.”

She affirmed in conclusion: “This experience in the Sultanate of Oman made me more open to different perspectives and more aware of the influence of culture on how we understand the world. I feel that I can be an unofficial ambassador by sharing my experience with my family and friends in Britain, and encouraging them to learn about Oman and its culture.”

Saif Abdul Latif, a British student who studied Arabic at the Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers, said: “When I saw the opportunity to study in the Sultanate of Oman, I seized it immediately because it gave me the chance to experience living in this beautiful country. Although I had only very limited knowledge of Arabic, I was familiar with Omani culture and customs through many members of my family who had visited Oman.”

He added: “I found forming friendships with Omani students very easy. The Omani students welcomed all the students at the Institute with open arms and made the experience exceptional. I encountered no linguistic or cultural barriers, but when we met outside the Institute I would ask them to speak to me in the local dialect so I could learn as much new vocabulary as possible.” -ONA

BAIT AL FALAJ CAMP

War Course begins at NDC

MUSCAT: The second War Course began on Sunday at the National Defence College (NDC) at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies in Bait Al Falaj Camp for a number of senior officers from various military and security units.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Rear Admiral Ali Abdullah Al Shidi, Commandant of the National Defence College.

In his speech, the Commandant of the National Defence College



pointed out that the course includes a number of information, concepts, theories, experiences, and mechanisms for handling and

weighing them within a complex strategic environment.

He added that it also covers analysing situations, diagnosing their causes, and forecasting their future repercussions to support the decision-making process at the strategic level and enhance the ability to make appropriate decisions in accordance with varying circumstances within an integrated system aligned with national interests.

-ONA



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/2026/100	OWNER'S ENGINEER SERVICES FOR NETWORK SURVEY & DESIGN OF NDS DISTRIBUTION PROJECTS AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICE FOR THE PERIOD 2027 - 2029	28-October-2026	12-November-2026	525.000

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



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Ministry of Defence

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

1. The medical city of military and security invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders:

No	Subject	Tender Number	Grade	Last date for Purchasing Tender document	Last date to submit bids	Tender document Fees + Vat
1.	Residential Building Project	01/2026	First, Excellent	26 October 2026	22 November 2026	700 OMR
2.	Purchase Of Microbiology Total Lab Automation	23/2026	--	26 October 2026	22 November 2026	840 OMR
3.	Purchase Of Complete Machine Ultrasound	24/2026	--	26 October 2026	22 November 2026	335 OMR
4.	Providing Cleaning Services For The Headquarters And The Hospital Of The Medical City Of Military And Security Services	25/2026	--	26 October 2026	22 November 2026	1109 OMR

2. Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the secretary of the the Tender Committee in Medical City of Military and Security Services between 0900 to 1300 on the working days.

3. Omanisation compliance certificate (issued by ministry of labor) with a validity period not exceeding one month from the date of issuance must be submitted when tenders document collection.

4. payment of the tenders document to be made by transferring the amount to the bank account of Medical City of Military and Security Services details are provided on the official website (www.mcms.gov.om/tenders).

Social Development Ministry celebrates Omani Women’s Day

The celebration was held under the auspices of Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development celebrated on Sunday in Muscat the Omani Women's Day, which falls on 17 October every year.

The celebration was held under the auspices of Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

The celebration included a theatrical performance which reviewed the journey of celebrating Omani women since the Omani Women's Symposium held at Saih Al Makarim in the Wilayat of Sohar in 2009. That symposium constituted a prominent national milestone in the journey of Omani women, under the royal blessing of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said and the declaration of 17 October as Omani Women's Day, signalling a new phase of focus on women's issues and aspirations and enhancing their participation in the national development process.

The performance reviewed the milestones of celebrating Omani Women's Day since 2010, including the honouring of distinguished female role models and the introduction of women's contributions across state institutions and various sectors. It also highlighted the diversity of fields covered by the

accompanying events over the years, to include social work, education, culture, economics, community initiatives, voluntary work, and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the performance recalled the milestone honouring of Omani women in 2020 by Her Highness the Honourable Lady and the national significance it carried, reflecting appreciation for women's achievements across various fields of work and giving. It reaffirmed the importance of highlighting distinguished female role models as inspiring examples for future generations, and as testimonies to Omani women's competence and capability to bear responsibilities and contribute to development paths.

The performance addressed the key features of celebrating Omani women during subsequent years; 2023 witnessed a focus on cultural and literary fields, while the 2024 celebration centered on women's contributions to culture, literature, and poetry, as well as their role in enriching cultural life, preserving national heritage, and enhancing its presence. The 2025 celebration came under the slogan "She is Oman," reaffirming women's connection to their national identity and their contributions to the renaissance journey, while highlighting their achievements in

social, professional, cultural, and economic domains.

Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, honoured 30 Omani women working in the energy, minerals, and environment sectors, comprising 10 honourees in the energy sector, 12 honourees in the environment sector, and 8 honourees in the minerals sector, in appreciation of their efforts and contributions in vital sectors linked to economic development, sustainability, and natural resource management.

The selection of these sectors serves to emphasise the diversity of work fields in which Omani women contribute, as well as the scientific and professional qualifications, specialised expertise, and ability to keep pace with technical developments and elevate performance required by these fields. It also underscores the importance of highlighting female competencies working in vital domains and presenting their professional experiences, thereby inspiring young generations and encouraging them to participate across various development sectors.

Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, affirmed in a statement that celebrating and honoring Omani women comes in appreciation of the efforts and expertise they

offer in sectors considered pillars of the national economy and tied to the future of development in the Sultanate of Oman. He added that this comes as an extension of the high attention accorded by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to enhancing women's status and participation in the national development process.

He noted that this recognition highlights women's presence in workplaces and leadership positions, affirming that competence and dedication are the basis for participation and excellence. He added that it also represents a message of encouragement to young women to benefit from available opportunities to contribute to these sectors and participate in building their future.

Al Aufi explained that Omani women's contributions to the energy, minerals, and environment sectors are witnessing growth and diversification, as their presence has extended from technical, engineering, and research fields to planning, policymaking, management, and leadership, reaching senior executive positions, including heading companies in the oil and gas sector and leading operational processes and strategic projects. — ONA

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MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Coastal protection project at Muttrah Corniche underway

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality is implementing a project to address damage to coastal protections on the Muttrah Corniche, as part of the first phase, which includes zones four and five.

Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Nabhani, a roads engineer at Muscat Municipality, explained that the project spans 268 meters at a cost of OMR3 million. It aims to enhance the protection of the road from the effects of waves and erosion and to mitigate future

damage. Al-Nabhani said that the project includes rehabilitating rock protections, constructing concrete piers, installing breakwater units, and repairing damaged sections of existing walls, in addition to maintaining the road and sidewalks.

He added that technical monitoring of the stabilisation piers and concrete mixes, rock testing, and verification of the quality of the protection units are ongoing to ensure the completion of the work according to the approved technical specifications.

MARITIME ACCIDENTS

Training programme

MUSCAT: An advanced training programme on investigating maritime accidents and incidents is being organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology—represented by the Transport Safety Office.

The 5-day programme, which kicked off on Sunday, aims to develop specialised national capabilities in the field of investigating maritime accidents and raise

the readiness of national cadres in accordance with the requirements of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

The programme deals with technical aspects in the field of investigating maritime accidents—including methods of collecting evidence and information, analysing the sequence of events and identifying causes and related factors.

— ONA



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Oman launches OMR100mn sovereign sukuk issue

MUSCAT: Oman Sovereign Sukuk Company announced on Sunday, on behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, the launch of the twelfth issue of local sovereign sukuk valued at OMR100 million, with an option to increase by an amount not exceeding OMR50 million, for a maturity period of 7 years at a profit rate of 4.85 percent per annum.

Subscription (submission of bids) will open on Monday and will close on 25 October, provided that these sukuk are issued on the settlement day corresponding to 29 October. The profit due on the sukuk will be paid four times a year, on 29 January, 29 April, 29 July, and 29 October of each year until the sukuk value maturity date



on 29 October 2033.

Subscription to this sukuk issue is available to all categories of individuals, institutions, and investors from within and outside the Sultanate of Oman of various

nationalities through two tracks: the competitive track, which enables all investors to subscribe by visiting the local bank branches specified in the prospectus and submitting bids through the com-

petitive auction in accordance with approved procedures and controls; and the non-competitive track, which enables individual investors to subscribe electronically via the bank applications

specified in the prospectus, applying the declared fixed profit rate of 4.85 percent, with a maximum limit of OMR10,000 per investor. Subscribing investors can obtain prospectuses and subscription forms through the Ministry of Finance website or the collecting banks' websites.

Those wishing to subscribe must obtain an investor number by visiting the website of Muscat Clearing and Depository Company or through the "Oman Stocks" application, at least one day before submitting the subscription application at the collecting banks specified in the prospectus.

These sukuk comply with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and are tradable (buying and selling)

at the prevailing market price through the Muscat Stock Exchange. Details and data of the sukuk allocated to subscribers in this issue will be registered and documented in the special sukuk register, which is maintained and managed by Muscat Clearing and Depository Company.

Oman Sovereign Sukuk Company emphasises the necessity for the bank account number written on the subscription application to match the one registered with Muscat Clearing and Depository Company to ensure a smooth subscription process and the timely receipt of profit and principal subscription amounts on maturity dates.

— ONA

IN UNITED STATES

Oman attends G20 Interfaith Forum

UTAH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, participated in the G20 Interfaith Forum held in Salt Lake City, United States (US), under the theme "Resilient Hope, Shared Future."

Dr. Mohammed Said Al Maamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, delivered a speech during the plenary session titled "Energy Policies, Religion, Peace, and Human Prosperity." In his address, the Minister discussed the relationship between energy resources and the values of equity, sustainability, and peace, emphasising the importance of transforming resources into shared prosperity that preserves human dignity and the rights of future generations.

He noted that balancing energy supply security, affordability, and environmental preservation is not limited to technical and economic aspects alone, but is

also linked to moral values established by religions based on utilizing resources without harming others or the environment, or depriving future generations of their rights.

Al Maamari reviewed the civilizational experience of the Sultanate of Oman and its centuries-long interaction with the peoples of the world through maritime navigation, referencing Omani-American relations established by the Treaty of 1833, as well as the arrival of the Omani ship "Sultana" in New York in 1840, carrying the first Arab envoy to the United States.

He touched upon the aflaj system—five of which are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List—and what it embodies in terms of responsibility in managing resources and preserving the rights of others, as well as the endowment (waqf) system, whose impact extends across generations. — ONA

BELL-RINGING CEREMONY

Muscat Stock Exchange launches Omani Women's Investor Club initiative

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on Sunday launched the Omani Women's Investor Club initiative to enhance Omani women's participation in capital markets, enable them to benefit from investment opportunities, and consolidate their role in shaping the future of national investment.

This came during a celebration organised by the stock exchange on the occasion of Omani Women's Day, under the auspices of Ibtisam Ahmed Al Farooji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion.

The celebration included the bell-ringing ceremony at the Muscat Stock Exchange marking the launch of the club, representing a new milestone that reflects commitment to enhancing the inclusivity of the Omani capital market, expanding its base of participants, and creating new pathways that support Omani women's investment presence



and contribute to developing their knowledge and capabilities to make informed and well-considered investment decisions.

Haitham Salim Al Salmi, CEO of Muscat Stock Exchange, said that the launch of the Omani Women's Investor Club represents a new strategic step in Muscat Stock Exchange's journey toward building a more inclusive and diverse capital market, boosting women's participation in investment, and serving as a fundamental pillar for deepening the market, expanding

the investor base, and supporting sustainable economic growth.

He added that through this initiative, the stock exchange is working to create an integrated system connecting knowledge with opportunities, enhancing confidence and active participation, and opening new pathways for Omani women to contribute to making investment decisions and developing wealth. He expressed his hope that the club will constitute a sustainable institutional model for partnership and

cooperation, translating women's capabilities and ambitions into added value and tangible impact on the future of the Omani capital market, in line with the targets of Oman Vision 2040. Arij Mohsin Haider Darwish, Chairperson of the Omani Women's Investor Club stated that empowering women in investment begins with knowledge and transforms into real impact when opportunities become available, noting that the Omani Women's Investor Club represents an ambitious vision to build an influential network of female leaders and investors.

She added that the club is expected to serve as an effective platform that goes beyond knowledge exchange to creating opportunities, building strategic partnerships, enhancing financial and investment literacy, expanding women's access to markets, and supporting the growth of women-led investments. — ONA

Full story @ timesofoman.com/business



Vale Wins Leadership in CSR – Mining Award at Shabiba Jawa'iz Basma 2026



Vale was felicitated with the 'Leadership in CSR – Mining Award' at Shabiba Jawa'iz Basma Social Impact Awards 2026. Organised by Muscat Media Group, publisher of Times of Oman and Al Shabiba, and managed by TEEvents, the awards recognised organisations, initiatives and individuals creating meaningful social, environmental and economic impact across Oman. The evening culminated in the presentation of 22 awards across diverse areas of community and social impact.

Vale was recognised for its sustained commitment to community development, environmental protection, youth empowerment and social responsibility through initiatives that create lasting value for communities in Oman. As a major player in the mining sector, the company has integrated corporate social responsibility into its operations, supporting projects that

enhance public infrastructure, improve community wellbeing and promote sustainable development.

Among its key initiatives in Liwa are the development of a slaughterhouse in 2021, a sports walkway in 2022 and a pedestrian overpass in 2023, contributing to improved community facilities, public safety and quality of life. Its environmental efforts also include the introduction of 3D-printed artificial reefs in 2024, supporting marine conservation and the protection of coastal ecosystems.

Vale's commitment to youth empowerment is further demonstrated through its Tatweer Youth Development Programme, implemented during 2024–2025, which has supported more than 300 students and young professionals through opportunities for skills development, learning and career readiness. The programme reflects the

company's focus on investing in young Omani talent and preparing the next generation for future opportunities.

With an investment of approximately US\$32 million in sustainable and socially responsible projects, Vale continues to demonstrate how the mining industry can contribute to meaningful community transformation. Its initiatives reflect a long-term approach to social investment, environmental sustainability and inclusive development, supporting stronger communities and the broader objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Shabiba Jawa'iz Basma 2026, organised by Muscat Media Group and managed by TEEvents, celebrates organisations and individuals whose initiatives contribute to community development, healthcare, education, youth empowerment, sustainability, inclusion and social progress across the Sultanate.

Europcar Oman Wins Leadership in CSR – Car Rental Services Award at Shabiba Jawa'iz Basma 2026



Europcar Oman was felicitated with the 'Leadership in CSR – Car Rental Services Award' at Shabiba Jawa'iz Basma Social Impact Awards 2026. Organised by Muscat Media Group, publisher of Times of Oman and Al Shabiba, and managed by TEEvents, the awards recognised organisations, initiatives and individuals creating meaningful social, environmental and economic impact across Oman. The evening culminated in the presentation of 22 awards across diverse areas of community and social impact.

Europcar Oman was recognised for its sustained commitment to corporate social responsibility, youth empowerment, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability through its 'Beyond Mobility' CSR initiatives. Going beyond its core car rental operations, the company has actively supported programmes focused on education,

healthcare, social welfare and environmental protection, demonstrating how businesses can create meaningful value for the communities they serve.

A key highlight of its efforts was its involvement in the Oman Internship Fair 2026, which brought together more than 600 students and 70 organisations, creating access to over 280 internship opportunities.

The initiative helped connect young people with potential employers, supporting career development, practical learning and greater employability among Omani youth.

Europcar Oman's community initiatives also include Ramadan ration drives supporting more than 100 families, annual blood donation campaigns, mammography awareness initiatives and support for Dar Al Hanan. Its environmental efforts extend to beach cleanup activities and collaboration with organisations such as the

Environment Society of Oman (ESO), while its wider community engagement includes support for the Oman Animal Welfare Association and Oman Diabetes Association.

The company's commitment to responsible business practices has also received international recognition, with Europcar Oman receiving the Global CSR Award from Europcar International in 2025. This recognition reflects its continued efforts to integrate social responsibility into its business approach and contribute positively to communities across Oman.

Shabiba Jawa'iz Basma 2026, organised by Muscat Media Group and managed by TEEvents, celebrates organisations and individuals whose initiatives contribute to community development, healthcare, education, youth empowerment, sustainability, inclusion and social progress across the Sultanate.

Excellent P3 Bronze Cup finish in Portugal for Oman Racing by Century

Competing at the Portuguese track for the first time since 2023, Al Harthy was quick throughout practice

MUSCAT: Ahmad Al Harthy wrapped-up the GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Endurance Cup season with a richly deserved return to the Bronze Cup podium on 17 October, after a fantastic performance at the Autódromo Internacional do Algarve. Competing at the Portuguese track for the first time since 2023, Al Harthy was quick throughout practice, qualifying and the race itself and along with team-mates Javier Sagrera and Calan Williams he was delighted to celebrate Oman Racing by Century Motorsport's second podium of the season. Starting at 17:00 local time, the three-hour race concluded under night skies at the Portimão track and with one of the largest crowds of the GTWCE Endurance Cup season. The very strong third place result for the No.42 BMW M4 GT3 EVO trio also ensured ninth in the



Bronze Cup championship, just a single point shy of the top eight. Highly competitive end to GT-WCE campaign for Al Harthy The Oman Racing by Century Motorsport team-mates produced a fantastic collective performance across the three qualifying sessions on Friday evening, 16th October, to match their best showing of the season with the fourth fastest time on average. Sagrera took the opening session and delivered a best time of

1m43.358 seconds to end the run fourth fastest in the Bronze Cup. Al Harthy took over the BMW M4 for session two and posted a very impressive best of 1m43.545s, and in session three Williams lapped with a time of 1m42.483s. On average times across the three outings, the squad ended with an aggregate time of 1m43.128s. Al Harthy took the start of Saturday's race and with a combined grid of 61 cars, surviving the opening lap would be the first priority

for the OQ, Omantel, Oman LNG, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and BMW Oman supported driver. Ending a very busy first lap sixth in Bronze, the Omani was shuffled back another couple of places on the second tour but was very determined to hit back. Running tight behind the No.91 Porsche, just a tenth of a second shy over the line into lap six, Al Harthy swiftly made his move to take seventh and immediately closed on the No.74 Ferrari be-

fore smartly passing for sixth the next time around. Once again, the Omani instantly latched on to his next target, the No.11 Aston Martin, while pulling well clear of the pack behind. Almost 20 minutes into the contest the first Full Course Yellow period of the race was required due to a car off circuit, but the cautionary period didn't last more than a few minutes and racing quickly resumed. Then came news of an unfortunate 10 second penalty for the Oman Racing car linked to an on-track incident, but Al Harthy maintained his composure and duly took fifth from the Aston. At the 35-minute mark the second in class Porsche spun off track after contact with another car, and so Al Harthy moved back inside the Bronze top four as a result. During the latter part of hour one the Omani was edged back to fifth, but he was fourth again when pitting 65 minutes into the race. Sagrera took over the car for hour two as the sun began to set over Portimão and the temperature dropped, with the No.42 BMW M4 still fourth in Bronze. Soon after, another FCY period was called and racing resumed with an hour and three quarters to run, but 20 minutes further into the race a two-car collision led to a third FCY period and Safety Car. Action got back underway with 70 minutes left and as the race entered its final hour Sagrera was within half a second of the Bronze

podium, and swarming all over the No.87 Mercedes. Taking third place a few laps later, a penalty for the class leading No.991 BMW M4 then meant Sagrera moved up into second in Bronze before pitting with 48 minutes to run. Williams climbed into the No.42 BMW for the final three quarters of an hour and when the order settled he was third in Bronze and 25 seconds clear of his closest class rival. Another FCY period occurred with just over half an hour to go, and following the subsequent Safety Car there were just 23 minutes left. Williams held third comfortably to the finish, ensuring much deserved silverware. Ahmad Al Harthy said: "It's an amazing feeling to be back on the podium, at one of the hardest tracks we have ever raced on and I think the busiest ever for Portimão. In qualifying I think I had driven one of my best laps of the season and it was great to have the car in P4. The race was very complicated, very tough, but we managed to really produce a great result for the team. "It's always a proud moment to see the Omani flag on the podium, I want to say huge thanks to my team-mates and everybody at Oman Racing by Century Motorsport. Most importantly I want to thank all of the incredible partners who have supported us, this result is for them and is a nice way to start building for next year – we keep pushing!"

BILATERAL SERIES



Sammy hails West Indies' fighting show against India in 2-2 T20I series draw

BENGALURU: The West Indies' wait for a bilateral series win in India since 2002 continues after the final T20I was called off following just 46 balls of India's innings. Having lost all three of their previous bilateral T20I series in India, winning just one of seven matches, the visitors came closer to matching India this time around, with head coach Daren Sammy describing their performance as a "massive step" towards achieving their goals. Sammy also lauded his side's fighting performance against the Indian team, asserting that the West Indies in certain areas "outplayed" India in their backyard.

Led by Shai Hope, West Indies had shown great application and power-hitting in the series, holding the ICC Men's T20 World Cup champions India for an eventual 2-2 scoreline. **Massive step** "We understand what success means to us, we don't ever take for granted where we are as a team and the challenges that we face. We just look to make those strides, and I think after this series we've taken a massive step. We played against the defending champions, and we've matched them, and in certain areas we've outplayed them, especially in their backyard," Sammy said at

the post-match press conference. Sammy also felt the series reflected the teams' performances, adding that the West Indies had defied outside expectations, with many doubting their chances before the series began. "It's a true reflection of how all the teams have played, especially for our guys. I'm pretty sure when the series started, we probably didn't have a chance. But that was just the opinion of others," he added. India will now go on to New Zealand for an all-format tour that begins on 22 October, while West Indies will visit Bangladesh for a two-game ICC World Test Championship 2025/27 series.

LA LIGA

FC Barcelona maintain perfect start with win over Betis

MADRID: FC Barcelona extended its winning start to the La Liga season to nine matches with a 5-2 victory at Real Betis on Saturday. The match represented Barcelona's toughest test so far, with Betis entering the day third in the table. Hansi Flick's side dominated early possession and opened the scoring after 10 minutes when Lamine Yamal curled a left-footed shot into the corner, leaving Betis goalkeeper Alvaro Valles with no chance. Valentin Gomez equalized with a powerful header from Pablo Fornals' cross in the 27th minute, but Barcelona regained the lead in the 41st when Rodri headed home after Valles misjudged a corner. Betis thought it had leveled again a minute later through Giovanni Lo Celso's volley, but VAR ruled the strike out for a handball by Cucho Hernandez in the build-up. Yamal set up Gabriel Jesus to score Barcelona's third in the 51st minute, and Betis responded through Abde Ezzalzouli just two minutes later. Tensions flared when Betis midfielder Facundo Bernal was sent off following an altercation with Yamal, in which Bernal appeared to grab the forward by the neck before headbutting him. With a one-player advantage, Barcelona took greater control. Eric Garcia added a fourth in the 62nd minute and Dani Olmo sealed the scoring with a strike in the 81st. Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid remained five points behind Barcelona after Alex Baena's late 89th-minute goal earned a 1-0 win at Espanyol. Atletico had the better chances across the match, with



Leandro Cabrera hitting the crossbar for Espanyol in the first half and Marcos Llorente striking the woodwork for the visitors after the break. Valencia and Athletic Club played out a 0-0 draw. Athletic controlled possession, but Valencia created the clearer opportunities, all frustrated by Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon.

In a goalless contest, Elche goalkeeper Matias Diturow produced several important saves to deny Villarreal, who will feel it should have taken all three points. On Friday night, Deportivo de La Coruna and Levante drew 1-1 after Dani Requena's 82nd-minute equalizer cancelled out Bil Nsongo's opening goal for Deportivo.

AT GQEBERHA

There's no game or two: Rabada gears up for crucial second Australia Test

GQEBERHA: South Africa speedster Kagiso Rabada, in line to play his first competitive game since the IPL final during the second Test against Australia, stressed on the importance of the game, saying that "there is no game or two" for him to ease in, with a home series and World Test Championship points at stake. Playing his first Test in 12 months since the Rawalpindi Test against Pakistan last year and his first competitive game since IPL final after being out due to a hamstring injury suffered during the winter training, Rabada is eyeing to renew his battle against the Aussies, knowing that he does not have the luxury of easing his way back in.

"I do not have a game or two. We are one-nil down. There is no game or two," Rabada said in Gqeberha as quoted by Cricinfo. With the series and WTC points at stake, Rabada, the leader of the Proteas attack, is not letting everything consume him and wants to "let the game take him". "I just like to let the game take me. Obviously, I know what I want to do, but the emotions that I am going to feel, I do not know," Rabada said. "Right now, I feel ready. I feel confident. But it is sport. There is always some mystery in sport. You do not know if you are going to win or you are going to lose. But I also do not want to give too many inches. I know what it means for



me, and that is going there and giving my best and trying to get those Australian batters out. And for us to perform as a collective. And then, you just kind of let the game take you," he said.

Rabada's injuries were one of six hamstring niggles to have affected the Proteas ahead of the series, with Lungi Ngidi, Kwena Maphaka, Ottneil Baartman, Lutho Sipamla and batter Tony de

Zorzi yet to return. The veteran pacer said that he did not feel "extremely dysfunctional" due to his injury and for him, it was about getting match-fit to play his cricket with full intensity and prevent any recurrence of the injury. "I did not feel extremely dysfunctional or whatever. It was more about getting it to heal so that I can play at full intensity and not to prolong or keep reoccurring," he said. "That the main focus of getting back. It is a long cricket summer and lots of cricket to be played. The timing of it was not too bad if you ask me. I was not distraught or it was just a bit of a flag to say, how am I keeping up with conditioning my body? What sort of changes do I need to make to try and mitigate

the risk of injury? And yeah, just looking at it from a holistic perspective," he added. On the demands of the cricketing calendar and paying attention to his conditioning, keeping that in mind, he said, "There is a lot of research that goes into it, especially these days when you're playing so much cricket and at a high intensity. The older you get as well, the more you're going to have to train because your body slows down a lot more. And the more you have to look into the one-percenters of how you're going to recover. There has to be a great deal of work done off the field so that you can perform on the field. And then all the other stuff, like recovery, diet."

AAMALI TALKS

Omantel, in partnership with Sohar International, hosted the fourth edition of Aamali Talks bringing together Omani women entrepreneurs and business leaders.

>B2

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



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MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2026



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 7,656.14 points, down by -0.29% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.08% at 627.61 points. National Gas, up 6.45%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 7.25%, was the top loser. >B2

Oman targets new markets through debut participation at Paris food expo

The debut participation aims to showcase the quality of Omani products, expand their presence in global markets, and create new opportunities for trade and export growth



PARIS: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Omani Products Promotion Supervisory Team (OPEX), is making its debut at SIAL Paris 2026 in France with a national pavilion bringing together four government entities, alongside seven Omani food industry companies.

The participation aims to showcase the quality of national products, expand their presence in global markets, and create new opportunities for trade and export growth.

Ahmed Mohammed Al Araiimi, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the French Republic, emphasised that Oman's first-ever national pavilion at SIAL Paris reflects the Oman's keenness to strengthen its economic and commercial footprint in international arenas. "The participation expands avenues of cooperation and partnership with friendly nations, particularly France, with which Oman shares deep-rooted historical relations grounded in mutual respect, trust and shared interest," Al Araiimi said, adding that bilateral ties continue to grow across diverse fields in alignment with the aspirations of both leaderships to

deepen economic integration and strategic cooperation.

He noted that the Oman's presence at this major international platform provides an opportunity to build on strong Oman-France relations and develop economic, commercial and investment partnerships, particularly in the food sector. "The pavilion enables national manufacturers to demonstrate Oman's advanced production capabilities, highlight the quality and competitiveness of Omani products, and explore opportunities to access French and wider European markets. The event also facilitates direct engagement with international importers, distributors, and investors, while opening avenues for cooperation in food technology, innovation, supply chains and sustainability," he added.

The Ambassador also reaffirmed the commitment of Oman's Embassy in Paris to supporting national participation in economic events held in France and strengthen business ties between Omani and French companies.

Eng. Dawood Salim Al Hadabi, CEO of the Public Establishment



for Industrial Estates (Madayn) and Head of the OPEX Team, stated that Oman's first-ever national pavilion at SIAL Paris represents a significant milestone in OPEX's ongoing efforts to expand its international promotional activities and diversify export markets. He noted that the food sector is evolving rapidly in areas such as innovation, manufacturing and marketing, presenting opportunities to attract and localise related investments in Oman's industrial cities.

Al Hadabi added that the national pavilion offers a significant opportunity to highlight Oman's industrial and manufacturing capabilities, display product compet-



itiveness, enable direct business meetings with buyers and distributors, and stay abreast of evolving global consumer trends, packaging techniques, and international market requirements.

"By the end of the first half of 2026, the number of food sector projects across Madayn's industrial cities touched 111, with total investment volume exceeding OMR229.5 million spread over leased areas surpassing 1.36 million sqm. Raysut Industrial City accounted for the largest number of food manufacturing projects, with 30, followed by Sohar Industrial City with 21 and Al Rusayl Industrial City with 20," he informed.

He stressed that the figures reflect the growth of food industries in Oman and highlight the importance of supporting local manufacturers, enabling them to expand into regional and international markets, and leveraging specialised international exhibitions, particularly SIAL Paris 2026, to establish new trade partnerships and enhance the competitiveness of Omani products.

Al Hadabi pointed out that participating in SIAL Paris 2026 offers Omani companies a platform to gain insights into global food industry trends and explore advancements in product innovation, sustainable production, and packaging. Furthermore, the exhibition enables Omani businesses to tap into European and international markets while strengthening direct links with global commercial bodies, investors, and industry experts, and hence driving trade expansion and enhancing the competitiveness of Omani products on the world stage.

The Oman's participation at SIAL Paris forms part of the 2026 plan of the OPEX Team, which comprises Madayn, Ministry of

Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the SMEs Development Authority (Riyada). Through its international presence, the team focuses on expanding marketing channels for national products, supporting local factories in accessing new international markets, and creating direct linkages with global trade partners and investors.

SIAL Paris stands as one of the premier global trade shows dedicated to the food and beverage industry, uniting every link in the food value chain from production and processing to packaging, distribution, and marketing. The 2026 edition brings together 8,000 exhibitors and 295,000 food industry professionals across an exhibition area of 280,000 sqm. Featuring a diverse programme of specialised conferences, interactive showcases, and dedicated business networking sessions, the event includes key highlights such as SIAL Innovation, SIAL Taste, and SIAL Summits, offering Omani participants valuable exposure to cutting-edge developments and new commercial opportunities.

GCC-STAT

Industrial investments in GCC reach \$426bn

MUSCAT: Data from the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC-Stat) show that industrial investments total approximately \$426 billion, while the number of factories stands at nearly 22,000. The industrial sector employs more than 1.7 million people, according to the latest available statistical data as of July 2026.

Manufacturing contributed approximately 13.0 percent of the GCC states' gross domestic product in 2025, underscoring the sector's importance in supporting the economies of the member states, advancing economic diversification and increasing the contribution of non-oil activities.

Around 40 percent of industrial investments are concentrated in a group of key industries, including plastics, refined petroleum products, aluminium, gaseous fuels, and iron and steel. These industries form an important foundation for manufactur-

ing and intermediate industries and support the integration of industrial value chains.

In foreign trade, industrial products account for approximately 69 percent of total GCC exports.

Key exports include petroleum gases and hydrocarbons, petroleum oils, motor vehicles, organic compounds, aluminium, ships and boats, and electrical machinery and equipment.

On the import side, China accounts for around 20 percent of total GCC imports, making it the region's largest source of imports. Major imported goods include equipment and machinery, motor vehicles, pharmaceutical products, iron and steel, and plastics, with supplies sourced from a diverse range of markets. These indicators reflect the expanding and diversifying industrial base across the GCC, as well as differences in the scale of industrial activity among the member states.

— ONA

BANGKOK

Oman's participation in meetings of IMF, World Bank Group concludes

BANGKOK: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), concluded on Sunday its participation in the 2026 Joint Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group, held in the Thai capital, Bangkok.

On the sidelines of the meetings, the Ministry of Finance, in coordination with the Royal Navy of Oman, signed an agreement with the Thai company Marsun to enhance the operational and technical capabilities of the Oman National Hydrographic Office by providing hydrographic survey equipment, transferring expertise, and building national capabilities.

The Omani delegation participated in the annual meeting of ministers of finance, central bank governors, and heads of regional financial institutions in the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan region with the International Monetary Fund, as well as



the annual meeting of Arab Ministers of Finance with the World Bank, and the meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee of the International Monetary Fund to discuss economic and financial developments and enhance cooperation with the two international institutions.

The Omani delegation held bi-

lateral meetings with their counterparts from various countries and leading international institutions to enhance cooperation and discuss issues of common interest.

These joint meetings come to discuss a set of current topics and issues related to global economic forecasts, sustainable development, and financial and economic

challenges, and to examine mechanisms for strengthening strategic partnership with international organizations such as international financial and development institutions, as well as ways to enhance cooperation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in supporting technical consultations. — ONA

NCSI DATA

Added value of private enterprises in Oman rises by 31.2%

MUSCAT: The value added of active private enterprises in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 31.2% to reach OMR10,655.4 million in the second quarter of 2026, compared with OMR8,124.0 million during the corresponding period of 2025, according to data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Private enterprises
In contrast, the number of active private enterprises in the Sul-

tanate of Oman declined by 4.6% during the second quarter of 2026 compared with the corresponding period of 2025, reaching 269,714 enterprises, compared with 282,764 enterprises in the second quarter of 2025.

Gross domestic product records growth

Gross domestic product (GDP) also recorded growth of 25.6%, reaching OMR12,868.9 million during the second quarter of 2026,

compared with OMR10,249.7 million in the second quarter of 2025.

Total number of workers in active private enterprises

In terms of the labour market, the total number of workers in active private enterprises increased by 1.4% to reach 1,827,518 workers during the second quarter of 2026, compared with 1,802,972 workers during the corresponding period of 2025.

— ONA



MARKET

MSX Index ends lower



National Gas, up 6.45%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 7.25%, was the top loser in yesterday's trading session

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,656.14 points, down by -0.29% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.08% at 627.61 points. National Gas, up 6.45%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 7.25%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 14,381 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR51.51 million, with more than 210.36 million shares changing hands. Out of 64 traded securities, 20 advanced, 20 declined, and 24 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR4,795,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR4,219,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR576,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 13,794.76 points, down -0.02%.

Prices of Muscat Finance, Takaful Oman, Oman Arab Bank, Al Sharqia Investment, DIDIC were up by 4.69%, 3.51%, 2.47%, 1.98%, 1.04% respectively. Prices of Bank Muscat, Sohar International Bank, National Finance, Oman & Emirates Investment were down by 1.14%, 1.06%, 0.93%, 0.83% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 10,017.69 points, up 0.04%. Prices of Oman Refreshment, Voltamp Energy, Galfar Engineering were up by 4.18%, 3.32%, 1.24% respectively. Prices of Raysut Cement, National Aluminium, Gulf Mushroom Products, Oman Flour Mills, Salalah Mills were down by 7.25%, 4.76%, 1.17%, 1.00%, 0.61% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.15% before closing at 3,023.20 points. Prices of National Gas, Muscat Desalination, Sembcorp Salalah, Sembcorp Salalah, Al Batinah Power were up by 6.45%, 2.17%, 0.72%, 0.72%, 0.51% respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	7,679.39	7,632.94	7,656.14	7,678.05	-21.91	-0.29
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,830.20	13,766.46	13,794.76	13,797.87	-3.11	-0.02
Industry Index	10,030.69	9,954.21	10,017.69	10,013.71	3.98	0.04
Services Index	3,032.98	3,016.53	3,023.20	3,018.72	4.48	0.15
MSX Shariah Index	628.22	623.54	627.61	627.00	0.52	0.08
MSX TR INDEX	12,002.51	11,929.91	11,966.17	11,970.07	-3.90	-0.03
FINANCIAL TR IDX	17,003.51	16,925.15	16,959.94	16,963.76	-3.82	-0.02
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,885.39	12,787.15	12,868.69	12,825.03	43.67	0.34
SERVICES TR IDX	4,187.38	4,164.67	4,173.87	4,167.69	6.18	0.15
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,291.27	1,291.27	1,291.27	1,291.27	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
210,365,714	51,509,005	14,381	39,347,589,970	20	20	24	64

MSX DAILY BULLETIN AS ON 18/10/2026

SN	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																
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	142,018	26,108	33	0.181	0.187	0.181	0.187	0.181	0.006	3.315	0.187	0.182	0.188	0.010	187,000,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	14,546,739	1,257,030	41	0.102	0.106	0.086	0.103	0.101	0.002	1.980	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	9,270,000
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INT'L DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	50,000	14,618	8	0.292	0.297	0.292	0.292	0.289	0.003	1.038	0.292	0.277	0.290	0.100	144,848,393
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	322,848	67,275	72	0.207	0.210	0.206	0.210	0.208	0.002	0.962	0.210	0.209	0.210	0.100	307,146,307
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,051,623	525,895	117	0.500	0.502	0.500	0.502	0.498	0.004	0.803	0.502	0.502	0.502	0.100	816,225,070
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	22,780	6,391	15	0.280	0.282	0.280	0.280	0.278	0.002	0.719	0.280	0.278	0.285	0.100	267,280,146
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	74,392	14,759	13	0.197	0.199	0.197	0.198	0.197	0.001	0.508	0.198	0.197	0.199	0.100	133,627,711
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	13,933,297	6,887,870	255	0.483	0.497	0.492	0.485	0.483	0.002	0.406	0.485	0.495	0.495	0.010	3,960,000,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	25,000	8,075	1	0.323	0.323	0.323	0.323	0.322	0.001	0.311	0.323	0.318	0.323	0.100	33,915,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	1,020,085	399,825	54	0.393	0.395	0.389	0.389	0.388	0.001	0.258	0.389	0.389	0.389	0.100	77,800,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	1,500	615	1	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.000	0.000	0.410	0.385	0.427	0.100	460,370,105
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	650	2,236	1	3.440	3.440	3.440	3.440	3.440	0.000	0.000	3.440	3.430	3.470	0.100	308,568,000
OM0000001772	UNANWAR INVESTMENT	180,311	37,505	13	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.000	0.000	0.208	0.208	0.220	0.100	63,961,980
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	8,000	696	1	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.000	0.000	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.100	30,983,075
OM00000002549	BANK DHOFAR	197,927	44,325	950	0.224	0.224	0.223	0.224	0.224	0.000	0.000	0.224	0.229	0.224	0.100	680,914,871
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM PRODS MRKTNG	100	135	1	1.350	1.350	1.350	1.350	1.350	0.000	0.000	1.350	1.350	1.375	0.100	93,150,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	278,712	88,011	42	0.318	0.318	0.315	0.315	0.315	0.000	0.000	0.315	0.316	0.315	0.100	205,047,432
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	4,906	893	3	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.182	0.000	0.000	0.182	0.182	0.199	0.100	36,333,679
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	23,287	3,498	6	0.151	0.151	0.150	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.150	0.151	0.100	337,779,908
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	15,555	1,665	6	0.107	0.109	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.107	0.113	0.100	18,725,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	130,799	25,920	23	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.197	0.197	0.000	0.000	0.197	0.197	0.199	0.100	140,738,490
OM00000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	1,000	169	1	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.000	0.000	0.169	0.160	0.169	0.100	12,763,218
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	500	463	2	0.925	0.925	0.925	0.925	0.926	-0.001	-0.108	0.925	0.925	0.925	0.100	115,530,613
OM00000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,641,823	719,768	1,015	0.441	0.441	0.437	0.438	0.439	-0.001	-0.228	0.438	0.444	0.438	0.100	337,347,600
OM00000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	121,841	33,531	14	0.277	0.277	0.275	0.275	0.276	-0.001	-0.362	0.275	0.275	0.277	0.100	65,012,750
OM00000010120	ASBUD SHIPPING	500,063	113,093	1,335	0.229	0.229	0.224	0.226	0.227	-0.001	-0.441	0.226	0.229	0.226	0.000	1,177,176,207
OM00000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	18,235,383	4,048,753	2,346	0.223	0.224	0.219	0.223	0.224	-0.001	-0.446	0.223	0.225	0.223	0.100	965,729,134
OM00000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	2,075	1,433	2	0.700	0.700	0.690	0.690	0.694	-0.004	-0.576	0.690	0.625	0.698	0.100	82,800,000
OM00000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	141,994	15,613	31	0.115	0.120	0.108	0.119	0.120	-0.001	-0.833	0.119	0.118	0.119	0.100	15,228,281
OM00000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	52,704,845	9,865,958	2,642	0.188	0.189	0.186	0.186	0.188	-0.002	-1.064	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.100	1,427,737,055
OM00000002796	BANK MUSCAT	6,601,654	2,867,242	1,667	0.439	0.439	0.432	0.435	0.440	-0.005	-1.136	0.435	0.437	0.435	0.100	3,265,282,722
OM00000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	1,285	651	2	0.505	0.510	0.505	0.505	0.511	-0.006	-1.174	0.510	0.510	0.525	0.100	25,422,900
OM00000009908	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SPZ)	18,828,283	4,795,989	2,496	0.255	0.258	0.251	0.255	0.260	-0.005	-1.923	0.255	0.262	0.255	0.040	882,170,167
OM00000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	100	148	1	1.475	1.475	1.475	1.475	1.550	-0.075	-4.839	1.475	0.000	1.689	0.100	90,380,625
Total		34			130,811,365	31,877,154	13,210									

Parallel Market

OM00000001160	NATIONAL GAS	1,256,608	165,583	116	0.125	0.135	0.125	0.132	0.124	0.008	6.452	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.100	11,220,000
OM00000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	36,270	2,397	2	0.066	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.064	0.003	4.688	0.067	0.066	0.068	0.100	20,578,804
OM00000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	526	603	2	1.146	1.146	1.146	1.146	1.100	0.046	4.182	1.146	1.146	1.200	0.100	57,300,000
OM00000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	8,997	520	6	0.059	0.059	0.057	0.059	0.057	0.002	3.509	0.059	0.057	0.059	0.100	14,750,000
OM00000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	1,044,250	293,181	40	0.283	0.290	0.275	0.290	0.283	0.007	2.473	0.290	0.274	0.290	0.100	604,033,754
OM00000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	23,105	2,147	7	0.094	0.094	0.092	0.094	0.092	0.002	2.174	0.094	0.092	0.095	0.100	14,621,738
OM00000005521	GALFAR ENG'G & CONTRACTING	20,059,321	2,754,629	37	0.161	0.163	0.137	0.163	0.161	0.002	1.242	0.163	0.145	0.163	0.100	33,086,791
OM00000001151	OMFCO	15,293,407	3,261,759	871	0.209	0.218	0.209	0.213	0.211	0.002	0.948	0.213	0.215	0.213	0.000	1,424,836,675
OM00000001030	OMAN CHROMITE	80	399	1	4.990	4.990	4.990	4.990	4.990	0.000	0.000	4.990	0.000	5.000	1.000	18,113,700
OM00000001698	OMAN PACKAGING	3,596,331	704,881	1	0.196	0.196	0.196	0.230	0.230	0.000	0.000	0.196	0.000	0.000	0.100	7,460,248
OM00000002150	ALFAJAR ALAMIA	76,359	38,018	6	0.494	0.494	0.494	0.494	0.494	0.000	0.000	0.494	0.000	0.000	0.100	24,369,144
OM00000002168	ALANJAR CERAMIC	66,864	9,988	20	0.145	0.150	0.145	0.147	0.147	0.000	0.000	0.147	0.147	0.150	0.100	32,340,000
OM00000002200	AHLI BANK	244	49	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.192	0.200	0.100	555,658,183
OM00000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	130	104	1	0.799	0.799	0.799	0.799	0.799	0.000	0.000	0.799	0.782	0.820	0.100	75,905,000
OM00000003539	GALFAR ENGINEERING	18,379,659	8,785,477	1	0.478	0.478	0.478	0.562	0.562	0.000	0.000	0.478	0.000	0.000	0.100	49,267,449
OM00000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	27,500	2,078	2	0.076	0.076	0.075	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.078	0.100	16,890,240
OM00000001889	SALALAH MILLS	170	111	1	0.650	0.650	0.650	0.650	0.654	-0.004	-0.612	0.650	0.650	0.650	0.100	40,600,950
OM00000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	19,289,761	3,549,348	2	0.214	0.214	0.184	0.214	0.216	-0.002	-0.928	0.214	0.214	0.237	0.100	139,248,813
OM00000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	3,680	2,183	2	0.598	0.598	0.592	0.592	0.598	-0.006	-1.003	0.592	0.580	0.600	0.100	102,797,100
OM00000003711	SOHAR POWER	5,237	1,152	5	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.223	-0.003	-1.345	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.100	4,400,000
Total		20	79,180,099	19,574,523	1,194											



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INDIA

Bodies of Kolkata pandal stampede victims handed over to families

KOLKATA: The bodies of those who lost their lives in the Durga Puja pandal stampede incident in Kolkata were handed over to their family members on Sunday.

The tragic incident occurred at a Durga Puja pandal on Saturday evening, where a massive rush of devotees led to a fatal stampede that claimed 19 lives and left several others injured.

Among the victims was a 27-year-old nurse whose mortal remains were taken to her native place in Hooghly. Her relative told ANI that she went to the pandal to watch the puja. "After doing her duty, she went to watch the puja (worship/festival) with her friend," he said.

Following the stampede at the Chorbagan Sarbojanin Durga Puja pandal, West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Sunday said that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) would be constituted

soon to probe the incident, adding that six people had been arrested in connection with the case.

Speaking to the reporters, the CM said the Chief Secretary would write to the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court to seek permission for the formation of the team.

"An SIT (Special Investigation Team) is also being formed, which will operate under the leadership of a sitting judge. The Chief Secretary will write to the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. If permission is granted, we will constitute the SIT as soon as possible," he said.

About the arrests and the medical condition of those injured in the stampede, Adhikari said, "Six individuals have been arrested and are currently in police custody under the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).



Of the 25 injured, two remain in the ICU, while the discharge process for the other 23, following medical treatment, has already begun." He said the state government is closely monitoring the situation and responding to the aftermath of the incident.

"The Governor visited the hospital, as did the Union Home Minister. I am personally monitoring

the situation with the assistance of the Chief Secretary, Commissioner of Police, Home Secretary, Director General of Police (DGP), and others. The entire government is actively engaged. We are not celebrating the holiday, nor are we posting anything on social media. We are not making

statements to the press assigning blame to others," CM said.

Adhikari also outlined precautionary measures discussed following the incident, particularly those concerning the immersion process and public safety along riverbanks.

Earlier in the day, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, West Bengal Governor RN Ravi and CM Suwendu Adhikari visited the injured undergoing treatment in an Apollo hospital in Kolkata.

Meanwhile, Kolkata Police arrested seven people in connection with the incident. Those arrested include Raj Kumar Sewda, alias Raja, the secretary of the puja committee; Santanu Dubey, its vice-president; and Biplab Mukherjee, alias Joy, who was involved in the construction of a bamboo structure.

The other arrested persons include Koushik Saha, who was in-

involved in crowd management and checking VIP passes; Pintu Dey, who was engaged in crowd management; and Suman Chakraborty and Rajesh Pal, who were working as private security in-charges.

Police registered a suo motu case under Sections 105, 110 and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the organisers and others. Fourteen people were also detained for questioning, according to the police. Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, was also imposed in parts of Kolkata from October 18 to 20 to prevent possible disturbances.

The West Bengal government has announced compensation of Rs 25 lakh and a job for the family of each deceased person. An investigation by the Special Task Force (STF) has also been initiated to establish accountability. — ANI

KHOR FAKKAN PORT

Tugboat struck by 2 unknown projectiles

PORTSMOUTH: A tugboat was struck by two unknown projectiles while travelling southbound near Khor Fakkan port in the UAE, sustaining damage, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said on Sunday, reporting one minor casualty.

UKMTO has advised vessels to transit with caution and report any suspicious activity.

"UKMTO has received a report of an incident northeast of Khor Fakkan, UAE. A tug travelling southbound has reported being struck by 2 unknown projectiles. The tug has sustained damage but is continuing on its route. One minor casualty has been reported. Vessels are advised to transit with caution and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO, whilst authorities investigate," UKMTO said in a statement on X.

On Saturday, a vessel was struck by an unknown projectile at 68 nautical miles northeast of Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO).

UKMTO said that it "received a time-late report of an incident 68 NM northeast of Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia, of a tanker struck by an unknown projectile."

All crew are reported safe and have been evacuated. There was no reported environmental impact at the time of the report, the UKMTO stated.

This comes amid the ongoing conflict between the US and Iran, with both countries trying to claim control of the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway for fuel supply across the globe. — ANI

Global nuclear expansion faces uranium supply challenge: IAEA

The report highlights a widening gap between the world's nuclear energy ambitions and the mining and fuel-processing infrastructure needed to support them, raising concerns over future supply security and the investments required to develop new uranium resources

NEW DELHI: Global plans to expand nuclear power capacity could face growing challenges from uranium supply constraints, as production from existing mines is projected to decline sharply even as demand for nuclear fuel rises, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Nuclear Technology Review 2026.

The report highlights a widening gap between the world's nuclear energy ambitions and the mining and fuel-processing infrastructure needed to support them, raising concerns over future supply security and the investments required to develop new uranium resources.

"In contrast to the future doubling of uranium requirements, uranium production from existing mines is forecast to decrease by at least 50% by 2040," the IAEA stated in its annual review.

Global uranium requirements

The report, which examines major developments in nuclear technology during 2025, said global uranium requirements could increase by 50 to 144 per cent by 2050, according to projections from the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency and IAEA's Uranium 2024: Resources, Production and Demand report.

These projections indicate that annual uranium requirements could reach between 90,045 tonnes and 142,631 tonnes by 2050, compared with approximately 60,000 tonnes currently used as the baseline. However, expanding uranium supplies may prove challenging because developing new mines requires significant investment and long lead times. "New mines and the expansion or life extension of existing mines, as well as the reopening of



idled mines, will be required for assurance of supply in the future," the report said.

It noted that developing a new uranium mine typically takes 10 to 15 years from the discovery of a deposit to the beginning of mining operations.

The challenges are not limited to uranium extraction. The IAEA also flagged growing pressure on the infrastructure required to process nuclear fuel.

"The global nuclear fuel supply chain is facing growing imbalances. Conversion capacity is already insufficient and is projected to fall further behind demand through

2040," the report stated.

The agency noted that although global uranium enrichment capacity currently exceeds demand, it remains unevenly distributed across countries, creating additional supply-chain concerns.

These challenges come as countries increasingly look towards nuclear energy to meet rising electricity demand, improve energy security and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The expansion of artificial intelligence and data centres is also contributing to interest in nuclear power as a source of reliable electricity.

The IAEA said the nuclear in-

dustry would need to address financing, project costs and regulatory challenges to accelerate the construction of new reactors.

For India, which aims to increase its nuclear power capacity to 100 GW by 2047, the global supply-chain challenges highlight the importance of securing reliable fuel supplies and developing the infrastructure required for long-term expansion. The report indicates that the pace of future nuclear expansion will depend not only on building reactors but also on timely investment in uranium mining, fuel processing and supporting infrastructure. — ANI

IN MILAN, BOLOGNA

Italian PM condemns violent demonstrations

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni issued a firm condemnation of violent demonstrations across several major cities, declaring that while peaceful protest is fundamental to democratic society, political violence and destruction will not be tolerated.

In a statement posted on X addressing recent nationwide rallies, Meloni drew a sharp contrast between peaceful demonstrators and violent agitators who turned city streets into scenes of unrest.

"I have great respect for the thousands of people who today demonstrated peacefully, including those who took part in the mobilisation called by the CGIL, which also saw the participation of left-wing leaders," Meloni said. "Whatever the ideas for which one demonstrates, participation is the foundation of any healthy democracy."

The Prime Minister emphasised that law enforcement officials were confronted with direct aggression and destruction in several urban centres, forcing authorities to take emergency measures, noting that such actions can not go unnoticed.

"On the other hand, however, we cannot ignore what happened in other Italian squares," Meloni stated. "In Milan, as these im-

ages show, stones were thrown at the Law Enforcement Forces, officers were injured, and damage and violence occurred that forced the interruption of the procession. In Turin, people were stopped carrying cobblestones and window-breaking hammers. In Bologna, the disorders led to the precautionary closure of the railway station."

Meloni sharply criticised those responsible for the destruction, describing them as "thugs who exploit demonstrations to sow chaos, attack those who ensure security, and hold entire cities hostage."

Drawing a clear distinction between the right to protest and acts of violence, she said, "Demonstrating is a right. Setting our cities ablaze is not."

Turning to opposition political parties, Meloni urged rival leaders to take an explicit, unambiguous stance against street violence, warning that failing to do so undermines public safety and law enforcement.

"I renew my request to the opposition: do not be ambiguous about this," Meloni said. "Unequivocally condemn these acts of violence and issue a clear appeal for every mobilisation to be peaceful."

— ANI

VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS

French President Macron vows strict action against the 'sowers of chaos'

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday expressed a firm response to violence amid the ongoing protests, driven primarily by students who, over the past few weeks, have engaged in violent demonstrations to denounce what they call "deplorable" school conditions and excessive police force.

In a post on X, Macron vowed strict action against the protestors who were involved in vandalism and looting, expressing solidarity against "sowers of chaos."

"No room for violence in our Republic. Those who have broken, attacked the prefectures as well as businesses, looted even our town halls, will be prosecuted and punished. To the law enforcement forces, guarantors of the right to demonstrate, I express the support of the Nation. We will all stand united against the sowers of chaos, who seek only to bring down our institutions and prevent those who peacefully express their demands from doing so," he wrote.

Meanwhile, French Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu also condemned the escalating unrest, emphasising that peaceful demonstrations were legitimate but that acts of arson, looting and attacks on public and private property would not be tolerated.

Blaming what he described as



"ultraleft groups" and opportunistic rioters for the disturbances, Lecornu said violence had been orchestrated in several French cities.

"Today, ultraleft groups have orchestrated violence in several French cities; delinquents have joined in to pillage and destroy," he wrote in a post on X.

With political tension simmering ahead of upcoming elections, Lecornu firmly rejected any attempt by rioters to leverage public unrest to sway the national leadership, stating, "At a time when some are seeking to cast blame on our law enforcement forces, I want to tell the French people that they can be proud of their police officers and gendarmes. They have faced violence of extreme intensity to protect our fellow citizens, and

they deserve all our support."

"To those who clearly want to use these acts of violence as a 'warm-up' before the presidential election, I say this plainly: we will not be intimidated. No one will impose their political agenda through violence."

Lecornu further stated that law enforcement personnel had received clear instructions to prevent violence, protect people and property, apprehend those responsible and bring them before the courts.

"The instructions given are clear: prevent abuses, protect property and people, apprehend the perpetrators, and bring them before the courts."

The prime minister also signalled a legislative push to hold

perpetrators financially accountable for the widespread destruction, backing the controversial "pay-the-damagers" bill.

"We will see through the full debate on the 'pay-the-damagers' bill. Public money is scarce: it must fund our public services, not endlessly repair what vandals destroy. It is up to them to bear the cost," he asserted.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez confirmed that emergency measures have been activated in the capital to contain the volatile situation on the ground.

"In the face of the ongoing violence in Paris, I am mobilised within the City's crisis unit, alongside Lamia El Aaraje," Nuñez wrote on X.

Highlighting the multi-agency coordination required to handle the escalating disturbances, Nuñez added that he had "brought together all the district mayors in order to coordinate the action of all municipal services and to respond as closely as possible to the needs on the ground." "Our absolute priority is the safety of the women and men of Paris," the Interior Minister stressed, issuing an urgent plea to the public, stating, "I call on each and every one of you to remain calm and exercise responsibility."

— ANI



LIFESTYLE

THE HIDDEN ENVIRONMENTAL COST OF AI DATA CENTRES

As data centres multiply to meet AI demand, they're straining power grids, draining water supplies and reshaping the land and air around them

Every question sent to AI models provides an instant reply that seems to appear out of nowhere, but answering queries requires physical infrastructure that consumes real energy, water and land. Somewhere around the world — maybe in Virginia, Sao Paulo or Hong Kong — a massive warehouse filled with fibre-optic cables and seemingly endless rows of humming servers is working to provide the processing power for the more than 2.5 billion questions ChatGPT alone fields daily. AI models, along with cloud storage, streaming, web hosting and social media, all have a very real physical footprint. If data centers were a country, their level of electricity use would make them the 11th largest electricity consumer in the world, according to researchers from the United Nations University. From energy to water to land, here's the real toll data centres take on the environment.

An insatiable appetite for power
Data centres are becoming some of the world's fastest-growing consumers of electricity. These warehouses of servers, routers and internet-connected devices run 24/7, while cooling systems operate continuously to keep the tech from overheating. In Frankfurt, Germany, the grid is currently so saturated that no new connections will be available until at least the 2030s. There, data centers consume about 41% of the city's electricity. In Dublin, it's double that. And data centre electricity consumption is growing rapidly — it's expected to double by 2030 to about 945 terawatt-hours, around what Japan consumes annually, according to the International Energy Agency.

How the AI boom could slow climate progress
All that energy has to come from somewhere, increasing reliance on fossil fuels. One 2024 study found that more than half of the United States' data centres are powered by fossil fuels, emitting in excess of 105 million tonnes of CO2. Offsetting that would take more than 31,000 wind turbines running continuously for a year. The build-out is also keeping old coal plants alive. Utilities in the US have delayed the retirement of 15 coal-fired plants nationwide to meet surging demand, plants that together emitted nearly 65 million tonnes of greenhouse gases in 2023 alone. And utilities are also constructing new gas-fired power plants, with more than 100 GW of additional facilities across the country already announced. That would lead to more carbon emissions than burning 111 million pounds (50.4 million kilograms) of coal. Of course, data centres can also be powered by renewable energy. Pairing a facility with on-site renewables can ease pressure on the local power supply, and any surplus energy can even be sold back to the grid, making it more stable. However, using green electricity for data centres means there is less available for electrifying transport or decarbonising other emissions-heavy industries.

Hidden water demand
Many data centres consume millions of gallons of water to stay cool. Servers generate constant heat, and water is one of the most effective ways to absorb and carry that heat away through evaporation. A single large facility can use up to 5 million gallons a day, roughly the same as a town of 10,000 to 50,000 people. About 80% of the water withdrawn for cooling simply evaporates; the rest becomes wastewater that can overwhelm local treatment systems never designed to handle that volume. In northern Virginia, the almost 300 data centres clustered in one



region of the US state supply about a third of the world's online traffic. There, in what is known as the world's data center capital, facilities collectively used nearly 2 billion gallons of water in 2023. There are several more efficient ways to cool data centres. These include immersion cooling, where devices are bathed in a coolant, and closed-loop cooling systems which recycle water and can reduce freshwater use by up to 70%. **Data centres are making cities hotter**
Cooling a data centre doesn't get rid of the heat, it just moves it outside. That can exacerbate the urban heat island effect, which is when cities experience higher temperatures than rural areas. Researchers in Phoenix, Arizona, found a single large data centre can emit as much waste heat as tens or even hundreds of thousands of households, raising nearby land surface temperatures by up to 9 degrees Celsius (16 Fahrenheit) and air temperatures by up to 2 degrees Celsius. Those effects can be felt as far as half a kilometre away. Since cities are already 0.5–4 degrees Celsius warmer than their surroundings, these higher temperatures can increase heat stress risks for nearby residents and push up air conditioning demand, requiring still yet more energy. Not all of that heat goes to waste: a growing number of data centers are capturing and piping it into nearby homes and businesses. This process, called thermal energy networks, can reduce data centre power demand by up to 30%. **Coal, gas and diesel all contribute to dirty air**
Powering and running data centers pollutes the air on two fronts. First, coal and gas plants release toxic particulate matter, which can lead to respiratory disease, heart disease, asthma and more health conditions for nearby communities. On-site diesel generators, used as backup power when the grid fails, also release harmful air pollutants. These generators pump out 200 to 600 times more nitrogen oxides than natural gas plants. One estimate found that when backup generators for all of Virginia's data centers were emitting at just 10% of their permitted level, they could contribute to 14,000 cases of asthma symptoms, more than a dozen deaths and up to \$300 million in public health costs a year. **Data centers take over large swaths of land**
Data centre construction requires large plots of land to build on. Repurposing natural and agricultural areas into industrial zones can threaten biodiversity and disrupt local ecosystems. In Hattersheim, Germany, for example, an 18-acre (7-hectare) parcel reserved for agriculture and groundwater protection — a local green space known for its rapeseed blossoms — was rezoned in 2024 to make way for a five-building data center campus. The damage often extends beyond the site itself. Gas pipelines and power plants built to supply these facilities require their own land, fragmenting habitats and eroding soil along their routes. -DW

SPORTS

BARCELÓ MUSSANAH RESORT

Sailing and sustainability take centre stage as 15th Mussanah Race Week

MUSCAT: Competitive action officially got underway at the Barceló Mussanah Resort, as the opening day of racing at the 15th Mussanah Race Week and 3rd Arab Women's Sailing Championship began.

The waters off Mussanah came alive as competitors across the Optimist, ILCA, and inclusive classes hit the course for the first day of practice races.

With over 100 sailors from Oman, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt, Tunisia and India battling for early leaderboard positions, the regatta also turned a sharp focus toward environmental stewardship as, against the backdrop of high-performance fleet action across multiple classes, the events made an equally powerful impact on land with the launch of environmental initiatives and the inaugural Community Sustainability Lab.

The practice races followed registration, boat inspections, technical briefings, and training sessions, giving sailors time to familiarise themselves with the courses and local conditions.

Mussanah Race Week features racing across several boat classes, while the Arab Women's Sailing Championship includes Optimist, ILCA 4 and ILCA 6.

Organised in partnership with the Oman Maritime Sports Committee and the Arab Sailing Federation, the women's championship aims to increase participation and develop sailors' technical and racing skills.

Qasim Abdulrazzaq, Techni-



cal Director of the Bahrain Sailing Team, said: "We are pleased to return to Mussanah, having competed in several championships here over the years. This year, Bahrain is represented by seven sailors, including three female sailors competing in the Arab Women's Sailing Championship and four sailors in Mussanah Race Week. Our focus is on developing their technical skills and gaining valuable racing experience against competitors from across the region and beyond."

He added: "We continue to work towards raising the standard of sailing in Bahrain and preparing our sailors to compete at regional and international levels. Events such as Mussanah Race Week provide an important opportunity for our sailors to gain experience, learn from other competitors and build connections that will sup-

port their long-term development in the sport."

Dr. Mohammed Al Awadhi, Technical Director of the Kuwait National Sailing Team, highlighted the importance of participating in Mussanah Race Week and the Arab Women's Sailing Championship, noting that the Kuwaiti team had completed a month-long training programme ahead of the competitions.

He said: "We expect strong competition with teams from different countries taking part, and we aim to achieve positive results."

Mussanah Race Week provides an important opportunity for sailors to gain competitive experience, exchange knowledge and improve their technical skills. Regular participation in international championships is essential for developing sailors and im-



proving their performance from one event to the next."

Adding profound local resonance, yesterday (17 October) marked the launch of the first Community Sustainability Lab, coinciding with Omani Women's Day.

Targeting school and college students, particularly females aged 14 and above from the South Al Batinah Governorate, as well as teachers, the initiative reflects Mussanah Race Week's commitment to extending its community impact far beyond the sailing competitions.

Saada Ahmed Al Habsi, lead coordinator of the lab, said: "The Community Sustainability Lab gives girls and young women a platform to turn their ideas into practical environmental solutions. We want to build their un-

derstanding of sustainability and their confidence to make a positive difference in their communities."

She added: "The initiative builds on Oman Sail's commitment to sustainability through Clean Regattas practices, including reducing single-use plastics, encouraging recycling and organising beach clean-ups. We want participants to take these practices back to their schools and communities, creating a lasting impact."

The environmental programme also includes a clean-up of Mussanah beach, bringing together 51 sailors, volunteers and local residents to raise awareness of marine and coastal conservation. Mussanah Race Week achieved Gold certification under the Clean Regattas programme in 2025 in recognition of its environmental practices.

Mohammed Ali Al Balushi, a

member of the event's sailor safety team, said: "Sailor safety is our priority. Our rescue boats and safety teams are ready, and we continuously monitor weather and sea conditions in close coordination with race committees and medical teams so we can respond quickly and effectively."

He added: "We have clear procedures for changing weather conditions, including postponing or rescheduling races when needed. We also ensure all participants follow safety instructions, allowing sailors to compete at their best in a safe environment."

Both events support Oman Sail's work to develop national talent, empower young people and women, and increase community participation in sport. They also contribute to Oman Vision 2040 objectives and strengthen Oman's position as a host of international sporting events.

The 2026 edition is presented by Renaissance Services as title partner; the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism; Barceló Mussanah Resort as the host and bronze partner; and National Mineral Water Company (Tanuf), the Arab Sailing Association, the Oman Maritime Sports Committee, and the Royal Navy of Oman's Directorate of Medical Services at the Medical City for Military and Security Services as supporting partners.

Their support covers event operations, supplies, accommodation, promotion and services for sailors, coaches and visitors.

FOOTBALL



Diaz hat-trick powers Bayern past Leipzig to reclaim Bundesliga lead

BERLIN: Luis Diaz scored a hat-trick as Bayern Munich crushed RB Leipzig 6-1 on Saturday to return to the top of the Bundesliga and end a run of two consecutive draws. Vincent Kompany's side dominated from the outset, overwhelming Leipzig with relentless pressing and attacking intensity after disappointing draws against Augsburg and Viking Stavanger.

Diaz opened the scoring in the 12th minute, racing onto Joshua Kimmich's pass before beating goalkeeper Maarten Vandevoordt. Aleksandar Pavlovic doubled the advantage in the 26th minute after Diaz had created the opportunity, while Michael Olise added a third eight minutes later with a precise strike from 18 meters.

Leipzig struggled to contain Bayern's movement and repeatedly surrendered possession. Only several saves from Vandevoordt prevented the hosts from establishing an even greater halftime lead.

Bayern maintained its dominance after the restart. Diaz curled home his second goal in the 47th minute before Harry Kane converted Nathaniel Brown's delivery from close range six minutes later.

Kompany made four substitutions shortly after the hour mark, resting key players ahead of Wednesday's Champions League encounter at Arsenal.

Diaz completed his hat-trick in the 69th minute with a powerful long-range finish. Vandevoordt then tipped an Olise close-range effort onto the crossbar. Leipzig grabbed a late consolation through Maksimovic in stoppage time.

"Today we were a completely different team. We were far too passive without the ball and offered very little going forward. We have to congratulate Bayern. You can lose here, but not the way we did today," Leipzig coach Martin Demichelis said.

The victory sent Bayern back to the top of the Bundesliga with 14 points from six matches, ahead of Borussia Dortmund on goal difference. Leipzig slipped to seventh with nine points, while third-placed Freiburg remains one point behind with a game in hand. Elsewhere, Borussia Dortmund surrendered top spot after being held to a goalless draw at Union Berlin, while Mainz climbed to fifth with a 1-0 victory at Schalke. -xinhua

Premier League: Manchester City, Chelsea, Liverpool win

At Etihad Stadium, Manchester City played out a 3-2 thriller against Ipswich Town, while Chelsea entered top four with a 2-0 win over Everton at the Hill Dickinson Stadium



MANCHESTER: Manchester City, Chelsea and Liverpool continued their solid Premier League runs with wins on an action-packed Saturday. At Etihad Stadium, Manchester City played out a 3-2 thriller against Ipswich Town, while Chelsea entered top four with a 2-0 win over Everton at the Hill Dickinson Stadium. Brentford led against Liverpool at the first half, but the Premier League giants served the world a reminder of their pedigree and skillset with two goals in the second half, as per Sky Sports.

Manchester City vs Ipswich Town
Manchester City continued their run on top with a sensational win over Ipswich, with Erling Haaland scoring a brace and taking his seasonal goal tally to 12. He is also the fastest of any player in the Premier League to reach 100

non-penalty goals, and the superstar was later denied a hat-trick due to VAR. It was Phil Foden who put City in front, benefitting from some magic by Jeremy Doku, beating Christian Walton with a low finish. In the 21st minute, Daizen Maeda levelled the scores, beating Gianluigi Donnarumma with a low finish.

In the 34th minute, the 'Inevitable' Haaland struck, with Mateo Kovacic gliding down the right side of the box and clipping a ball to the Norway superstar to head home and give Man City a lead.

At the half-time, Man City led by 2-1. In the 56th minute, Nico O'Reilly missed a chance to double City's lead as his header was off the target. However, just 13 minutes later, Iliman Ndiaye slid the ball to Haaland who wasted no time in guiding the ball past Walton.

However, the multi-time Premier League champions had a

scare, with Zian Flemming converting a penalty in the 90th minute to take the scoreline to 3-2. However, Enzo Maresca came out of the match as a history-maker, becoming the first Premier League manager to win his first seven games in charge.

With seven wins in seven, Man City have 21 points, six points clear of second-placed Arsenal (five wins and a loss).

Brentford vs Liverpool
Shifting the focus to GTech Community Stadium, things got really chaotic towards the first-half whistle. After 40-odd seconds without a goal, Keane Lewis-Potter put Brentford in front to the delight of home fans with a header past Alisson following a cross from Thiago. This came just moments after Liverpool were denied a penalty, with Dango Ouattara deemed to have touched the

ball while making a challenge to The Reds' star Mac Allister.

Yehor Yarmoliuk headbutted Jeremy Jacquet during half-time stoppage time, and he was sent off by the officials for violent conduct.

In the 62nd minute, Liverpool finally scored, with Victor Munoz latching onto a through ball from Florian Wirtz. However, just moments later, Alexander Isak, returning after a thigh injury, gave Liverpool a lead in the 70th minute. Thiago missed a chance to give Brentford hope, failing to score from close range.

Janelt was shown a second yellow card during stoppage time for a foul on Liverpool substitute Rio Ngunmoh, bringing down Brentford to nine men.

Liverpool climbed to fifth, winning three, drawing three and having lost just one, while Brentford slipped one spot with two losses, four draws and a loss. -ANI

2-2 DRAW AGAINST INDIA

Success doesn't have to be series win necessarily: WI skipper Hope

BENGALURU : Following his side's 2-2 series draw against India, West Indies skipper Shai Hope said that the team's performances throughout the series reflected its progress as a unit, adding that "success does not necessarily have to be series wins".

One of the most competitive and high-scoring T20I series in recent times ended on an anticlimactic note after the rain-affected fifth match was abandoned following just 7.4 overs of play. With rain preventing a result in the series decider, both captains, Shreyas Iyer and Shai Hope, shared the trophy after their teams produced competitive performances across the first four matches.

However, West Indies' wait for

a bilateral series victory in India continues, with their last such success coming during the 2002-03 tour, when they won the ODI series 4-3. Speaking after the match, West Indies skipper Hope reflected on the team's performance and the significance of taking the series to a 2-2 draw.

"We have not won a series here in 20-plus years. To get this far in the series shows what we've done as a unit. Success does not necessarily have to be series wins, to see the way the guys have been progressing has been commendable."

Hope also praised the team's bowling unit, particularly Shamar Springer, Keemo Paul and Roston Chase, who featured prominently among the leading wicket-takers



in the series. Springer claimed seven wickets, while Paul picked up eight wickets and Chase accounted for six dismissals. Paul also registered a five-wicket haul

while helping West Indies defend a massive total of 248 runs in the previous match in Hyderabad.

"Bowling front, saw Shamar Springer come in and play a cru-

cial role at the back end, wickets and death overs. Keemo Paul similarly, Roston has been bowling well. The way we play our cricket in general, everyone was chipping in. Pleased from the bowling side of things," he said.

Reflecting on his individual performances after being named 'Player of the Series', the West Indies skipper emphasised the importance of self-belief and maintaining consistency in his approach. Hope registered two centuries during the T20I series and has scored four centuries across the ODI and T20I formats.

"Still have to have self-belief; when I cross the line, I still believe I can get the job done. My process never changes; I try and stay as

neutral as I can."

Hope finished the T20I series as the leading run-scorer, accumulating 261 runs in four innings at a strike rate of over 190, including two centuries and a half-century. He was also named Player of the Series for his contributions with the bat.

In the fifth T20I, West Indies won the toss and elected to field first in the rain-shortened nine-overs-per-side contest. India posted an entertaining total, with Ishan Kishan scoring 30 off 10 balls, including three fours and two sixes, while Naman Dhir remained unbeaten on 24 off six balls, hitting one four and three sixes. Shamar Springer and Keemo Paul claimed two wickets each for WI. -ANI

Al Mouj Muscat partners with Oman Cancer Association to unite community against breast cancer

Pinktober Market at Al Mouj Walk and Al Mouj Golf Walk mobilised community support for awareness, early detection and cancer care

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat, Oman's premier lifestyle and waterfront destination, joined forces with the Oman Cancer Association (OCA) this month to mobilise support for breast cancer awareness and fundraising. Through the Pinktober Market at Al Mouj Walk and the Al Mouj Golf Pink Walk, the partnership brought the community together to support the Association's work across Oman.

Held from 15 to 17 October, the Pinktober Market brought three evenings of local vendors and community activities to Al Mouj Walk. On 17 October, Al Mouj Golf hosted a 5 km Pink Walk around the course, giving participants an active way to support the cause. Organised in collaboration with OCA, the initiatives directed all vendor registration fees and voluntary donations collected onsite to the Association, helping fund prevention and early detection outreach programmes, patient support and palliative care.

Ahmed Al Massan, Acting CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said: "The power of community is measured by what we can achieve together. When people unite behind a cause that affects so many lives, awareness can become action and individual contributions can make a lasting difference. At Al Mouj Muscat, we believe destinations have a role to play in making that



possible, using the connections they create every day to mobilise support where it matters most."

An important platform
Kawthar Al Jabri, Board Member of Oman Cancer Association, said: "Progress in the fight against breast cancer depends on reaching people early and ensuring those affected have access to the support they need. Al Mouj Muscat provided an important platform for this work, bringing vital health

messages into everyday community life while helping generate resources for patients and families. Partnerships like this extend our reach beyond traditional health-care settings and turn public awareness into practical support."

By bringing causes of national importance into its retail, leisure and outdoor spaces, Al Mouj Muscat demonstrated how destinations can contribute to addressing wider societal needs. The partnership with OCA built on its ap



proach to community engagement, connecting everyday activities with opportunities to make a positive impact in people's lives.

Al Mouj Muscat is a destination without an equal. It has redefined urban living in the region with an impressive portfolio of oceanfront residential properties, luxury and authentic hospitality, elegant Business Parks, award-winning architecture and well-designed landscapes.

A warm and diverse community at the heart of Oman's capital, Al Mouj Muscat created a sense of belonging for 10,000 residents from 90 nationalities who now call it home. With a vibrant dining and retail district, residents and visitors alike are able to enjoy a wide range of culinary experiences in a lively oceanfront setting.

Al Mouj Muscat provides an exclusive lifestyle that urges families and individuals to live life to the

fullest, do better, see more and live richer. For work or leisure, residents and visitors can stay, dine or relax at seven luxury hotels, including Kempinski and The St. Regis, experience boating in Oman's largest Marina, or awaken their sense of play at an 18-hole championship golf course that's listed in the world's top 100.

At Al Mouj Muscat, every moment spent, every opportunity explored, is life Inspired.

WATER DISTRIBUTION NETWORK PROJECT

Nama Water wins Asian Water Award for Al Mudhaibi project

MUSCAT: Nama Water Services has received an award at the Asian Water Awards 2026 for the first package of its Al Mudhaibi Water Distribution Network Project, recognising a major infrastructure development completed ahead of schedule and without exceeding its original contract value.

Valued at approximately OMR 65 million (US\$169 million), the project delivered 820 kilometres of water distribution networks and around 11,400 household connections, extending water service coverage to more than 80% of Al Mudhaibi in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate and benefiting over 130,000 people.

The project also addressed a distinctive engineering challenge: constructing modern water infrastructure across areas intersected by traditional Omani aflaj irrigation channels, some running underground at varying elevations. Engineering teams carefully planned pipeline routes and assessed crossings to protect these historic water systems while completing construction ahead of the contractual deadline.

Eng. Abdullah bin Salim Al Rasbi, Chief Executive of the Development Projects Unit at Nama Water Services, said the recognition reflects the company's growing capabilities in delivering major infrastructure investments.

"This award demonstrates that the value of infrastructure investment extends beyond its financial scale. It lies in delivering reliable services, strengthening operational readiness and creating lasting benefits for communities and the wider economy," Al Rasbi said.

"Completing the project ahead of schedule and within its approved contract value reflects effective integration of planning, fi



nancing and execution, supported by disciplined management of project timelines and costs," he added.

A key feature of the development is its Design, Build and Finance (DBF) contractual model. Under the arrangement, the contractor financed construction during implementation, while Nama Water Services will repay the contract value over five years following project handover.

The structure provides flexibility in managing capital expenditure and supports infrastructure delivery through a defined long-term payment arrangement.

Eng. Ghalib bin Amer Al Musalmi, Project Manager of the Al Mudhaibi Water Distribution Networks Project, said the construction teams worked to balance technical requirements with heritage protection.

"The varying elevations and intersections of the aflaj systems presented complex engineering challenges. Detailed site assessments, careful planning and continuous field coordination enabled us to develop appropriate solutions while safeguarding these

traditional water channels," Al Musalmi said.

He added that collaboration between engineering disciplines, local professionals and supporting companies helped strengthen in-country value and build practical expertise in infrastructure delivery.

Nama Water Services is also progressing with the project's second package, valued at approximately OMR 15 million (US\$39 million). The ongoing works will extend water distribution infrastructure to 11 additional villages not covered by the first package and have reached 45% completion.

The first package covers Al Rawdah, Al Akhdar, Samad Al Shan, Khadra Bani Difa and central Al Mudhaibi. Designed to accommodate a population exceeding 154,000 by 2040, the network supports future demand while contributing to improved distribution efficiency and reduced water losses.

The Asian Water Awards recognise notable achievements and initiatives across the water sector, including developments in infrastructure, operational efficiency and sustainable water management.

STRATEGIC PARTNER

Bank Muscat reaffirms support for creativity and excellence through Media Excellence contest

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Information is preparing to host the closing ceremony of the 2026 Media Excellence Competition, supported by Bank Muscat as the strategic partner of the competition. The ceremony will witness the announcement of the winners and the recognition of the institutions and individuals who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in the media sector. The event reflects the Ministry's continued efforts to promote creativity, professional excellence and positive competition, while contributing to the advancement of media practices in Oman.

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, supports the competition as part of its ongoing commitment to national initiatives that contribute to developing Omani capabilities, empowering national talents and fostering a culture of creativity, innovation and excellence across various sectors. The sponsorship also reflects the Bank's approach to building effective partnerships with government institutions and stakeholders across different sectors, creating sustainable value for the community and supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

The 2026 Media Excellence Competition witnessed strong participation from media institutions, media professionals, content creators and media students. The applications have progressed to the evaluation and judging stage through an electronic system, representing a significant advancement in the way the competition is managed and the participating works are evaluated. The Minis



try of Information has highlighted the electronic evaluation system as a qualitative development in the competition's history, with submissions received digitally, screened and subsequently presented to judging committees for electronic assessment.

The Media Excellence Competition holds particular importance as a national platform that recognises excellence across the media sector, highlights Omani talents and capabilities, and encourages the production of innovative and impactful media content. It also contributes to enhancing professional standards and fostering a spirit of positive competition. The competition covers key areas including journalism, radio and television, and electronic media, and provides opportunities for media institutions, professionals, content creators and students specialising in media to showcase their work and emerging talent. The competition's objectives include promoting innovation, raising professional quality, supporting digital media and content creation, and recognising nation

al media achievements.

Bank Muscat's sponsorship of the competition further reflects its continued support for national initiatives that create sustainable impact and focus on investing in Omani talent while providing an environment that encourages creativity, innovation and excellence. It also underlines the Bank's belief in the importance of collaboration across sectors and the role of strategic partnerships in supporting Oman's development journey and strengthening the contribution of national capabilities in vital sectors.

As part of its ongoing partnership with the media sector, Bank Muscat regularly organises media visits, meetings and press conferences to highlight the Bank's latest developments, initiatives and banking solutions, and to share its contribution to the growth and development of Oman's banking sector. These engagements also provide an opportunity to strengthen communication with media professionals, exchange ideas, listen to their views, and address their questions and enquiries.

ROUND-UP

Oman Cables Industry breaks ground on OMR10mn Plant 3, advancing next generation of manufacturing

Under the patronage of Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, the groundbreaking marks a strategic investment advancing Oman's industrial competitiveness and enabling the region's energy transition

MUSCAT: Oman Cables Industry, the Sultanate's leading cable manufacturer and solutions provider, has marked the groundbreaking of Plant 3, an investment of over OMR10 million, under the patronage of Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

Part of the company's broader OMR 15 million+ strategic investment programme in advanced manufacturing in Oman over recent years, Plant 3 will expand Oman Cables' manufacturing capabilities to support the growing power and infrastructure requirements of Oman and the region.

More than an expansion of Oman Cables' manufacturing footprint, Plant 3 represents an investment in how the company manufactures for the future, bringing together AI-powered technologies for safer, smarter, and more sustainable operations, alongside a strong focus on Omani talent and leadership development.

The project reinforces Oman Cables' long-term commitment to the Sultanate and its contribution to the national priorities of Oman Vision 2040, enhancing industrial competitiveness, driving the shift toward cleaner and more efficient infrastructure required for the energy transition.

Built on more than four decades of manufacturing experience in the Sultanate, Plant 3 will further expand Oman Cables' advanced manufacturing capacity and technical expertise as the new state-of-



the-art facility will feature first in Oman and Particularly in Rusayl Industrial City a 42-metre cable production tower, capability for cable drums exceeding four meters and drum-handling capacity of up to 50 tonnes, creating a future-ready manufacturing platform designed to respond to the increasingly sophisticated energy and infrastructure requirements.

At the heart of Plant 3 is a vision for a smarter, more connected, and sustainable factory. The facility will integrate a Manufacturing Execution System (MES), AI predictive maintenance and AI-driven quality monitoring to provide greater visibility and control across the manufacturing process. Safety is embedded into the facility from the design to operation, including AI-powered forklift safety systems, real-time safety monitoring and reporting, supported by Lean Manufacturing and 6S standards. Sustainability is equally embedded in this approach, building on more than 50 energy-efficiency and circularity

initiatives across Oman Cables' operations to advance lower-carbon manufacturing and integrate sustainable practices throughout its industrial processes.

The investment places Omani talent at the center of its manufacturing model, with a strong focus on upskilling and developing the technical, professional and leadership capabilities required for the next generation of manufacturing. Plant 3 is expected to create more than 60 employment opportunities, further supporting local talent development and industrial growth. Through Oman Cables' strategic partnership with Prysmian, local teams are connected to a global network of more than 30 R&D centers, bringing international know-how, technology and innovation into local practice. This creates opportunities for Omani engineers, professionals and future leaders to grow alongside the technologies shaping the industry and contribute from Oman to an increasingly global industrial landscape.

Salim Al Aufi said: "Oman Ca-

bles Industry's expansion through Plant 3 represents a strategic investment in the country's industrial capacity to meet the growing needs of electricity networks and infrastructure. As Sultanate of Oman advances its solar, wind and green hydrogen projects, alongside urban and industrial development, the project creates opportunities for locally manufactured products to serve domestic demand and compete in global markets. We see these investments as an opportunity to turn growing demand into stronger local content by localising industrial capabilities and technologies and developing Omani talent. Connecting industrial growth with clean energy, modern cities and the development of industry and logistics will help diversify the economy and deliver broader development benefits, advancing the objectives of Oman Vision 2040."

Cinzia Farisè, Chairman of Oman Cables Industry, said: "The energy and infrastructure landscape is transforming rapidly, and

so is the role we play within it. We are moving beyond cable manufacturing towards a more integrated solutions model, bringing together products, technology, innovation and expertise to address increasingly complex energy and infrastructure needs.

"Plant 3 is an important step in this journey, enabling us to better serve our customers, expand our regional reach and create long-term value for our stakeholders and the markets we serve."

As part of the groundbreaking, Oman Cables' Board members, employees, operators, partners and guests signed a structural beam that will become part of Plant 3, marking the beginning of this new chapter.

With more than 40 years of industrial presence in the Sultanate, Oman Cables today combines its manufacturing base in Oman with an expanding presence across the GCC, alongside Oman Aluminium Processing Industries (OAPIL) in Oman and Associated Cables Private Limited (ACPL) in India. Through its strategic

partnership with Prysmian, the worldwide leader in the cable industry, Oman Cables connects its local manufacturing strength with global expertise, technologies, international know-how and standards, enabling it to innovate and create value across Oman and the wider region.

Beyond manufacturing, Oman Cables is building an integrated ecosystem through its Innovation Centre, Renewable Excellence Centre and Global Sustainability Academy, connecting industrial capability with innovation, renewable-energy expertise, sustainability and talent development. Plant 3 marks the next phase of this evolution, further positioning Oman as a base for expertise and solutions that serve growing infrastructure needs and the energy transition across the region.

From its roots in Oman to its growing regional and global reach, Oman Cables continues to invest in the capabilities, technologies and people shaping the future of the industry.

DX OMAN 2026 FORUM

BankDhofar crowned Digital Banking Leadership Award winner



MUSCAT: BankDhofar won the Digital Banking Leadership Award 2026, an achievement that reflects its ongoing efforts to develop innovative digital solutions and deliver an advanced banking experience that meets customer aspirations and keeps pace with the evolving demands of the digital era.

The Bank participated as a Strategic Partner of DX Oman 2026, a forum that brings together poli-

cymakers, regulators, technology specialists, and business leaders to explore the future of digital transformation across various economic sectors in Oman.

The event under the auspices of Eng. Badr bin Salem Al Maamari, Chairman of the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority and the presence of Sheikh Salim bin Mustahail Al Mashani. The forum focused on the technologies,

strategies and policy frameworks shaping digital transformation, business competitiveness and operational resilience.

The event featured senior representatives from the Central Bank of Oman, Financial Services Authority, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Oman Tax Authority and leading private-sector organizations. Discussions addressed

e-governance, intelligent transformation, digital adoption in industry and the development of digital infrastructure to support Oman's future economic growth.

BankDhofar's strategic partnership reflected its strong positioning as a digitally progressive financial institution, committed to leveraging advanced technologies to enhance customer experiences, streamline banking processes and



support the Sultanate's broader digital transformation ambitions under Oman Vision 2040.

The Bank's active engagement was further underscored by the participation of Mohammed Issa Al Balushi, Head of Digital Channels at BankDhofar, as a panellist in a discussion titled "Building Digital Rails for Oman's Future." The session brought together senior technology and digital transformation professionals from banking, insurance, financial services and other sectors to examine the foundations of a more connected and digitally enabled economy.

BankDhofar's digital transformation journey has been marked by continuous investments in mobile and internet banking, seamless digital payments, automated customer onboarding and innova-

tive financial solutions. Its growing digital ecosystem, including Dhofar Pay, digital account opening and advanced transaction banking platforms, has enabled customers to access secure, convenient and efficient banking services.

The Bank has also strengthened its digital offerings for businesses and SMEs through solutions designed to simplify collections, payments, payroll processing and financial management.

Through its association with DX Oman 2026, BankDhofar reinforced its commitment to fostering innovation, encouraging cross-sector collaboration and supporting the development of a robust digital economy, while continuing to deliver smarter, faster and more accessible banking experiences for customers across Oman.



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