

Times

GOLDEN JUBILEE

OF OMAN



51

YEARS OF LEGACY

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HM issues four Royal decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued 4 Royal decrees on Sunday. The Royal Decree No. (79/2026) amends certain provisions of the Basic Law of the State. Article One stipulates that the phrase “Public Attorney’s Office” shall be replaced with the phrase “Public Prosecu-

tion” wherever it appears in the laws and Royal decrees. The Royal Decree No. (80/2026) amends the designation of the Public Attorney’s Office. The Royal Decree No. (81/2026) appoints Nasr bin Khamis bin Mohammed Al Sawae as Attorney General.

The Royal Decree No. (82/2026) ascribes the public utility status to the project of designing and implementation of Barka Link dual-carriageway in South Al Batinah Governorate and A’Suwaiq Link Road, in addition to the flyover in North Al Batinah Governorate. — **ONA**

OMAN TARGETS NATIONAL TALENT WITH 2,538 JOBS

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Oman's inflation stands at 3.4%

1 The inflation rate in Oman reached 3.4 percent in August 2026, compared with the corresponding month of 2025, according to CPI data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information. The average inflation rate for the period from January to August 2026 stood at 2.9 percent. **>A2**

OMAN Reality of gaming, esports discussed

2 Sayyid Saud Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth met with Sir Paul J. Foster, President of the Global Esports Federation. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the reality of gaming and esports. **>A6**

MARKET GCC stocks' trading value tops \$617bn

3 Gulf financial markets saw approximately 401.7 billion shares change hands during 2025, surging 19.5 percent compared with 2024, as the value of traded shares reached \$618 billion. **>B1**

FIVE-YEAR ROADMAP

Oman charts new course for education quality



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education has launched its Strategic Plan 2026–2030, setting out a five-year roadmap to strengthen education quality and enhance outcomes across the Sultanate. The plan, launched under the patronage of Dr Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Minister of Economy, is structured around eight strategic domains, including three core domains and five enabling domains. The three core domains focus on the quality of teaching and learning, cooperation and partnership, and reputation-building and capacity-building. The five enabling domains cover governance and administration, the digital ecosystem, planning and development, human resources

and financial enablement, and the work environment and institutional culture. The new plan reflects the Authority’s continued national role in advancing Oman’s education ecosystem and improving the quality of educational outcomes across all levels and types of education. It also supports national efforts to develop education as a key pillar of sustainable development and national capacity-building, while promoting continuous improvement and strengthening the Authority’s role as a national reference in education quality assurance. The launch of the Strategic Plan marks a new phase in the Authority’s efforts to develop the national education quality system and enhance its efficiency, effectiveness and credibility. **>A5**

The plan is to align Omanisation with government needs and sharpen existing skills

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour made progress during the first half of 2026 in implementing its recruitment and Omanisation plans in the government sector, advertising three main job announcements comprising 2,538 employment opportunities across 42 government entities. This falls within the ministry’s efforts to enhance the presence of national talent in the state’s administrative apparatus and to develop the recruitment system in a manner that responds to the actual needs of government units, linking career planning with the outputs of education and training and the requirements of future jobs. These results come within the context of the ministry’s drive to develop government recruitment mechanisms and move them beyond the mere announcement of vacancies towards building more integrated pathways. These are based on prior planning of needs, identification of priority jobs, and linking certain recruitment pathways to training and qualification, thereby contributing to raising the readiness of national cadres and enhancing their ability to fill jobs in accordance with the



1,927	opportunities for university degree holders
280	jobs for post-secondary diploma holders
201	vacancies for general education diploma holders
110	expat vocational trainers to be replaced by Omanis

requirements of each entity and specialization. The employment opportunities advertised during the first half of the year were distributed across three main announcements. The

first announcement contained 1,681 employment opportunities, while the second comprised 757 opportunities. In addition, 100 opportunities were allocated to persons with disabilities, bringing the total number of opportunities offered under these pathways to 2,538 across 42 government entities. Abdullah Sultan Al Sunaidi, Director of the Recruitment and Omanisation Department in the Government Sector at the Ministry of Labour, said that the results of the first half of 2026 reflect the ministry’s continued implementation of recruitment plans according to a methodology based on the actual needs of government units. He explained that the advertisement of 2,538 employment opportunities represents part of an integrated system the ministry is developing with the aim of organizing the recruitment process, raising the efficiency of utilizing national talent, and achieving alignment between available jobs and the required qualifications and skills. **>A3**

SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY

New study sheds light on seawater intrusion in northern Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A recent geophysical study by researchers at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has provided new insights into the extent of seawater intrusion into a coastal aquifer in northern Oman, highlighting the need for advanced monitoring to protect the Sultanate’s groundwater resources. The study, titled “Imaging of Seawater Intrusion in a Coastal Alluvial Aquifer Using Transient Electromagnetic Data and Laterally Constrained Inversion in Northern Oman,” was led by Dr Muhammad Younis Khan, Assistant Professor of Applied Geophysics in the Department of Earth Sciences, College of Science at SQU. Groundwater is one of Oman’s most valuable natural resources, but coastal aquifers are increas-

ingly threatened by seawater intrusion, driven by excessive groundwater extraction and changing environmental conditions. Dr Khan said the deterioration in groundwater quality has resulted in the abandonment of wells and affected economically important crops, including date palms. The study focused on the Al Jifnain area between Al Jifnain Dam and the Sea of Oman. It sought to determine the extent of seawater intrusion and develop a more reliable method of distinguishing freshwater from saline groundwater, providing scientific information to support sustainable groundwater management. The research team used the Transient Electromagnetic (TEM) method combined with Laterally Constrained Inversion (LCI) to produce detailed images of sub-



surface conditions. The models identified the main layers of the coastal aquifer system, including unsaturated near-surface gravels, a freshwater-bearing gravel aquifer

and localised clay-rich layers. Most significantly, the researchers identified a large, wedge-shaped body of highly conductive material, interpreted as seawater intrusion. The intrusion extends inland from the coast, with its greatest thickness near the shoreline and gradually thinning farther inland. **Clearer identification** According to Dr Khan, combining TEM with LCI produced more continuous and geologically realistic subsurface images than conventional processing methods. The approach enabled clearer identification of the freshwater aquifer, seawater intrusion and clay-rich layers. The findings provide a detailed geophysical assessment of groundwater conditions in Al Jifnain and

establish an important scientific baseline for monitoring changes in seawater intrusion over time. The study could also support assessments of managed aquifer recharge and its long-term effectiveness in protecting freshwater resources in the area. Dr Khan recommended establishing a long-term groundwater monitoring programme using repeated TEM surveys alongside groundwater-level and hydrochemical measurements. He also called for geophysical monitoring to be integrated with groundwater-flow and numerical modelling to assess the long-term benefits of managed aquifer recharge from Al Jifnain Dam. In addition, the researchers recommended high-resolution airborne electromagnetic surveys to develop detailed three-dimension-

al maps of groundwater salinity and provide further information on the area’s hydrogeological conditions. Such measures could support evidence-based groundwater management and policy decisions aimed at reducing seawater intrusion and protecting freshwater supplies. The research also contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on Clean Water and Sanitation by improving understanding of seawater intrusion and supporting the sustainable use of freshwater resources. Published in Water, an international peer-reviewed Q1 scientific journal, the study was conducted by Dr Muhammad Younis Khan, Dr Talal Al Hosni, Prof Osman Abdalla, Bader Al Shaqsi, Dr Hai Li and Dr Ahmed M. Beshir.



Dhuhr.....	12:08pm
Asr.....	3:35pm
Maghrib.....	6:17pm
Isha.....	7:28pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:38am

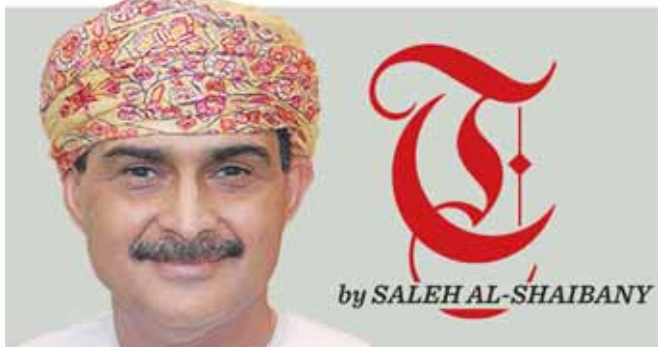
COMMENTARY

Are the mountains guardians of death?

When I was driving past a range of mountains, my colleague said that they reminded him of death. It was an interesting thought. Personally speaking, the sight of mountains gives me a feeling of peace and complete tranquility.

I guess it is about being up there and well above everything else that gives one a sense of power. To me, death does not come into the equation. It is about life in its full zest and enjoying the moment while it lasts. But to him, death is already an ongoing process whose formality will be completed when we finally lower him six feet down. He had another fear but it was not easy for him to put it into words. Every time he goes to bed, he explained, he was terrified of slipping into the dark abyss of nothingness.

He expected me to laugh but I looked at him seriously and told him his concern was shared by half of the world's population. Only he had the courage to bring it out in the open. We all think of our mortality from time to time. That is where religion is important. Life after death is a comfort to many though nobody has been there and come back to tell about it. Pushing these thoughts out of your mind makes you unprepared for the eventuality. It is just like preparing for a big party. You enjoy every minute of it and the journey towards the big day becomes one smooth ride. Except, you will never make the opposite direction once you are in there. In death, I reminded



by SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

my morbid friend, he should find solace before he starts saddling his horse for the final voyage.

Grave diggers or cemetery caretakers would testify to that. I talked to a couple of them on different occasions. It started as just a job like any other, but the familiarity of the place had an impact on them. The peace that surrounds a vast ground that cradles so many dead bodies is not a bad proposition after all. Here in Oman, most cemeteries are surrounded by mountains. And that was, perhaps, the psychological connection my friend has with the mountains.

Unlike a routine in the office in a high rise building, cemetery caretakers come to terms with the long silence of mortality. They need not be reminded that the end of the rope terminates in their workplace. To them, there is no twist in the tale. It is just straight talk. When they die, it is just another drive back to the office but this time, the return trip is not in the duty roster. Last time I was in a graveyard

burying someone, I let my eyes scan those beautiful mountains that looked down on death. Tall, massive, jagged and dark in appearance. Do they scowl down on dead people or stand there lovingly and vigilant until the day of judgment?

After carefully hearing me out, my friend was not impressed about my theory of the mountains. I only managed to make him even more miserable than he was.

When we parted company that evening, I drove past more ranges of mountains. This time they were wrapped by the darkness but I could see the silhouettes of their peaks as they reach for the stars. From the distance, I could make out the same peaks that floated over the cemetery. I was looking at the other side of the range. The side that faces life and the bustle of the city. The same mountains separate life and death in their full literal meaning. If life is about city noises then it is only fitting that death is about eternal nothingness. There is a thought for you when you go to bed tonight.

Inflation rate in Oman reaches 3.4% in August

The average inflation rate for the period from January to August 2026 stood at 2.9 percent



MUSCAT: The inflation rate in the Sultanate of Oman reached 3.4 percent in August 2026, compared with the corresponding month of 2025, according to Consumer Price Index data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The average inflation rate for the period from January to August 2026 stood at 2.9 percent.

The data showed price movements across most main groups. The transport group recorded the highest year-on-year increase at 8.5 percent, followed by the food and non-alcoholic beverages group at 7 percent, and then the miscellaneous personal goods and services group at 6.1 percent.

Prices also rose in the restaurants and hotels group by 3.6 percent, the furniture, household equipment, and routine household maintenance group by 3.1 percent, the education group by 2.2 percent, the health group by 1.7 percent, the culture and recreation group by 0.4 percent, and

the clothing and footwear group by 0.1 percent.

Meanwhile, prices in the communications and tobacco groups remained stable, with no change compared with August of last year, while prices in the housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels group declined by 0.6 percent.

At the governorate level, Al Dhahirah Governorate recorded the highest inflation rate in the Sultanate of Oman during August 2026 at 4.8 percent, followed by Muscat Governorate at 3.9 percent, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate at 3.8 percent, and Al Wusta Governorate at 3.4 percent.

The inflation rate in both Musandam and Al Buraimi Governorates reached 3.3 percent each, South Al Sharqiyah Governorate recorded 3.1 percent, and South Al Batinah Governorate recorded 2.7 percent. North Al Batinah Gov-

ernorate recorded 2.5 percent, North Al Sharqiyah Governorate recorded 2.2 percent, and Dhofar Governorate recorded the lowest inflation rate among the governorates at 2.1 percent.

With regard to the food and non-alcoholic beverages group, the data showed an increase in the prices of a number of sub-groups compared with August 2025. Vegetable prices rose by 19 percent, fruits by 16.3 percent, meat by 9.8 percent, non-alcoholic beverages by 3.5 percent, and food products not classified elsewhere by 3.1 percent.

Prices also rose for milk, cheese, and eggs by 3 percent; sugar, jam, honey, and sweets by 2.3 percent; bread and cereals by 0.8 percent; and oils and fats by 0.1 percent. Meanwhile, fish prices declined by 0.1 percent compared with the corresponding month of 2025.

ELECTRONIC ASSESSMENT

Committee reviews progress of evaluation process for competition

MUSCAT: The Main Committee of the Media Excellence Competition 2026 held its third meeting under the chairmanship of Mohammed Said Al Balushi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information and Chairman of the Committee.

During the meeting, the Committee reviewed the progress of the evaluation process for the competition's submitted entries, which is being conducted through an electronic system representing a qualitative leap in the history of the competition's editions.

Submissions were received via digital forms, and the screening and referral process to the judging panels was carried out for electronic assessment.

The Committee was briefed on



the various activities of the competition, including the accompanying events, namely preparations for organising a workshop on writing television drama scripts and a lecture addressing creativity and

innovation in the era of artificial intelligence, in addition to discussing preparations for the competition's closing ceremony, scheduled to be held next month.

The Ministry of Information

had announced the opening of nominations for participation in the Media Excellence Competition 2026 from 6 May to 14 June 2026, across the fields of journalism, radio and television, and electronic media. The competition targets media institutions, individual practitioners and those interested in media, as well as media students at academic institutions and media content creators.

The competition aims to motivate national talent toward media creativity and innovation, raise the level of professional quality in media institutions, highlight national media capabilities and recognise their achievements, and consolidate the role of national media as an active partner in realising Oman Vision 2040. -ONA

TYPES OF PUFFERFISH

Warning against fish consumption

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Food Safety and Quality Centre (FSQC) has warned the public against buying, trading or consuming certain types of pufferfish, which can contain a potent toxin capable of causing paralysis, breathing difficulties and death.

In a warning issued on social media, the centre said some pufferfish species contain tetrodotoxin, a highly potent poison that can cause severe and potentially fatal symptoms if consumed.

The centre urged consumers to learn to identify the species shown in its warning and avoid purchasing, selling, trading or eating them.

It stressed that the toxin can-

not be eliminated through normal food preparation methods, warning that cooking or freezing the fish does not make them safe for consumption.

Tetrodotoxin can affect the nervous system and, in severe cases, lead to paralysis and respiratory failure, making accidental consumption potentially life-threatening.

The FSQC urged the public to exercise caution when purchasing fish and to avoid any pufferfish species identified in its warning.

The centre also advised against trading or handling the fish for consumption, stressing that the presence of the toxin means they should not be considered safe even after cooking or freezing.

UTAS

Dhofar third scientific forum kicks off in Salalah

SALALAH: Dhofar 3rd Scientific Forum began on Sunday at the premises of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Salalah.

As many as 275 students, academics, researchers, innovators and people interested in research fields are taking part in the 5-day event.

The forum is jointly organized by the UTAS and the Research and Innovation Authority (RIA) to facilitate the exchange of expertise and the development of scholarly research skills.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Said Hamad Al Ruba'ee, Vice Chancellor of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences.

The forum targets individuals aged 18 to 35 years, including students and jobseekers wishing to enhance their research skills and apply modern scientific methodologies.

During the opening ceremony, the RIA signed two memoranda of cooperation (MoC), the first of which was inked with the UTAS to ensure the sustained implementation of the forum over a period



of three years, starting in 2026. The second MoC was signed with the Chair of Technical Strategic Studies to provide academic support and guidance to teams in the research studies track.

These efforts seek to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, protect intellectual property and convert the outcomes of research

into sustainable economic projects that align with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The forum focuses on a number of themes, including the significance of artificial intelligence (AI) to the integrity of research, the impact of COPE guidelines on research retraction and the role of marketing research in enhancing global university rankings. The forum reflects a keenness to groom national talents, develop research capabilities and foster an interactive environment for the exchange of expertise among researchers, students and academic institutions. -ONA

TRANSFORMING HOUSEHOLD

Efforts on to empower rural women in Al Buraimi

MUSCAT: The programmes and initiatives implemented by the Directorate General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Al Buraimi Governorate serve as a genuine support for empowering rural women economically and socially by transforming household activities into productive projects that contribute to generating sustainable income for these families, in addition to enhancing food security.

Eng. Shaikha Hamad Al Kindi, Head of the Rural Development Department at the Directorate General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Al Buraimi Governorate, stated that the number of rural women registered in productive projects in the governorate has reached about 90, while the number of currently active projects stands at three in the agricultural and livestock sectors, noting that a plan is in place to launch new projects across various wilayats of the governorate during the coming period.

She explained that the support directed to rural women spans several main areas, including food processing, goat, sheep, and poultry breeding using modern meth-



ods, alongside honeybee keeping projects and home farming.

She indicated that the Directorate provides a package of facilities and technical support that includes field follow-ups and specialised training workshops in project management, packaging, as well as electronic and traditional marketing, to facilitate access to government and private

financing programmes. Regarding marketing, she emphasised that the Directorate is keen to offer beneficiaries opportunities to participate in national exhibitions and festivals, while working to establish permanent sales outlets and develop product brands to ensure their continuity and boost their competitiveness in the markets. -ONA

Oman boosts farm research through molecular breeding

Regional workshop spotlights technologies for climate-resilient crops

MUSCAT: The regional workshop on “Molecular Breeding and Marker-Assisted Selection”, which commenced on Sunday in Muscat and continues until 24 September, discussed enhancing scientific and technical cooperation and exchanging expertise in modern plant breeding technologies.

The workshop, held under the auspices of Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al Bakri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Agriculture, seeks to build national and regional capabilities in utilising molecular technologies and genetic markers in genetic improvement programmes, thereby contributing to developing agricultural production and elevating its capacity to confront environmental and climatic challenges.

Organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, represented by the Directorate General of Agriculture and Livestock Research, in cooperation with the International Atomic



Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the workshop includes lectures, practical applications, and specialised training in the fields of molecular breeding and marker-assisted selection, thereby enhancing participants’ knowledge and skills, and paving the way for exchanging expertise and experiences among specialists and researchers from participating countries.

Dr. Al Ghalia Hamid Al Maamari, Director of the Tissue Culture and Biotechnology Research Centre, said that organising this regional meeting comes as a result of constructive and continuous cooperation, underscoring the importance of international partnerships in

supporting scientific research and developing capabilities in modern agricultural technology fields.

She added that food security and the sustainability of the agricultural sector represent the forefront of shared developmental priorities in light of the accelerating climatic and environmental challenges facing the world, most notably drought, rainfall fluctuations, soil degradation, and limited freshwater resources, alongside increasing pressures resulting from the spread of plant pests and diseases.

She pointed out that these challenges necessitate adopting a scientific and innovative approach based on deploying advanced biotechnologies, with the aim of enhancing the resilience and pro-

ductivity of agricultural systems and securing communities’ needs for strategic and staple food crops.

She noted that mutation breeding programmes represent one of the effective and proven strategic solutions for improving agricultural crops and achieving qualitative advances in their quantitative, productive, and qualitative traits. She explained that mutations, whether spontaneous or laboratory-induced using physical mutagens—including radiation within the framework of peaceful nuclear technologies—or chemical mutagens, represent an important foundation for generating and expanding the base of genetic variation in plants.

She pointed out that this vari-

ation allows for the development and introduction of new and desirable genes and traits, enabling plants to withstand harsh environmental conditions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and resist agricultural pests, particularly in staple cereal crops like wheat and barley, alongside crops of local economic importance.

She stated that utilising genetic markers allows for screening plant genetic material and precisely selecting successful and promising mutations, rather than relying on waiting years for desired traits to manifest phenotypically and stabilize across generations, thereby contributing to reducing research time and effort and accelerating access to improved varieties.

She concluded by emphasising that the integration between mutation breeding technologies, molecular techniques, and marker-assisted selection represents a promising approach to accelerating the production of improved agricultural varieties and transferring them efficiently and rapidly to farmers’ fields, thereby supporting food security and boosting the resilience of agricultural systems against global food crises and supply chain disruptions.

The workshop aims to highlight the integration of molecular breeding techniques and marker-assisted selection with mutation breeding programs, as precise diagnostic tools enabling the identification of genetic changes and the selection of promising mutations at early stages of plant growth. -ONA

Performance indicators reviewed

SOHAR: A meeting was held on Sunday at the Office of the Governor of North Al Batinah to review performance indicators of government departments and to assess local administrative units across the governorate’s wilayats.

The meeting, which was attended by Mohammed bin Sulaiman Al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah, discussed the outcome of a study on living conditions in North Al Batinah and a drive to align programmes of planning and projects with the community’s actual needs and priorities.

In addition, the meeting reviewed the general concept of Sohar Festival and discussed the outcome of a survey on identifying key challenges facing government establishments in the governorate and proposals on helping public establishments perform their duties more efficiently.

Satisfaction of beneficiaries

The meeting also looked into indicators of the performance of government departments in North Al Batinah, the satisfaction of beneficiaries and opportunities for improving government services.

The participants issued recommendations on enhancing coordination between the branches of government units, forming joint task forces for priority sectors and accelerating digital transition and electronic integration, among other proposals. -ONA

Training-linked Omanisation helps in acquiring skills

FROM A1 He explained that the ministry does not deal with government jobs as separate vacancies, but rather works to link them to career planning and the future needs of entities. This allows for the identification of priority jobs and the establishment of appropriate pathways to fill them, whether through direct recruitment, Omanisation, or training and qualification linked to the target job.

He pointed out that Omanisation represents one of the main pillars of the government recruitment plan. The number of Omanisation opportunities during the first half of the year reached 999 jobs, accounting for about 59 percent of the total opportunities, of which 877 jobs were within train-

ing-linked Omanisation and 122 jobs within direct Omanisation.

He indicated that these figures reflect a growing trend towards linking Omanisation to training and qualification pathways, particularly in jobs that require specialised skills or practical experience not necessarily directly available among job seekers. He explained that training-linked Omanisation gives national cadres an appropriate period to acquire the knowledge, skills, and practical experience required before moving into the target job.

He affirmed that linking Omanisation to training represents an important shift in the concept of Omanisation, as it is not limited to replacing one job holder with another, but rather moves towards building qualified national com-

petence capable of performing the required tasks in accordance with the work standards of the beneficiary entity.

He added that this pathway also helps address some of the challenges associated with specialised jobs by giving job seekers an opportunity to prepare for the job before filling it. At the same time, it gives government entities the ability to plan their national talent needs more precisely and sustainably.

He pointed out that the ministry monitors the stages of Omanisation from the identification of the target job through the completion of training and qualification and the transition to the appointment stage, thereby enhancing implementation efficiency and reducing the gap between job planning

and reaching a qualified national holder for the position.

Al Sunaidi explained that among the most prominent initiatives the ministry is implementing in the field of Omanisation is an agreement to replace 110 expatriate trainers with national cadres in vocational colleges. He noted that vacancies for these jobs will be announced during 2026, with the selection and appointment procedures for national cadres to be completed during 2027, and the selected cadres to commence their duties at the beginning of the 2027/2028 academic year.

He indicated that the total employment opportunities during the first half of the year included 1,500 new job vacancies, in addition to 39 opportunities under employment contracts, alongside Omani-

sation opportunities. This reflects the multiplicity of pathways on which the ministry relies to meet the needs of government entities.

He explained that new jobs represent a fundamental aspect of the government recruitment system, as they are a direct response to needs that arise in government units as a result of expansion in certain fields, the creation of new jobs, or the need to reinforce certain units with national talent.

He pointed out that the ministry reviews the job needs submitted by government entities and studies the nature of the jobs, their qualifications, and their specialisations, thereby helping to direct opportunities towards the fields required at the current stage, while taking into account the outputs of education and training and the ability of

job seekers to fill those jobs.

He noted that the distribution of employment opportunities by qualification showed a clear focus on university degree holders, with 1,927 opportunities allocated to them, while opportunities for general education diploma holders reached 201, and opportunities for post-secondary diploma holders reached 280.

He explained that this distribution reflects the diversity of job needs in the government sector and the differing educational and professional requirements of the advertised jobs.

He affirmed that the ministry works to align qualifications with the nature and requirements of the job to ensure that appropriate talent reaches the targeted job positions.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Meeting in South Al Batinah reviews labour market priorities

RUSTAQ: An expanded meeting was held in South Al Batinah Governorate as part of a series of field visits by the team preparing the Ministry of Labour’s strategic plan, with the participation of a number of government and private entities, business institutions, and community members to foresight their aspirations and monitor the most prominent challenges and opportunities associated with the labour market, employment, and human resources development.

Participants emphasised the importance of building the strategic plan on a realistic assessment of the governorates’ needs and the specificity of their economic sectors, as well as taking into account the nature of activities and the size of establishments when formulating policies and decisions related to the labour market.

Omanisation mechanisms

The meetings discussed aligning education outputs with labour market requirements, foresighting future specialisations and skills, the quality and sustainability of job opportunities, developing Omanisation mechanisms, strengthening partnership with the private sector, and linking employment targets with investment and development projects across the governorates.

Furthermore, participants stressed the importance of stud-



ying the economic and social impact of decisions prior to implementation, relying on accurate data to define labour market needs, enhancing government integration and streamlining procedures, ensuring clear legislation and implementation guidelines, and involving business owners in the early stages of decision-making related to the business and employment environment.

The plan preparation team explained that these meetings represent a fundamental pillar of the participatory approach in

preparing the Ministry’s strategy through 2030, by documenting and analysing stakeholder insights as core inputs for formulating strategic directions and priorities.

This orientation comes to enhance the integration of roles among the government, the private sector, educational institutions, and society, aiming to achieve a more efficient, flexible, and sustainable labor market capable of keeping pace with future economic and technological transformations. -ONA



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From frankincense to emerging tech, Dhofar charts future of security, safety

Its visual identity, inspired by the iconic frankincense tree of Dhofar, captured that philosophy. Frankincense has long been a symbol of the region's history, economy

Times News Service

SALALAH: From the heritage of frankincense to the technologies shaping the future, the Governorate of Dhofar hosted its first dedicated Security and Safety Exhibition from 7 to 9 September 2026, held alongside the fifth Symposium on the Security and Safety of Critical Facilities.

The inaugural exhibition added a significant new dimension to one of Oman's leading specialised gatherings in the security and safety sector, bringing together local and international companies, technology providers, government and private-sector institutions, experts and industry professionals under one roof.

More than a showcase of products and equipment, the exhibition presented a broader vision of modern security — one built around prevention, preparedness, intelligent response and the integration of people, technology and decision-making.

Its visual identity, inspired by the iconic frankincense tree of Dhofar, captured that philosophy. Frankincense has long been a symbol of the region's history, economy and cultural influence, travelling from Dhofar to markets and civilisations far beyond Oman.

In much the same way, the exhibition sought to connect established local capabilities with global knowledge, emerging technologies and international expertise.

The message was clear: the future of security does not mean leaving the past behind. It means building on strong foundations while embracing innovation.

'Security begins before the Threat'

The modern security landscape is increasingly defined not by how effectively organisations respond after an incident, but by how successfully they anticipate and prevent it.

That shift was evident through-

out the exhibition.

Advanced solutions on display covered a broad spectrum of capabilities, including vertical aviation and rescue operations, intelligent surveillance, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, unmanned aerial systems, command-and-control centres, integrated security platforms and technologies designed to strengthen emergency and disaster response.

Together, they reflected a fundamental transformation in the sector: from reactive security to predictive, data-driven and increasingly interconnected systems.

Today, security begins long before an incident occurs — with the collection of information, the analysis of indicators, the detection of vulnerabilities and the identification of emerging threats. The objective is ultimately to transform intelligence into timely decisions and effective action.

The first Security and Safety Exhibition provided a practical demonstration of that transition.

A platform where security, technology and investment converge

The exhibition attracted a specialised group of local and international companies showcasing technologies and solutions aligned with the rapidly evolving security and safety sector.

Among the prominent participants was Al Sharqiya Aviation, which showcased advanced helicopter capabilities for rescue, transportation, rapid response and emergency operations.

The presence of vertical aviation highlighted the increasingly important role of helicopters in search-and-rescue missions and emergency response, particularly in challenging geographical environments where speed, mobility and operational flexibility are critical.

But the significance went beyond the aircraft themselves.



Modern emergency response depends increasingly on the integration of aerial capabilities with command centres, field teams, communications networks and real-time information. When these elements operate as one system, response times can be reduced, resources deployed more effectively and crisis management significantly strengthened.

The exhibition also featured companies specialising in smart solutions, advanced security technologies and cybersecurity, alongside providers of unmanned aerial systems — or drones — which have rapidly become important tools for surveillance, reconnaissance, surveying, monitoring and emergency support.

Aspar, a company specialising in drone technologies, presented applications illustrating the expanding role of unmanned systems in security and field operations, reflecting the rapid evolution of autonomous and remotely operated technologies.

The Central Operations Centre: The intelligence behind the system

One of the exhibition's most compelling concepts was presented by the Central Operations Centre, demonstrating how traditional monitoring rooms are evolving into intelligent operational hubs

capable of collecting, analysing and connecting information from multiple sources.

The concept brings together data from surveillance systems, sensors, cameras, digital platforms and communications networks, creating a unified operational picture for decision-makers.

The value of such a system lies in its ability to provide a real-time understanding of an incident — from identifying the nature and severity of a threat to directing resources, coordinating specialised teams and monitoring the response until the situation is resolved.

This represents one of the most important global shifts in the security sector: moving beyond observation and reaction towards proactive risk management supported by data and intelligence.

Exhibition opens a window on the future: Governor of Dhofar

The exhibition received strong support from His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, who highlighted the importance of hosting specialised events of this nature in the governorate.

He said the exhibition represented a valuable addition to the fifth symposium, providing a platform that brings together expertise, technology and specialised companies in a field directly con-

nected to the protection of people, critical facilities and national assets.

"The advanced solutions and technologies showcased here confirm that the future of security and safety rests on innovation, preparedness and integration across sectors. The exhibition also creates opportunities for cooperation, investment and partnership, while strengthening Dhofar's position as a destination capable of hosting specialised events that support development and align with Oman's future ambitions."

His remarks reflected a broader objective behind the exhibition: positioning Dhofar not simply as a host for specialised events, but as a meeting point for technology, expertise, investment and national priorities.

'Building a sustainable platform'

For Brigadier General Eng. Saeed Al Asimi, Chief Executive Officer of the Security and Safety Foundation, the launch of the exhibition was driven by the need for a practical platform capable of keeping pace with rapid developments in the sector.

Hestressed that the objective was never simply to display products. "We wanted the Security and Safety Exhibition to be more than a showcase for products. We wanted it to be a platform for shaping the

future — bringing decision-makers together with experts and specialised companies, and enabling organisations to identify technologies that can be transformed into practical solutions that strengthen preparedness, prevention and response."

Al Asimi noted that the range of participation, agreements and partnerships demonstrated an important principle: the priority is no longer technology for its own sake, but the effective integration of technology into comprehensive security and safety systems.

"We look forward to developing the exhibition into a sustainable event that grows from one edition to the next and attracts an increasing number of regional and international companies and experts to the Sultanate of Oman."

He also emphasised the importance of cooperation between government institutions, private-sector organisations, technology companies, academia and specialists, noting that modern security and safety challenges are increasingly multidimensional and cannot be addressed from a single perspective.

From Exhibition Floor to Business Platform

The exhibition's impact extended beyond technology demonstrations.

Its halls became a forum for commercial dialogue, professional networking and the development of new relationships, with participants signing a number of agreements among themselves, as well as agreements with government entities and partnerships with the Security and Safety Foundation.

The agreements underscored the growing role of specialised exhibitions in creating business opportunities, facilitating technology transfer and building long-term partnerships.

Direct engagement between companies and government and private-sector organisations also provided an opportunity to identify local market requirements, explore areas of cooperation and open new channels for investment and specialised technical services.

Ultimately, the value of a specialised exhibition is measured not simply by the number of products displayed, but by its ability to turn conversations into projects, ideas into solutions and professional relationships into sustainable partnerships.

INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

North Al Sharqiyah advances housing and urban development projects

IBRA: The housing and urban planning sector in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate is witnessing sustained development activity this year, with projects focused on social housing, residential land allocation, integrated neighbourhoods and digital services to support family stability, organised urban growth and quality of life.

Ali bin Saeed Al-Rujibi, Director General of Housing and Urban Planning in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the sector's indicators during the first half of 2026 included the creation of 580 plots of land for various uses, the provision of 455 residential plots and the approval of 628 plots under the "Plan Your Land" initiative.

He said the figures reflect ongoing efforts to prepare the governorate for urban expansion and meet demand for residential land through planning that considers population needs and future development requirements.

In the social housing sector, 152 housing assistance applications were provided in 2025 at a total value of about OMR4.4 million. During 2026, 124 housing assistance packages have been provided with a total value of about OMR3.5 million.

He said the housing assistance programme forms part of government efforts to provide suitable housing for eligible citizens and strengthen family and social stability.

He noted that a number of social housing projects are being implemented across the governorate. Work is continuing on a project in Al-Rahibat in Al-Qabil comprising 45 housing units, a mosque and a council, at a total cost of about OMR2.44 million.

A project comprising 49 housing



units in Hail Al-Kafuf in Dima Wa Al-Taiyyin has been completed at a cost of about OMR2.43 million.

Work is also continuing on the construction of 24 housing units in Hail Al-Qash in Dima Wa Al-Taiyyin at an estimated cost of OMR1 million. A project comprising 19 housing units in Buwad in Wadi Bani Khalid has been completed at a cost of about OMR1.16 million, while work is continuing on the construction of a mosque in Hail Al-Kafuf at an estimated cost of OMR185,000.

He said the projects form part of the social housing system designed to provide suitable homes for citizens while supporting the development of residential communities with essential services and facilities.

The governorate is also continuing to implement "Surooh" projects, which seek to establish integrated urban communities incorporating housing, infrastructure, public facilities and essential services.

The projects include Al-Sumou neighbourhood in Al-Mudhaibi, Al-Ala neighbourhood in Bidiya and Saih Al-Rafie in Wadi Bani Khalid. He said the Al-Sumou neighbourhood project in Al-Mudhaibi has an estimated cost of OMR15 million, while the Al-Ala neighbourhood project in Bidiya is valued at about OMR5 million.

He explained that the projects reflect a broader planning approach aimed at developing integrated residential neighbourhoods and connecting them with road networks, public services and facilities.

The development programme is being supported by an expansion in digital services. More than 28 electronic services have been introduced in urban planning, helping simplify procedures, accelerate transactions and improve the experience of beneficiaries.

The digital transformation also contributes to improving land management and the efficiency of urban planning-related services.



Al-Rujibi said legislative and regulatory developments in housing, urban and real estate planning are contributing to more efficient land management and urban planning. They also support the use of geospatial data in decision-making, strengthen the planning of future population centres, improve the distribution of services and



facilities, and enhance land-use efficiency.

He added that urban planning in the governorate is closely linked to creating an environment conducive to economic and investment growth through the allocation of land for productive and service activities.

This approach, he said, strengthens integration between residential and economic development and supports the utilisation of the resources and investment opportunities available across the governorate's wilayats.

Al-Rujibi also highlighted the importance of infrastructure projects designed to protect population centres and facilities from climate-related risks, particularly flooding.

Among these is a flood protection dam project in the Samad Al-Shan area of Al-Mudhaibi, which is intended to strengthen the resilience of infrastructure against heavy rainfall and wadi flows.

The project is expected to con-

tribute to protecting residential areas and supporting the sustainability of urban development in areas vulnerable to flooding.

Al-Rujibi stressed that the housing and urban development indicators and projects under implementation reflect an integrated approach combining residential land allocation, housing assistance, social housing units, integrated neighbourhoods, digital transformation, land-use regulation and the use of geospatial data.

He said the approach is designed to keep pace with population and urban growth while improving living conditions and creating sustainable residential environments.

The efforts are aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, particularly its focus on balanced and sustainable development across the governorates, improving quality of life, enhancing urban planning efficiency, developing suitable residential environments and supporting economic and investment opportunities.

Rehabilitation of historic quarters boosts tourism, investment in Al Dakhiliyah

Work focuses on rehabilitation in a manner that preserves their heritage and architectural values while utilising them as sustainable economic, tourism and cultural destinations

NIZWA: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, in cooperation with the relevant authorities, is conducting studies and rehabilitation work on a number of heritage quarters and sites of historical value in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, in accordance with priorities that consider readiness and the anticipated economic and social impact.

Ahlam Hamad Al Qassabi, Director of the Heritage and Tourism Department in A'Dakhiliyah Governorate told Oman News Agency (ONA) that old quarter rehabilitation projects contribute to creating an attractive environment for investment by repurposing historic buildings for various economic activities, such as heritage inns, traditional cafés and restaurants, handicraft and traditional industries exhibitions, private museums, and cultural centres, as well as organising events, festivals, and heritage markets.

She added that these activities are intended to stimulate economic activity and attract visitors throughout the year. She noted that old quarters represent a civilisational, cultural and economic asset, as well as an authentic part of Omani identity.

Work in the governorate therefore focuses on rehabilitating them in a manner that combines preserving their heritage and architectural values with utilising them as sustainable economic, tourism and cultural destinations, she pointed out.

She explained that Al Dakhiliyah Governorate encompasses more than 220 historic quarters, a number of which have witnessed the implementation of rehabilitation and development projects in recent years.

She affirmed that the department continues to implement restoration and rehabilitation projects for heritage quarters and buildings, through the restoration of sabahs (open courtyards), gates,



and historic mosques, and the rehabilitation of pathways and alleys within the quarters, in a manner that preserves their authentic architectural character and enhances their readiness to receive visitors.

Among the most prominent of these projects is the restoration of Al Waljah Mosque and the sabah of Al Saybani quarter in Birkat Al Mouz, along with the preparation of the area in front of the quarter and its entrance, and paving it in a manner consistent with the urban character of the site.

Meanwhile, restoration work on the sabahs and tower of the Al Ain and Al Sawad quarters in the Wilayat of Izki has been completed.

In the Wilayat of Jabal Akhdar, the Al Aqr, Al Ain, and Al Shurayjah villages trail project is also ongoing. It links a number of the Al Aqr, Al Ain, and Al Shurayjah quarters by paving the trail with flat gravel and creating seating areas along its length, thereby enriching the visitor experience and enhancing the utilisation of the wilayat's heritage and natural assets.

Al Qassabi added that the ministry's efforts include supporting owners of heritage houses and providing the restoration materials needed to rehabilitate them and



convert them into heritage inns, as well as providing technical supervision of restoration and maintenance work, thereby contributing to preserving the urban identity of the quarters and sustaining their historical and heritage value.

Within the framework of strengthening partnership with the local community, the ministry

has supported community initiatives in the Wilayat of Adam to restore and maintain Al Hawashim and Bani Shibani quarters by providing essential restoration materials, including sarooj, kandhal wood, and stone.

She affirmed that the rehabilitation projects have contributed directly and indirectly to creating

diverse job opportunities during the restoration and construction phases and after the operation and investment of the sites. Small and medium enterprises have also benefited from the implementation of works and services associated with the projects, and opportunities have been created for productive families and artisans to mar-

ket their traditional products to visitors.

She indicated that reviving old quarters contributes to stimulating the local economy by increasing tourism traffic, raising spending rates within local communities, enhancing the value of real estate assets, and encouraging entrepreneurs to launch new projects related to tourism, culture, and heritage, which reflects positively on the income of families and individuals and supports the sustainability of development in the wilayats.

She said that partnerships with the private sector represent a fundamental pillar in developing heritage sites, by providing the financing and the marketing expertise necessary to transform them into sustainable economic projects, in addition to raising the quality of services, accelerating project implementation, and enhancing the attraction of local and international investments.

These efforts are consistent with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 by supporting economic diversification, enhancing cultural and creative industries, developing heritage tourism, and raising the contribution of small and medium enterprises to the national economy. — ONA

E OMAN AUTHORITY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDUCATION

Strategic Plan 2026-2030 unveiled at ceremony

< FROM A1 The plan is guided by a set of institutional values, including integrity and transparency, professionalism, partnership, flexibility and future foresight. These values are intended to strengthen institutional performance and support the achievement of the Authority's strategic objectives during the coming period. The launch ceremony included a visual presentation highlighting the Authority's journey in establishing a national system for education quality assurance. It reviewed the development of the Authority's institutional role, as well as its key achievements and impact. The presentation concluded with the unveiling of the Strategic Plan 2026-2030, which builds on the approaches and priorities of Oman Vision 2040.



Royal Oman Police

ANNOUNCEMENT

Public Online Auction to Sell Detained Vehicles

The Royal Oman Police - Directorate of Public Relations and Security Information – announces a public online auction through the ROP Auctions Platform to sell detained vehicles at the police stations of North Al Sharqiyah Governorate Police Headquarters via the website (www.rop.mzadcom.om), starting from Sunday, 20 September 2026.

The vehicles displayed for sale may be inspected during the period from 15 to 17 September 2026 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm at the vehicle detention yard at Al Qabel Police Station at North Al Sharqiyah Governorate Police Headquarters.

Bidders must abide by the following terms and conditions:

- To register on the website www.rop.mzadcom.om
- To pay an insurance amount of RO 500/- (five hundred Omani Riyals) via the website, which is non-refundable in case of failure to pay the value of the purchased vehicle or carry out the procedures for its registration and transfer within the specified period.
- To pay the auctioneer fees at 2% of the value of the vehicle plus 5% VAT.
- To pay the value of the vehicle by electronic transfer within 48 working hours.
- To register and transfer the vehicle within 3 days after paying its value to avoid a fine of RO 5/- (five Omani Riyals) for each day of delay after the end of the specified period, without the Royal Oman Police bearing any responsibility in the event of its loss or damage.
- The Royal Oman Police and the Auction Website shall not bear any responsibility if the image or description of any vehicle displayed does not match the reality and do not guarantee its validity or technical integrity. Buyers have to verify the condition themselves through visual inspection during the designated inspection days.
- **For more details, please visit the website (www.rop.mzadcom.om) or call 98886154.**



إعلان مناقصة

Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tenders:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
117/2026/ MTCIT	Promotional Campaign & Artistic Direction for the Launch of the Second Phase of the National Digital Economy Programme (2026-2030)	10-9-2026	15-9-2026	23-9-2026	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE PROJECT, TENDERS AND LOCAL CONTENT AUTHORITY (FORTH CLASSES)	(25/-) TEWNTY-FIVE OMANI RIALS (LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMPANIES) (10/-) TEN OMANI RIALS (SMES) NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

CORRESPONDANCE:

1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
2. E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:

Tel: +968 24402200 E-mail: etenderhd@gstb.gov.om

 @mtcitoman

www.mtcit.gov.om

Internal Tenders Committee

ARAB LABOUR CONFERENCE IN CAIRO

Forum focuses on Arab cooperation in fields of labour and employment

CAIRO: The Sultanate of Oman is taking part in the 52nd session of the Arab Labour Conference being hosted by the Arab Republic of Egypt until 20 September 2026.

The conference is organised by the Arab Labour Organisation under the theme “Sustainable Economic Growth: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Social Development in Arab Countries”.

It deals with measures to promote sustainable economic growth, equitable social development, climate change and its impact on the work environment.

The conference also underlines the role of startups in supporting entrepreneurship, generating new employment opportunities and boosting productivity.

The event seeks to align skills with labour market needs and support the formulation of labour policies that are capable of keeping pace with economic, technological and social transition.

The conference studies means of enhancing Arab cooperation in the fields of labour and employ-



ment and to facilitate the exchange of expertise and successful experiences among Arab countries.

Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), said that the Sultanate of Oman’s participation in the Arab Labour Conference responds to rapid developments taking place in labour markets.

These changes, he observed, stress the need to develop labour policies and consolidate the role

of the private sector in supporting sustainable growth and providing high-quality employment opportunities.

Al Rawas pointed out that the next stage requires a focus on developing skills so that they could align with labour market needs and meet the needs of digital transition and the green economy.

He added that the next stage also calls for supporting startups and developing their ability to garner innovation and growth.

He stressed the importance of constant cooperation and the exchange of expertise among Arab states to help improve the work environment and boost the ability of Arab economies to adapt to developments and achieve sustainable growth in accordance with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

On the sidelines of the conference, the Ministry of Labour participated in the 65th meeting of the GCC Council of Labour Ministers. — **ONA**

GLOBAL ESPORTS FEDERATION

Reality of gaming and esports discussed

MUSCAT: Sayyid Saud Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth met yesterday with Sir Paul J. Foster, President of the Global Esports Federation.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the reality of gaming and esports and their rapid growth worldwide, and explored ways to enhance their presence in the Sultanate of Oman.

The two sides also reviewed opportunities for cooperation and the exchange of expertise in relevant fields.

Furthermore, the two sides discussed ways to develop the esports ecosystem, support national talents and competencies, and benefit from global expertise and



experiences, in a manner that contributes to creating a stimulating environment for the growth of this sector, expanding its practitioner

base and enhancing the Sultanate of Oman’s presence in regional and international events and championships.

The meeting was attended by Sabaa Said Al Busaidi, Chairperson of the Omani Gaming and Esports Committee. — **ONA**

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FIVE-DAY SESSION

Training programme on strategic planning conducted in Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The specialised training programme on “Strategic Planning”, conducted by Muscat Governorate, commenced today. The five-day programme targets numerous the Governorate’s employees. It aims to reinforce their knowledge and skills in strategic planning and develop their abilities to apply modern planning methodologies. Thereby it contributes to improving institutional efficiency and supporting sustainable development efforts.

This programme aims to familiarise participants with the concept of strategic planning and its importance in ensuring institutional success and excellence, and to enable them to use strategic analysis tools to understand the organisation’s current situation and identify its priorities. It provides them with knowledge of the models and steps required to effectively develop strategic and operational plans.

Dr Humaid Al Hinai delivers the training programme through an interactive learning methodology that combines presentations, practical exercises, case studies, group work, brainstorming and discussions. This approach strengthens the practical aspect



of the programme and enables participants to benefit from the knowledge and experience gained and apply it in the workplace.

The programme covers several key topics, most notably the foundations and concepts of strategic planning and its importance, strategic planning methods and methodologies, institutional analysis techniques, advancing and formulating strategic plans, as well as executive management and mechanisms for preparing operational plans.

Conducting the programme forms part of Muscat Governorate’s efforts to invest in human resource development, enhance employees’ efficiency, and boost their leadership and professional skills. These efforts contribute to advancing institutional performance, keeping pace with the requirements of continuous development, and achieving work objectives efficiently and effectively.

Hanan Khalid Wins Influencer of the Year – Medical Aesthetics Award



Hanan Khalid, a marketing and communications professional in the medical aesthetics sector, was felicitated with the ‘The Origin Influencer of the Year – Medical Aesthetics Award’ at The Origin – Women Forum & Awards 2026. The awards presentation was held at JW Marriott Hotel Muscat, bringing together women leaders, professionals, entrepreneurs and changemakers from across Oman and the region.

With a strong background in marketing, communications and healthcare, Hanan has built her professional presence around connecting audiences with brands and experiences in the evolving medical aesthetics and beauty sector. Her work reflects the growing role of digital communication in shaping how audiences discover, engage with and understand aesthetic and wellness services.

Through her work with Dar Derma, Hanan brings together strategic marketing, creative communication and audience engagement to strengthen the connection between healthcare brands and their communities. Her approach highlights the importance of authentic storytelling and



meaningful digital engagement in an increasingly competitive and visually driven industry.

Her recognition as Influencer of the Year – Medical Aesthetics celebrates her contribution to the sector through communication, creativity and digital influence. It also reflects the growing impact of women who are using their expertise and digital platforms to shape conversations around beauty, confidence and modern aesthetic care.

Hanan’s journey demonstrates how the intersection of healthcare, marketing and digital influence can create new ways for brands to engage audiences and build trust. Her recognition at The Origin 2026 celebrates that impact and her contribution to the evolving medical aesthetics landscape in Oman.

The Origin Awards 2026 are instituted by Times of Oman, in collaboration with Muscat Media Group, Gulf Leaders Circle and TEEvents. The awards recognise exceptional women, organisations and initiatives making a meaningful impact across industries and communities, while advancing leadership, empowerment, inclusion and progress.

WILAYAT OF JABAL AKHDAR



Exhibition features geological heritage and diversity of Oman

JABAL AKHDAR: The 5th edition of the Omani Geological Heritage Exhibition, titled “Sustainability and Job Opportunities”, commenced on Sunday in the Wilayat of Jabal Akhdar, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, running until the end of coming December.

The opening of the exhibition was held under the auspices of Sheikh Mahmoud Rashid Al Saadi, Acting Governor of Al Dakhiliyah.

The current edition includes new corners introducing the “Al Hajar Geopark” project, which is considered the first national geopark project in the Sultanate of Oman, aiming to contribute to conserving geological heritage sites and utilising them in the fields of tourism, education, and scientific research.

The exhibition presents scientific and interactive content through several corners featured in previous editions, including the story of geological heritage, the geological diversity of the Sultanate of Oman, its history, the formation of Oman’s land across geological eras, and the importance of conserving and sustaining geological heritage, alongside job opportunities in the field of geo-tourism.

The fifth edition also features introductory corners on the “Al Hajar Geopark” project, address-



ing the project’s concept, objectives, and its tourism, scientific, and developmental significance.

The exhibition showcases a collection of distinctive geological heritage pieces, including a fossil estimated to be about 800 million years old, 3D scientific models of the extinct primitive

elephant whose fossilised teeth were discovered in the Aydam area in Dhofar Governorate, and a dinosaur whose fossilised bone remains were found in Al Khoudh area in the Wilayat of A’Seeb, alongside other models and fossils highlighting the geological history of Oman. — **ONA**

Oman lauds India’s vision for peace and dialogue at BRICS Summit 2026

Oman’s Ambassador to India said the impact of geopolitical crises extends beyond directly involved countries and affects the wider global community

NEW DELHI: Commending India’s approach to regional stability and dialogue at the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi, Oman’s

Ambassador to India, Issa Saleh Abdullah Alshibani, on Sunday praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s global vision and stressed the need for peaceful dialogue to address global crises. Referring to India’s efforts towards de-escalation, conflict resolution and neighbourhood stability, the Ambassador said Oman’s foreign policy aligns with India’s guiding philosophy. Speaking to ANI on the sidelines of the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi, Alshibani said the impact of geopolitical crises extends beyond directly involved countries and affects the wider global community. “I think we are part of the motto of the Prime Minister, when he said there is One Earth, One Family. In a geopolitical context, the impact of such crises affects not only the direct countries but also indirectly all countries,” he said.



“Oman has a genuine policy in terms of peaceful dialogue, peaceful neighbourhood, and I think we are pursuing that. I think this is the way forward for resolving so many of the issues and difficulties that the world faces right now,” Alshibani added. The Omani envoy also highlighted the longstanding ties between India and Oman, saying high-level engagements between the two

countries will continue. “High-level meetings will never stop. There will always be an interaction. India is not only a big country but very neighbouring country. We have enjoyed a historical, deep-rooted relationship that goes back thousands of years in history,” he said. On India-Oman cooperation in fuel and energy supply, the Ambassador said the recently signed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) would help facilitate trade and strengthen energy ties between the two countries. “Very recently we have signed the CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement). CEPA is one way of eliminating tariffs in order to facilitate the transport of fuels,” he said. “It’s one way of trying to work with governments, very close

neighbourhood, trying to make sure that there is always a dependable neighbourhood that they can rely on when the crisis is happening,” he added. Alshibani said both countries remain in close contact on issues of mutual interest and cooperation. “We are in close contact with Indian authorities with regard to collaboration in several issues,” he added. His comments come at a time when the expanded BRICS grouping is seeking to project a stronger voice for the Global South while managing differences among its members. The New Delhi Declaration reaffirmed the bloc’s commitment to consensus, sovereign equality, multilateralism and a more representative international order. – ANI

Full story@ timesofoman.com/world

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Cases of Ebola in DRC exceed 7,000

KINSHASA: Authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) say Ebola infections have surpassed 7,000, marking the country’s worst outbreak on record, with deaths approaching 3,400. The outbreak — the 17th in the DRC — was officially declared in mid-May, weeks after the virus began spreading in Ituri province in northeastern Congo before reaching other areas that lack basic health infrastructure and are plagued by armed conflict. According to the latest data, 7,022 cases and 3,398 deaths have been recorded, while 1,671 people have recovered. The disease has now been confirmed in South Ubangi province, the seventh

province to report infections. Most cases are concentrated in Ituri, where infections were detected in schools after the summer holidays, alarming parents and health workers. Schools have introduced measures to curb transmission, including handwashing and awareness campaigns urging students to avoid handshakes and close contact. Ebola has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa over the past five decades. It spreads through contact with bodily fluids and can cause severe bleeding and organ failure. The current outbreak is driven by the Bundibugyo strain, for which no vaccine or approved treatment exists. – ONA

PASSENGER SHIP

Search underway after ferry loses contact in Indonesia

JAKARTA: An Indonesian passenger ship carrying 243 people lost contact with authorities in the Java Sea on Sunday. Local authorities said 102 people have been brought to safety and one person has died. “We have carried out efforts to search for victims to the fullest extent. There were passengers who ... had already been successfully evacuated by the units at the scene,” I Putu Sudayana, head of the Banjarmasin Search and Rescue Office, told reporters. The Virgo Transport 8 was traveling from Indonesia’s second-largest city of Surabaya to Banjarmasin, the capital of South Kalimantan province. It departed on Saturday at 10:13 a.m. local time, but the ship’s operator lost contact with the vessel early Sunday amid bad weather. Search and rescue teams launched an operation after the operator alerted authorities. “The ship’s operator reported the incident to authorities after receiving information that the vessel had encountered bad weather,” Sudayana said in an earlier video briefing. The ship’s last known position was in the Java Sea, roughly 148 kilometres from a pier in Banjarmasin, according to Associated Press.



Search operation underway Rescue teams were dispatched to Banjarmasin’s Basirih Search and Rescue pier, with a rescue ship sent toward the vessel’s estimated last known location. Sudayana added that authorities were mobilising all available personnel and equipment given the large number of people aboard. The agency was coordinating with maritime authorities while closely monitoring weather conditions in the area, he said. Indonesia, a nation of roughly 17,000 islands, relies heavily on ferries for transportation, with sea travel often cheaper and more accessible than flying. But safety enforcement across the country’s maritime sector has been inconsistent, contributing to a comparatively high rate of accidents. – DW

Honouring Excellence in Social Impact

Shabiba Jawa’iz Basma 2026 honours individuals, organisations and initiatives making a meaningful difference to communities across Oman through their contributions to social progress, environmental responsibility and economic well-being.

Last date for nominations submission
20th SEPTEMBER 2026

Awards presentation
30th September, 2026
JW Marriott Hotel Muscat

AWARD CATEGORIES

- Biodiversity Conservation Initiative
- Environment Protection Initiative
- Environmental Advocacy and Action Initiative
- Clean Energy Initiative
- Community Healthcare Initiative
- Community Education Initiative
- Specially-abled Support Initiative
- Youth Engagement Initiative
- Women Empowerment Initiative
- Financial Inclusion Initiative
- SMEs Development Initiative
- Community Development and Empowerment Initiative
- Public-Private Partnership for Community Development
- Public Engagement Initiative
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative
- In Country Value (ICV) Initiative
- Outstanding Omanisation Achievement
- Skills Development Initiative
- Social Entrepreneurship Initiative
- Leadership in Sustainable Business Practice
- Leadership in ESG
- Leadership in ICV
- Leadership in CSR
- Social Impact Leader of the Year and many more

The event will showcase inspiring efforts that create lasting community impact and support Oman's broader sustainability and development goals.

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SA's Baartman
out of ODI series



JOHANNESBURG: Ottneil Baartman has been ruled out of South Africa's ODI series against Australia after suffering a left hamstring injury in the first-class season opener. Duan Jansen, who is currently with South Africa's second-string side in Namibia, has been called up as a replacement. Baartman is the second player to miss out on the series after Kagiso Rabada was also made unavailable for the ODIs with a hamstring concern. Cricket South Africa (CSA) has not provided an estimated time for Rabada's recovery and will take a call on his availability for the three-Test series closer to its start on October 9. Baartman could also be in consideration for the Test squad, especially as South Africa will need significant bowling resources across an eight-Test summer. Jansen will join his brother Marco, who took seven wickets in the same match Baartman was injured in, in South Africa's squad for the three matches against Australia. - Agencies

Antonelli clinches victory over Verstappen, Norris

The Mercedes driver achieved his eighth Grand Prix win of the 2026 season to further increase his advantage in the Drivers' Championship



MADRID: Kimi Antonelli boosted his title ambitions with victory in the Spanish Grand Prix in Madrid on Sunday, the Mercedes driver edging out Red Bull's Max Verstappen and McLaren's Lando Norris in a race swayed by strategy. The opening laps saw plenty of clashes up and down the field, with Norris narrowly holding onto the lead from pole position as Antonelli cut two corners during his concerted efforts to pass the Briton. Antonelli ultimately didn't need

to overtake him on track thanks to a Virtual Safety Car (VSC), which played perfectly into Mercedes' hands but ruined Norris' chances for victory. A tale of contrasting pit stops unfolded as the Italian gained the net race lead while a slow change dropped Norris behind both Antonelli and Verstappen. Norris was leading comfortably from pole position when the VSC was called on lap 15. The timing was terrible for the world champion - he had already passed the pit exit when the VSC was called. That meant Antonelli and Ver-

stappen were able to pit under the VSC, saving time, while the caution period ended before Norris could make it around to the pits again. He did come in on the following lap but, to make matters worse, the stop was slow and he came out in fifth place. Norris was able to recover only to third around this track where overtaking is next to impossible. Despite expressing worries with his steering, the 20-year-old Antonelli inherited control of the race once Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who didn't box during the VSC, gave up on his hopes for a Safety Car and finally peeled

into the pits after 48 laps. Antonelli's eighth win in 14 races this year puts an even tighter stranglehold on the championship for the Italian. Antonelli has now extended his lead to 81 points in the Drivers' Championship as his team-mate George Russell settled for P5, and he is 101 clear of Lewis Hamilton, who retired early on due to a issue with his brakes. Liam Lawson was sixth in the second Red Bull ahead of Franco Colapinto, who made it a successful day for Alpine as their sole scorer, McLaren's Oscar Piastri, Racing Bulls' Arvid Lindblad

and Audi's Nico Hulkenberg. Haas' Esteban Ocon just missed out on points in P11 and was followed by Pierre Gasly and Gabriel Bortoleto, while Yuki Tsunoda took P14 in his third weekend competing for Racing Bulls. Alex Albon was up next as the lone finisher for Williams, leading Ollie Bearman, local favourite Fernando Alonso and Cadillac's Valtteri Bottas. There were four retirements in total - Carlos Sainz failed to complete his home race, Sergio Perez faced a suspected water system issue, and Lance Stroll joined Hamilton in his brake troubles. - Agencies

NEW ZEALANDER

Hesson 'open' to taking on Pakistan Test head coach role

EDGBASTON: Mike Hesson on Saturday confirmed he is keen to take on the Pakistan Test coaching role in addition to his white-ball responsibilities. Shortly after the conclusion of the third Test, which Pakistan lost by eight wickets, interim head coach Hesson said he was excited by the talent Pakistan had on offer for the red-ball format. "I'd be open to it, for sure," New Zealand's Hesson said at a press conference after the game. "I love Test cricket and there's enough talent around the system in Pakistan that if we provide some good direction, we can make some strides going forward. It's not going to happen in a game or two but

there's some skill there I'd certainly be considering looking after." Hesson was swept into the red-ball role less than a fortnight ago, when the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced it had sacked Sarfaraz Ahmed following Pakistan's loss at Lord's that confirmed a series defeat. At the time, Hesson said he was only in the role on an interim basis, but appears to have seen enough to interest him in a more permanent appointment. The realistic possibility to ascend to the Test coaching job comes weeks after he was sounded out for the same role with England in their search for a replacement for the outgoing Brendon McCul-



lum. Hesson hinted that approach had never really moved past preliminary stages before England ultimately appointed Stephen Flem-

ing, with Hesson reasserting his commitment to Pakistan till the 2027 World Cup. Whether he takes that role with Pakistan is largely out of his hands, as Hesson acknowledged, with the PCB yet to make a final decision. "I haven't even contemplated [a job offer] at this stage. I've got the Asian Games coming a week after I get back. That's my main focus in terms of the white ball. By the time that arrives I'm sure we'll have some discussions about the Test team going forward. That's a discussion I'll have with the selectors." While Pakistan showed a degree of resistance in the final four sessions at Edgbaston that was completely absent across the rest of the tour, the outcome of this match was barely in doubt from lunch on the first morning.

On the best batting wicket of the series, Pakistan's muddled shot selections saw them shot out for 133 - their joint-lowest total in the first innings of a Test in 13 years. Ever since, Pakistan's attempt to gnaw their way back into the Test were too little, too late. The last dregs of optimism arrived in the form of two first-over wickets from Mohammad Abbas on the fourth morning, but in the absence of another bowler of his skill and consistency, and lack of scoreboard pressure, the chase was never seriously in doubt. Pakistan's next Test assignment comes in November, when they take on Sri Lanka in a two-match series at home. - Agencies

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SOHAR INTERNATIONAL
Sohar International has marked another significant milestone in its international growth journey with the official opening of its Asia Pacific Office in Hong Kong, strengthening the bank's ability to build relationships with investors, financial institutions, businesses.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 7,646.64 points, down by -0.01% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.06% at 622.57 points. Muscat Desalination, up 9.09%, was the top gainer while, Construction Materials, down 9.76%, was the top loser.

GCC-STAT

Trading value in GCC stock markets reaches \$618 billion



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Gulf financial markets saw approximately 401.7 billion shares change hands during 2025, surging 19.5 percent compared with 2024, as the value of traded shares reached \$618 billion, according to the latest data released by the GCC Statistical Centre (GCC-Stat).
The composite general index gauging the performance of Gulf financial markets stood at approximately 165.2 points by the close of 2025, registering a decline of 3.8 percent compared with the end of 2024.
The total market capitalisation of Gulf financial markets in 2025 reached around \$3.9 trillion, retreating 6.2 percent compared with 2024.
The total number of companies

listed on Gulf financial markets reached 779, while the number of companies whose shares are permitted to be traded by GCC citizens on Gulf exchanges stood at 756, equivalent to 97 percent of all listed companies, with the figure reaching 100 percent on the Bahrain, Muscat, Qatar and Kuwait bourses.
In 2025, Gulf financial markets experienced sweeping regulatory and legislative developments encompassing the oversight of financial markets and investment funds, the refinement of offering and listing rules, the bolstering of corporate governance, the regulation of trading conduct and the enhancement of market-making mechanisms, alongside an expansion in digital platforms and financial technologies.
The year 2025 also witnessed

the strengthening of risk-based supervision and oversight, the development of financial market infrastructure and the modernisation of capital adequacy frameworks, in addition to an expansion in sustainability-related disclosures and the upgrading of systems governing the electronic issuance of securities.
Within the framework of reinforcing Gulf integration, the cross-border registration regulation for investment funds entered into force as the first unified regulatory framework for a financial product across the GCC states, alongside continued work on initiatives to support the listing and trading of bonds and sukuk, to promote dual listings and electronic interconnection between bourses and to unify the investor number for GCC citizens.

Total output of refinery products in Oman exceeds 129mn barrels

The latest preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated a decrease in total automotive fuel production by 1.4 percent by the end of July 2026

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Total refinery products in Oman reached 129.08 million barrels by the end of last July, a decrease of 3.7 percent compared to the same period in 2025.
The latest preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated a decrease in total automotive fuel production by 1.4 percent by the end of July 2026. The statistics also showed a decline



in regular automotive fuel (M91) production by 4.5 percent to reach 9,629,700 barrels by the end of July 2026, compared to 10,088,600 barrels during the same period in 2025. Its sales also decreased by 4.6 percent to record 10,038,800 barrels compared to the same period in 2025, while its exports increased by 9.8 percent to reach 1,984,500 barrels.
On the other hand, production of premium automotive fuel (M95) rose by 2.6 percent by the end of July 2026 to reach 8,319,200 barrels, compared to 8,108,800 barrels during the same period in 2025. Meanwhile, its sales fell by 10.6

percent to reach 8,855,100 barrels, compared to 9,899,900 barrels. Its exports also dropped by 33.9 percent to reach 362,900 barrels, compared to 549,100 barrels.
Gas oil (diesel) production recorded a decline of 6.8 percent by the end of July 2026 to reach 43,305,400 barrels, compared to 46,475,500 barrels during the same period in 2025. Its sales also dropped by 8.3 percent to reach 11,112,700 barrels, compared to 12,116,800 barrels, and its exports fell by 11.8 percent to record 33,326,500 barrels, compared to 377,782,500 barrels.
Aviation fuel production saw an

increase of 12 percent by the end of July 2026 to reach 16,788,400 barrels, compared to 14,988,200 barrels during the same period in 2025. Meanwhile, its sales fell by 9.2 percent to reach 2,567,600 barrels, compared to 2,827,400 barrels, while its exports rose by 27.4 percent to reach 14,516,800 barrels, compared to 11,390,700 barrels.
Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) production fell by 3.3 percent by the end of July 2026 to reach 6,456,200 barrels, compared to 6,677,700 barrels during the same period in 2025. Its sales also decreased by 22 percent to reach

1,764,500 barrels, compared to 2,261,700 barrels. Conversely, its exports recorded a 3.9 percent increase to reach 2,057,300 barrels, compared to 1,980,300 barrels.
Conversely, naphtha production rose by 4.5 percent by the end of July 2026 to reach 22,609,400 barrels, compared to 21,646,000 barrels during the same period in 2025. Its sales also increased by 3.2 percent to record 8,333,800 barrels, compared to 8,075,700 barrels, and its exports increased by 2.6 percent to reach 14,658,100 barrels, compared to 144,283,100 barrels.
On the other hand, production of other refinery products dropped

by 15.9 percent to reach 21,974,900 barrels by the end of July 2026, compared to 26,121,700 barrels during the same period in 2025. Its sales also declined by 21.7 percent to reach 18,316,800 barrels, compared to 23,407,000 barrels, while its exports decreased by 3.1 percent to reach 5,615,700 barrels, compared to 5,795,600 barrels.
In the petrochemicals sector, statistics showed a 7.3 percent increase in benzene production by the end of July 2026 to reach 109,900 metric tonnes, compared to 102,400 metric tonnes during the same period in 2025. Its exports also rose by 11.3 percent to reach 108,000 metric tonnes.
Paraxylene production also recorded a growth of 9.6 percent to reach 370,500 metric tonnes by the end of July 2026, compared to 338,000 metric tonnes during the same period in 2025, while its exports rose by 1.7 percent to reach 372,400 metric tonnes, compared to 366,100 metric tonnes.
Meanwhile, polypropylene production decreased by 25.4 percent to reach 149,900 metric tonnes, compared to 200,800 metric tonnes during the same period in 2025. Despite the decline in production, polypropylene sales rose by 32.1 percent to reach 23,500 metric tonnes, compared to 177,800 metric tonnes. Conversely, its exports fell by 17.9 percent to reach 122,300 metric tonnes, compared to 148,900 metric tonnes.

NAMA ELECTRICITY

Electricity projects worth over OMR20mn being implemented in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate

NIZWA: Nama Electricity Distribution Company continues to implement a package of development projects in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate to the tune of OMR20.49 million to improve the stability of the electrical grid, increase its reserve capacity and operational flexibility, raise its efficiency, reduce losses, and comply with grid safety standards across various wilayats of the governorate.
Eng. Yousuf Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Head of Technical Affairs at Nama Electricity Distribution Company, said that these projects fall within the company's development plans to enhance the efficiency of the electrical grid and raise its carrying capacity to keep pace with the urban expansion and population growth witnessed in the governorate's wilayats, emphasising their contribution to boosting grid stability and improving supply quality for subscribers across various sectors.
He explained to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the projects include expanding and reinforcing the electrical grid, as well as connection and extension projects for homes, industrial, and commercial facilities, alongside technical pro-



jects focusing on grid automation and developing smart management systems, aiming to integrate renewable energy sources and offer innovative digital solutions for managing the distribution system.
He stressed that the company executes its projects according to approved timelines, while committing to quality and operational safety standards, thereby enhanc-

ing grid reliability and raising its carrying capacity to meet development requirements and rapid growth in the governorate.
Eng. Yousuf Mohammed Al Mahrouqi explained that projects currently under implementation include constructing the Bisiya Substation in the Wilayat of Bahla with a capacity of 2x6 MVA, at a cost of OMR3,267,537; relocating



33 kV feeders from the old switchgear room to the new one at the Adam Main Primary Substation at a cost of OMR27,292; alongside testing and commissioning power and control cables for the 33/11 kV transformer at the same substation at a cost of OMR24,240.
The projects also include constructing 33 kV feeders in the industrial area in the Wilayat of

Samail at a cost of OMR82,636, and constructing the Shafe' Primary Substation with a capacity of 2x20 MVA along with 33 and 11 kV feeders at the Shafe' Camp in the Wilayat of Izki at a cost of OMR2,100,000.
They also include constructing the Nizwa City 2 Primary Substation with a capacity of 3x20 MVA in the Wilayat of Nizwa at a cost of OMR2,333,333, and the Al Mua'aimir Primary Substation with the same capacity at a cost of OMR2,281,956.
Furthermore, the upgrading project for Al Bashaer Substation in the Wilayat of Adam is under execution, raising its capacity from 2x6 MVA to 3x6 MVA with 33 and 11 kV feeders, at a cost of OMR1,262,788.
He added that the projects also include constructing additional 33 kV feeders from the Birkat Al Mouz Main Substation in the Wilayat of Nizwa at a cost of OMR619,656, and executing a project to expand the 33 kV switchgear room at the Adam Main Substation, as well as constructing the Birkat Al Mouz Main Substation and Samail Industrial Main Substation, at a total cost of OMR5,190,082. -ONA

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Chinese automakers take centre stage at Italy's Turin Auto Show

TURIN: Chinese automakers have taken centre stage at the 2026 Turin Auto Show for their growing design capabilities and advanced technology, as industry representatives highlighted the increasing role of Chinese companies in Europe's automotive sector. The auto show opened Friday in Turin, featuring 132 new vehicle models and a range of activities including test drives and events focusing on automotive design.
During the Torino Automotive Design Award (TADA) ceremony held Friday at the Teatro Regio, Chinese automakers including Chery, Geely, Great Wall Motor (GWM) and GAC received awards in various categories, underscoring the growing presence of Chinese brands at the Italian event.
Andrea Levy, president of the Turin Auto Show, told Xinhua that more and more people now are getting to know these Chinese brands. -Xinhua

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Muscat Desalination, up 9.09%, was the top gainer while, Construction Materials, down 9.76%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,646.64 points, down by -0.01% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.06% at 622.57 points. Muscat Desalination, up 9.09%, was the top gainer while, Construction Materials, down 9.76%, was the top loser. Shares of OQBI were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 8718 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 43.36 million, with more than 155.46 million shares changing hands. Out of 70 traded securities, 18 advanced, 32 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for RO 605K while foreign investors were net buyers for RO 451K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 154K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 13,610.38 points, up 0.38%. Prices of Oman United Insurance, Financial Corporation, DIDIC, OMINVEST, Sohar International

Bank were up by 7.50%, 4.26%, 2.41%, 1.73%, 1.05% respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Anwar Investment, Al Madina Takaful, Takaful Oman were down by 2.41%, 2.34%, 2.32%, 1.79%, 1.64% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 9,944.05 points, down -0.02%. Prices of Raysut Cement, Jazeera Steel Products, Oman Packaging, Oman Cement, Voltamp Energy were up by 2.70%, 1.10%, 0.88%, 0.82%, 0.53% respectively. Prices of Construction Materials, Galfar Engineering, Al Anwar Ceramics, A'Saffa Foods, Salalah Mills were down by 9.76%, 1.94%, 1.27%, 1.08%, 0.33% respectively.

Services Index was down by -0.49% before closing at 3,062.26 points. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Shell Oman Marketing were up by 9.09%, 3.31% respectively. Prices of Al Maha Marketing, Dhofar Generating, Muscat Gases, OQ Gas Networks, Al Jazeera Services were down by 3.64%, 2.41%, 1.45%, 0.90%, 0.78% respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	7,668.17	7,630.69	7,646.64	7,647.69	-1.05	-0.01 %
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,614.60	13,505.40	13,610.38	13,558.34	52.05	0.38 %
Industry Index	9,969.19	9,916.66	9,944.05	9,946.20	-2.15	-0.02 %
Services Index	3,082.22	3,057.71	3,062.26	3,077.25	-14.99	-0.49 %
MSX Shariah Index	623.60	620.33	622.57	622.92	-0.35	-0.06 %
MSX TR INDEX	11,888.65	11,830.53	11,855.26	11,856.88	-1.62	-0.01 %
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16,738.43	16,604.18	16,733.26	16,669.27	63.99	0.38 %
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12,768.01	12,700.73	12,735.80	12,738.55	-2.75	-0.02 %
SERVICES TR IDX	4,138.47	4,105.57	4,111.68	4,131.81	-20.13	-0.49 %
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
155,469,242	43,362,259	8,718	39,436,852,917	18	32	20	70

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

ISINSECURITY NAMEVOLUMETURNOVERTRADESOPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PREV. CLOSEDIFF (RD)DIFF %LAST PR.LAST RD.LAST OFFERPUR VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	100	34	1	0.344	0.344	0.344	0.344	0.320	0.024	7.500	0.344	0.315	0.344	0.100	36,120,000
OM0000001059	DHOFAR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	1,145,516	340,213	58	0.288	0.288	0.281	0.288	0.291	-0.007	2.405	0.298	0.290	0.297	0.100	14,724,730
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	2,540	1,042	4	0.410	0.412	0.406	0.412	0.405	0.007	1.728	0.412	0.410	0.412	0.100	462,615,813
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	9,431	8,677	3	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.910	0.010	1.099	0.920	0.908	0.920	0.100	114,906,123
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	37,763,377	7,234,667	1,345	0.191	0.193	0.190	0.193	0.191	0.002	1.047	0.193	0.192	0.193	0.100	1,481,469,095
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	468,800	97,306	186	0.208	0.209	0.206	0.209	0.207	0.002	0.966	0.209	0.203	0.209	0.100	635,317,893
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,800	1,106	4	0.600	0.616	0.600	0.616	0.611	-0.005	0.818	0.616	0.600	0.618	0.100	203,817,589
OM0000006608	OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SF2)	55,824,568	14,453,369	1,766	0.257	0.260	0.257	0.260	0.258	0.002	0.775	0.260	0.257	0.260	0.000	889,467,621
OM0000003061	VOLTAMP ENERGY	946,797	179,232	86	0.197	0.199	0.197	0.199	0.198	0.001	0.532	0.199	0.198	0.195	0.010	189,000,000
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	3,200	1,414	3	0.442	0.442	0.442	0.442	0.440	0.002	0.455	0.442	0.440	0.443	0.100	22,251,321
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	283	374	2	1.321	1.321	1.320	1.320	1.320	0.000	0.000	1.320	1.320	1.321	0.100	80,883,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	1,317,933	471,378	57	0.360	0.365	0.340	0.360	0.360	0.000	0.000	0.360	0.348	0.360	0.100	72,000,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	128,847	41,375	42	0.323	0.324	0.320	0.324	0.324	0.000	0.000	0.324	0.320	0.324	0.100	210,905,531
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	71,736	10,476	12	0.147	0.147	0.146	0.147	0.147	0.000	0.000	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.100	328,832,096
OM0000004825	ALBATHINAH POWER	26,795	5,318	8	0.199	0.199	0.197	0.199	0.199	0.000	0.000	0.199	0.197	0.199	0.100	134,302,599
OM0000008710	BARAKA DESALINATION	5,000	800	2	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.161	0.164	0.100	12,083,320
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	3,514	12,071	3	3.435	3.435	3.435	3.435	3.440	-0.005	-0.145	3.435	3.430	3.435	0.100	308,119,500
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	8,445,045	4,115,760	569	0.485	0.490	0.484	0.484	0.485	-0.001	-0.206	0.484	0.484	0.484	0.010	3,872,000,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	2,651,836	3,945,385	73	1.975	1.975	1.969	1.972	1.975	-0.003	-0.218	1.971	1.970	1.971	0.100	1,028,000,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	12,828,500	5,423,086	967	0.424	0.426	0.413	0.423	0.424	-0.001	-0.236	0.423	0.424	0.423	0.100	3,175,205,957
OM0000009834	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	382,123	155,609	226	0.407	0.409	0.404	0.407	0.408	-0.001	-0.245	0.407	0.405	0.407	0.100	313,471,400
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	2,000	970	1	0.488	0.488	0.488	0.488	0.490	-0.002	-0.408	0.488	0.484	0.490	0.100	793,461,821
OM0000004833	AL SUWADI POWER	142,965	28,302	20	0.199	0.199	0.197	0.197	0.198	-0.001	-0.505	0.197	0.197	0.197	0.100	140,738,049
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	31,055	8,909	12	0.287	0.288	0.286	0.286	0.288	-0.002	-0.694	0.286	0.286	0.287	0.100	67,613,260
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	280,063	80,075	36	0.280	0.280	0.282	0.285	0.287	-0.002	-0.697	0.285	0.285	0.309	0.100	416,841,416
OM0000004735	SEMBOCORP SALALAH	54,410	14,040	16	0.260	0.260	0.258	0.258	0.260	-0.002	-0.769	0.258	0.257	0.260	0.100	246,279,563
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	3,666	932	2	0.252	0.256	0.252	0.256	0.258	-0.002	-0.775	0.256	0.253	0.256	0.100	10,967,806
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	16,683,992	3,705,650	1,472	0.224	0.225	0.220	0.221	0.223	-0.002	-0.897	0.221	0.219	0.221	0.100	957,097,886
OM0000003440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	25,797	2,384	4	0.101	0.102	0.100	0.102	0.103	-0.001	-0.971	0.102	0.100	0.102	0.100	819,000,000
OM0000003004	ASFAFA FOODS	450	484	2	0.750	0.750	0.732	0.732	0.740	-0.008	-1.081	0.732	0.730	0.732	0.100	57,940,000
OM0000001010	ASTAD SHIPPING	4,958,533	1,157,852	1,110	0.236	0.238	0.231	0.233	0.236	-0.003	-1.271	0.231	0.234	0.230	0.000	1,213,617,417
OM0000004769	MADINA TAKAFUL	1,096,796	120,865	118	0.112	0.112	0.110	0.110	0.112	-0.002	-1.798	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.100	19,250,000
OM0000000772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	12,417	2,643	6	0.214	0.214	0.211	0.211	0.216	-0.005	-2.315	0.211	0.210	0.237	0.100	64,884,509
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	10,699	1,348	4	0.126	0.126	0.125	0.125	0.128	-0.003	-2.344	0.125	0.124	0.130	0.100	15,996,094
OM0000003000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	8,429	10,061	3	1.200	1.200	1.190	1.190	1.235	-0.045	-3.644	1.190	1.190	1.200	0.100	82,110,000
Total	35	145,457,011	41,324,031	8,223												

Parallel Market

OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	528,856	49,629	50	0.069	0.066	0.069	0.066	0.068	0.006	9.091	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.100	14,932,838
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	11,060	1,082	3	0.097	0.098	0.097	0.098	0.094	0.004	4.255	0.098	0.091	0.100	0.100	6,692,936
OM0000002575	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	12,707	9,521	8	0.751	0.780	0.740	0.780	0.755	0.025	3.311	0.780	0.740	0.780	0.100	74,100,000
OM0000001190	NATIONAL GAS	45,004	5,190	13	0.115	0.116	0.113	0.116	0.114	0.002	1.754	0.116	0.114	0.116	0.100	9,860,000
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	4,696	1,080	2	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.228	0.002	0.877	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.100	7,460,248
OM0000001151	OMIPCO	8,142,931	1,764,357	225	0.216	0.218	0.216	0.217	0.216	0.001	0.463	0.217	0.217	0.218	0.000	1,451,594,375
OM0000000823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	400	421	1	1.052	1.052	1.052	1.052	1.051	0.001	0.095	1.052	1.053	1.100	0.000	28,850,934
OM0000000140	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	485	291	1	0.600	0.600	0.600	0.600	0.600	0.000	0.000	0.600	0.588	0.600	0.100	104,186,250
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRIGERANT	370	407	1	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.100	0.000	0.000	1.100	1.050	1.100	0.100	55,000,000
OM0000001906	MUSCAT INSURANCE	441	225	1	0.510	0.510	0.510	0.510	0.510	0.000	0.000	0.510	0.510	0.000	1.000	5,622,773
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	12,100	847	3	0.069	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.100	1,470,000
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	24,000	4,056	13	0.169	0.170	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.000	0.000	0.169	0.166	0.169	0.100	12,084,994
OM0000002580	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INVESTMENTS	150	300	1	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	2.000	1.900	2.000	0.100	140,000,000
OM0000007910	OMAN REAL ESTATE	240	17	2	0.070	0.070	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.066	0.074	0.100	13,600,000
OM0000008447	OMAN TRUST FUND	46,738	5,372	11	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.000	0.000	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.100	69,222,313
OM0000005659	JABAL REIF	12,609	1,265	2	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.116	0.118	0.100	18,762,000
OM0000001889	SALALAH MILLS	250	150	1	0.598	0.598	0.598	0.598	0.600	-0.002	-0.333	0.598	0.000	0.598	0.100	37,352,912
OM0000003260	OMAN ARAB BANK	365,095	102,222	37	0.280	0.280	0.279	0.279	0.280	-0.001	-0.337	0.279	0.280	0.280	0.100	558,765,390
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	15,000	3,000	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.201	-0.001	-0.468	0.200	0.191	0.210	0.100	555,658,183
OM0000002286	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	18,025	18,216	27	0.158	0.158	0.156	0.156	0.158	-0.002	-1.266	0.156	0.156	0.157	0.100	34,320,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	766	104	1	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.138	-0.002	-1.449	0.136	0.130	0.145	0.100	4,080,000
OM0000001900	MUSCAT FINANCE	106,000	7,037	7	0.067	0.068	0.066	0.067	0.068	-0.001	-1.471	0.067	0.067	0.068	0.100	20,578,804
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	1,500	90	2	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.060	0.062	0.100	15,000,000
OM0000003221	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	206,000	31,948	25	0.156	0.158	0.152	0.152	0.155	-0.003	-1.935	0.152	0.146	0.157	0.100	30,853,940
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	20,700	16,246	24	0.083	0.083	0.080	0.081	0.083	-0.002	-2.410	0.081	0.077	0.081	0.100	3,491,100
OM0000000747	DHOFAR GENERATING	31,100	1,249	4	0.081	0										



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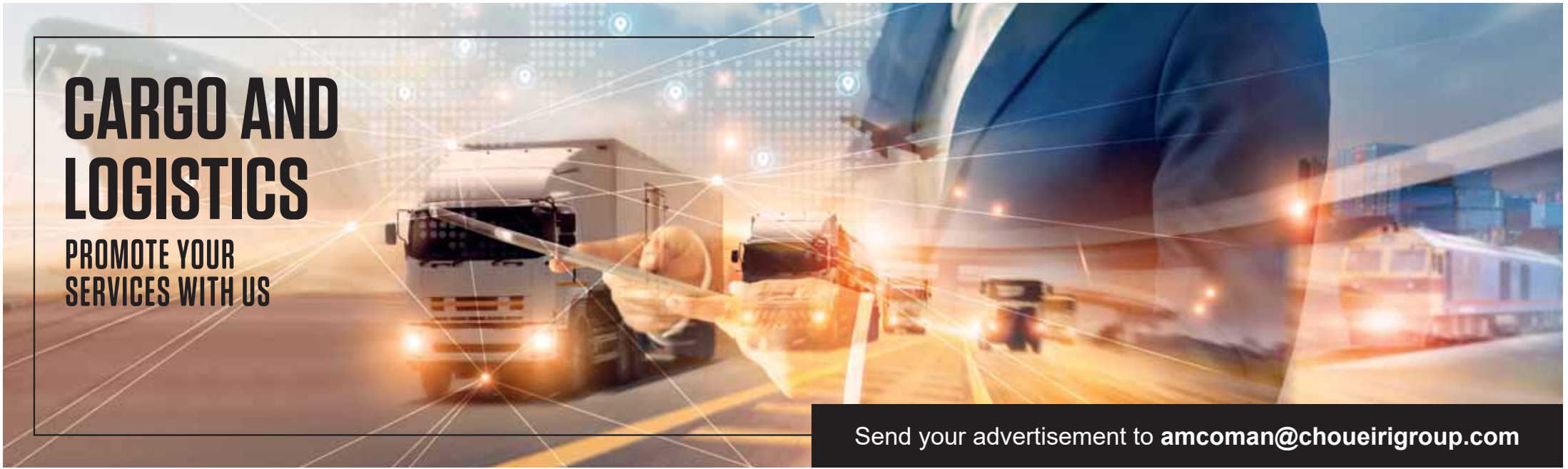
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We must translate outcomes into time-bound actions: Indian PM

We hope that the New Delhi Declaration adopted at this summit will provide a clear direction for our shared vision and future cooperation, said PM Modi in his concluding remarks at the Summit

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed hope that New Delhi Declaration adopted at BRICS Summit will provide a clear direction for shared vision and future cooperation and the discussions over the over the past two days have strengthened the conviction that the grouping is an ecosystem of solutions. In his concluding remarks at the two-day Summit held at Bharat Mandapam, PM Modi said BRICS countries must translate all outcomes into time-bound actions. “We are now moving towards the conclusion. As the 18th BRICS Summit draws to a close, I express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your active participation and valuable contributions. Your



significant ideas and suggestions have lent both breadth and depth to our cooperation. Your presence stands as a testament to the growing relevance, openness, and inclusiveness of BRICS,” he said. “Our discussions over the past two days have further strengthened our conviction that BRICS is not merely a grouping of nations, but an ecosystem of solutions. We hope that the New Delhi Declaration adopted at this summit will provide a clear direction for our shared vision and future cooperation. We must translate all outcomes into time-bound actions that deliver last-mile impact. We will work together to ensure that our framework moves beyond mere documentation and creates a tangible impact in real life,” he added. PM Modi said that the world now expects concrete results from BRICS and expressed hope that expectations will be fulfilled.

“BRICS is poised to enter its third decade. The world now expects concrete results from us, not just ideas and commitments. I am confident that through our collective efforts, we will certainly live up to these expectations. I extend my best wishes once again to China as the next host of BRICS. I especially commend all of you and your teams for making the New Delhi Summit a success. I wish you all a pleasant and safe journey,” he said. BRICS leaders held a session on ‘Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability: Shaping the Future for Inclusive Global Growth’ on Sunday. Speaking at the session, PM Modi noted that weaponization of technology and critical minerals can hinder shared progress of BRICS countries and said that there is need of inclusivity in the adoption of technology. He said the BRICS Logistic Sup-

ply Chain Cooperation Framework will “help make our supply chains more reliable and resilient””. Under the umbrella of innovation, the BRICS Incubator Network will connect our startups and incubators. We have proposed the BRICS Startup Innovation Fund to promote innovative and scalable solutions. The BRICS Network on Digital Agriculture will create new opportunities for farmers; through this initiative, AI, geospatial technology, and digital public infrastructure will be aligned with the actual needs of farmers. The weaponization of technology and critical minerals could hinder our shared progress; therefore, we have emphasized inclusivity in the adoption of technology,” PM Modi said. The Prime Minister said that that the trust of Global South nations in BRICS has grown, because their voices are heard, their experiences are respected, and solutions

are crafted not just for them, but with them. “The strength of BRICS lies in our diversity and cooperation. We may be rooted in different realities, but together we rise through cooperation and blossom for humanity. May our diversity remain our identity, our cooperation serve as our inspiration, and our progress benefit all of humanity,” he said. BRICS leaders on Saturday unanimously adopted the New Delhi Declaration, which stressed the importance of building reliable and resilient supply chains for critical minerals. “We affirm the need to promote reliable, responsible, diversified, resilient, fair, sustainable, and just supply chains of critical minerals to guarantee benefit sharing, value addition and economic diversification in resource-rich countries,” the Declaration said.

does not hold: Chinese President Xi Meanwhile, aiming at the West, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sunday said that the “logic of ‘might makes right’ does not hold” and urged the nations in the Global South to jointly defend the rule of law and sovereign equality. In a statement at Session II of the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi, according to the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry, Xi asserted that international law is applied to all “free from double standards.” “A world without rules is like a crossroads without traffic lights, where chaos and disorder are all but guaranteed. Fairness and justice are a universal aspiration, and international rules must be written by all countries. The logic of ‘might makes right’ does not hold and should have been discarded long ago. Global South countries should jointly defend the rule of law in international affairs, safeguard the basic norms of international relations including sovereign equality, noninterference in internal affairs, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and ensure that international law and international rules are applied to all, free from double standards,” the Chinese President said. Xi’s statement follows the New Delhi Declaration of the BRICS Summit, which was based on the ideas of peace and multilateralism. The BRICS nations noted the current global context of polarisation and distrust and encouraged global action to strengthen international peace and security, expressing concern over the ongoing conflicts around the globe. — **ANI**

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Nepal estimates flood reconstruction cost at \$4.78 billion

KATHMANDU: Nepal estimates that reconstruction following deadly floods triggered by glacial and mountain collapses last month will cost \$4.78 billion, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Lok Bahadur Chhetri, spokesperson for Nepal’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said approximately \$57.67 million would be needed for short-term recovery and reconstruction over the next six months, while long-term reconstruction would require around \$4.71 billion. The tsunami-like surge of water, mud and debris, which began near the China-Nepal border on 26th August, killed more than 1,400 people and left around 5,600 missing. “The total estimated requirement for reconstruction is approximately \$4.78 billion,” Chhetri told reporters. A preliminary UN assessment estimated damage to buildings in Nepal at \$158 million alone, warning that total losses, including damage to roads, bridges and agricultural land, as well as humanitarian costs, would be far higher. Rescue teams in Nepal have recovered 1,385 bodies, while around 5,130 people remain missing, according to the country’s disaster agency. In China, 43 people have been confirmed dead and 519 remain missing, according to state media.

ment of components for a 70-metre Bailey bridge to Nepal’s Road Division in Hetauda, marking a significant step in restoring vital connectivity disrupted by the devastating Bhothe Koshi-Trishuli flash floods last month. Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava announced the delivery on X (formerly Twitter), noting that the modular steel bridge is specifically intended for the Betrawati area in Nuwakot district, one of the regions severely impacted by the disaster. The handover ceremony took place in the presence of Prakash Gautam, Member of Parliament for Makawanpur-1; Mina Kumari Lama, Mayor of Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City; and representatives from the District Administration, Nepal Police, and Armed Police Force. On August 26, a massive flash flood triggered by a glacial event near the Nepal-Tibet border surged down the Bhotokoshi River into the Trishuli River system. The deluge claimed over 1,300 lives, left hundreds missing, washed away dozens of bridges, severely damaged roads, and crippled multiple hydropower projects across Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, and other districts. In Betrawati and adjoining areas, vital road links were severed, leaving communities isolated and severely hampering relief and reconstruction operations. Bailey bridges, which are prefabricated portable structures made of modular steel panels, can be rapidly assembled on-site to quickly restore vehicular connectivity. — **Agencies**

KEY MARKETS

Drivers and riders ‘shocked’ as Uber shuts operations in Nigeria, Uganda

ABUJA: A week ago, Uber unexpectedly announced its departure from the Nigerian market after spending more than a decade building up its presence in Africa’s most populous country. The ride-hailing platform also said it would be winding up its operations in Uganda — also with immediate effect. With the exit from both Nigeria and Uganda, Uber now remains operational only in a handful of African countries — Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa. “This decision is limited strictly to these two markets and does not impact our operations across the rest of the continent,” Uber said in a statement, adding that their “immediate priority is supporting drivers, riders, and local team members throughout this transition,” without sharing details on what this assistance would entail. In the last year, the multinational company also closed shop in Ivory Coast and Tanzania, while also cutting its global workforce by 10%.

Africa a difficult market to crack Uber has not managed to grow across much of the African market despite its massive global scale. The profit-driven ride-hailing app faces stiff competition from rival platforms, including Bolt, inDrive and SafeBoda, which operate in the Nigerian and Ugandan markets and beyond. However, it’s not only Uber that is having to deal with its frustration over the current situation: Many of its drivers across Africa have been raising complaints about shrinking profit margins amid rising fuel costs, inflation and currency volatility, especially in markets like Nigeria. In their view, Uber’s business model of pocketing around 20% — 25% of any trip fare in commissions is no longer tenable.

Discontent, discomboluted and disregarded drivers Abbas Olamide, an Uber driver in the Nigerian capital Abuja, said the company’s overall service was “good,” while firmly stressing that the high commission rates were adding greatly to his existing woes. He told DW that a ride of 30,000 Naira (€20) “to the airport means the ride-hailing app would deduct 6,000 Naira as commission,” still leaving him to “then pay a gate fee at the airport.”



“Probably because you do not want to go back to town empty-handed, we also pay to park at the airport [to pick up another client],” he explained. “At the end of the day, what’s left is no longer enough.” Samuel Olatunji, an Uber-driver in the megacity Lagos, also shared his concerns with DW following the abrupt announcement of Uber’s exit, saying he will now have to recalibrate his own business model. The 43-year-old driver says he’ll have to join hundreds of other drivers who “have to depend on other [ride-hailing] apps now” to ensure any steady stream of income. “But the amount I take home won’t add up like before again.” In recent years, drivers like Olamide and Olatunji have staged several strikes and protests over soaring operating costs, low fares and working conditions, as well as Nigeria’s fuel hikes, which this year have also been worsened by the surge in prices at the pump following the war in Iran. Their pleas and concerns, however, remain largely unheard, as they find themselves having to prepare for a bumpy ride ahead.



pany. Ikemesit Effiong, partner at SBM Intelligence, a consulting firm based in Lagos, explained that “[r]ising costs for such things as fuel, vehicle maintenance, insurance, coupled with a currency that is less valuable now than in 2014 means that fares were climbing faster than the average Lagos or Abuja rider’s willingness or ability to pay for the convenience.” Effiong added that while Uber’s cost base is dollar-linked, the drivers’ revenue is the shrinking naira, leading to the overall maths not working anymore, and forcing Uber to operate under unsustainably thin profit margins. This is despite the fact that Nigeria’s ride-hailing market alone is estimated to be worth around \$450 million per year. “These platforms are trying to hold fares low enough to retain price-sensitive riders, while the driver take-home shrinks in real terms. This pushes drivers toward multi-apping, off-platform negotiation, or exit altogether,” he noted. Effiong further highlighted that one of Uber’s local competitors, inDrive, does actually operate under a negotiated-fare approach, result-

ing in “less reliance on the capital-heavy, standardised-fare template that works in wealthier markets.”

The complex economics of ride-hailing There are some striking similarities between the Nigerian and Ugandan markets: Both countries have huge populations and a growing demand for more transport solution. But both across both Kampala and Lagos, Uber’s exit also creates a loss of a service many users had considered a safe and reliable option — more so than some of the other options. Mary-Esther Anele, a Lagos resident, told DW that she knows that she is “going to start looking for alternatives.” “But most importantly, I’m going to travel less anyway now because transportation costs are going to increase,” she added.

Spain restricts ride-hailing services There also are questions about any knock-on effects beyond the current decision by Uber: Will the California-based multinational leave its remaining African markets? Will its pricing dynamics change in order to bring in more money from the continent? And how will competitors respond? In some other African countries like South Africa, ride-hailing apps like Uber have also long been a thorn in the side of taxi companies and minibuses, whose operators say they don’t want to compete against those drivers, even resorting to violence at times as part of ongoing local taxi wars. — **DW**



How climate change and food insecurity could fuel conflicts



The world's food system is under growing stress, and new research is pointing to areas where this could lead to conflict.

Severe droughts and extreme weather are damaging harvests in many regions. A developing El Niño event is even threatening to worsen food shortages for millions of people next year. At the same time, wars and geopolitical tensions are disrupting supply chains that keep food and farm supplies moving.

The war in Ukraine has repeatedly shaken grain markets, while the Iran war's impact on the Strait of Hormuz has driven up fuel and fertilizer prices, increasing costs for farmers everywhere.

Experts have long warned that rising food insecurity could fuel instability. When people can no longer feed their families, they argue over land, water, and other resources — or they move. In fragile countries, these pressures can contribute to social unrest and even armed conflict.

Now, new research has suggested where some of these risks are greatest. The Climate-Driven Agricultural Decline Index (CADI), developed by Hannes Mueller and his colleagues, maps how climate change is reshaping agricultural productivity around the world. "The heaviest losses are in the tropical regions," said Mueller, a researcher at the Institute for Economic Analysis and the Barcelona School of Economics.

Climate change is already reducing food production in many parts of the world. Hundreds of millions of people live in areas where harvests are smaller than 30 years ago. Mueller mentioned Cambodia, Bangladesh, Burundi, Nigeria, Paraguay and El Salvador as countries where agricultural losses are already being felt.

"Northern Africa is another region we should pay much more attention to. If you look at the map, it just looks terrible. It really looks horrible," he said.

And climate change is only one part of the story. Wars, trade disruptions, export bans, and rising fertilizer costs can magnify food insecurity.

Within the next 25 years, nearly half of the world's people could be living in areas where farms are producing less food.

New winners, losers, and conflicts

These pressures can undermine governments, help cause migration, and make it easier for armed groups to recruit fighters. In societies that are already unstable, such factors can push them toward crisis.

Yet CADI's research points to a surprising reality: Gains in agricultural productivity also appear to increase the risk of violence. Mueller said the key issue is not just scarcity, but change. The climate crisis and other shocks do not simply make some regions poorer. They also create new opportunities, changing the value of land and resources.

In some places, land that had been marginal becomes more productive and more valuable. And that attracts investors and produces competition for ownership and access.

So countries that appear to benefit overall may face new tensions. Sudan, for example, is projected to produce more food as the climate changes. But while some areas could become more productive, others may suffer losses, creating new winners and losers within the country and increasing the risk of conflict.

This looming instability, Mueller said, also applies to areas where the change in productivity hasn't even happened yet. "If we know that your land is going to become more productive, maybe I want to grab it from you today. That is exactly where negotiations break down and where we will have violence," he said.

Even in stable, wealthy regions, the climate crisis is creating future problems. It may seem trivial, but the change in grape-growing options in Europe is affecting local farmers. Major producers of sparkling wine have started to buy up land in mountainous regions.

"It is not productive yet, but they already know where future grape harvests will be," Mueller

Climate change, conflict, and trade tensions are putting pressure on the global food system. New research suggests the biggest risk is not food shortages, but whether societies can peacefully adapt to change

said. "Big agricultural companies are buying land. This is happening all over the world. Locals are displaced because large producers come in, land prices rise, and you start having fights about something that is still 20 or 30 years in the future."

One of the CADI team's most striking findings is that agricultural change is more likely to lead to conflict in non-democracies. When climate shocks, food insecurity, and competition over resources hit democracies, they tend to have institutions that force competing interests to negotiate rather than fight.

"Democracies may look annoying and cumbersome. Nothing moves as fast as people want. But this is a great thing because it makes people talk to each other," Mueller said. "There is a platform for negotiation. There are institutions that help people negotiate. That process of constantly finding solutions is at the heart of what prevents conflict."

South Asia as a warning sign

"We do not pay enough attention to the threats to the source of our livelihoods," said Abdullah Fahimi of the think tank German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). "These threats can trigger major crises and displace millions and millions of people. The regions we should watch most closely are South Asia and the Sahel, where climate vulnerability and rapid population growth mean the number of people affected could rise dramatically."

Fahimi said South Asia stands out because it depends on both vulnerable water supplies and global food markets. Food prices have already risen significantly over the past decades. "South Asia, with a population of around 2 billion, is highly dependent on imports," he added. Those imports include wheat, maize, and palm oil from countries including Russia, Ukraine, Canada, and Malaysia.

At the same time, local agriculture is increasingly threatened by heat waves, floods, declining land productivity, and saltwater intrusion from rising sea levels.

As well as the immediate human toll, events such as the devastating floods that struck Nepal in August 2026 offer a glimpse of the long-term challenges that could become more common in the future. "The Himalayas and the Hindu Kush mountain ranges supply most of the water for agriculture and drinking water in the region," Fahimi said. "Because of climate change, the glaciers and snow are melting very fast."

In the short term, meltwater could increase water availability. But later in the century, he warned, the region could face "a huge humanitarian crisis that could affect around 2 billion people."

As food insecurity deepens, the social and political consequences can multiply. "When resource scarcities or the impacts of climate change force people to look for other livelihood opportunities, sometimes they end up being hired by terrorist groups," said Fahimi, who cited examples from Nigeria and Afghanistan.

In other cases, public frustration is directed at governments if they fail to mitigate the effects on people's livelihoods. Their legitimacy is questioned, and this can escalate into violent conflict.

That echoes Mueller's broader conclusion. Climate change, wars, and trade disruptions do not automatically lead to conflict. But climate adaptation cannot just be about growing different crops or using new technologies. People and societies also need to adapt to changes in who has access to land, water and jobs.

The key question is whether societies have institutions that can manage these changes. Where governments, courts, and local institutions can help communities negotiate new realities, shocks may be absorbed. Where those institutions are weak, the pressure on food systems may become a pressure on peace itself. — **ww**

SPORTS

Arsenal maintain perfect start; Liverpool and Chelsea stumble

Guimares was on target as Gunners beat Sunderland to go three points clear at the top of the Premier League

LONDON: Bruno Guimaraes sent Arsenal three points clear at the top of the Premier League on Saturday with a moment of brilliance that was doubly painful for Sunderland.

Not only did the Brazil midfielder set up a 2-0 win for defending champions Arsenal at the Stadium of Light on Saturday. But, as a former Newcastle player, he made the most of his moment, sending a message to the home supporters who booed him by cupping his ears as he ran towards the corner in celebration.

Guimaraes joined Arsenal from Sunderland's fierce north east rival Newcastle in the summer so will have been well aware of the significance of his goal. Coming on as a half-time substitute, he curled a long-range shot into the top corner in the 58th minute.

"It is a beautiful moment for me and my family," Guimaraes told TNT Sports. "Everyone knows my amazing history at Newcastle, but now I'm trying to create a new history here. I've started on the



right foot." Guimaraes' goal came two minutes after Arsenal's David Raya saved a penalty from Sunderland's Enzo Le Fee.

Bukayo Saka sealed the win with a penalty in the seventh minute of added time after Reinildo Mandava was sent off for bringing down the Arsenal forward in the box.

Meanwhile, Liverpool and Chelsea dropped more points after being held to surprise draws at home. Liverpool's big money forwards Alexander Isak and Bradley Barcola couldn't find a way past winless Fulham in a goalless contest at Anfield. "Collectively we didn't play well. Many things we tried to do, we couldn't do well," Liverpool

goalkeeper Alisson said. Coach Andoni Iraola is still finding his feet in his first season at Liverpool after previously impressing at Bournemouth. But it has been an unconvincing start that has left his team with ground to make up even this early in the campaign.

"When you draw, especially at home, you can't be happy," Iraola said. "Today we lacked a bit of freshness and we did not do enough offensively to make the difference. In the first half we started the game slow, we lacked energy and it was not enough."

Chelsea's fragile defence was exposed again by newly promoted Hull in a 2-2 draw at Stamford



Bridge. It took a goal from Joao Pedro in the 66th to salvage a draw after Mohamed Belloumi's double saw Hull rally from 1-0 down to lead 2-1. Morgan Rogers put Chelsea ahead in the seventh minute.

Xabi Alonso's team has conceded at least two goals in each of its league games and 12 goals in six games in all competitions. Their only clean sheet came against third division Luton in the English League Cup.

"We can do better. We got what we deserved," Alonso said. "We need to be more solid and be more controlled. New players and new staff. This is the process. In a few months I'm sure we'll be able to

control better." Aston Villa's nightmare start to the season continued with a 2-1 loss at home to Nottingham Forest. Substitute Zian Flemming scored a 90th-minute winner as Ipswich beat Crystal Palace 3-2, while Bournemouth and Brentford drew 2-2.

Tottenham are still without a goal after a 0-0 draw with Everton.

Arteta insisted the decision was wrong. "It's a huge win, but it could have been something very different," he said.

"It's unacceptable at this level. Unacceptable. This changes the course of the season, the championship, and it's not acceptable. I've seen it 10 times to make sure because I watched it live and I said it's not possible at this level that there's going to be a penalty."

The Premier League confirmed the penalty was given for holding.

"I've been in football for almost 27 years, 28 years. It's not a penalty in any case, in any game, in any context, in any league," Arteta said. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Mbappe and Bellingham shine in Real Madrid win

MADRID: Real Madrid moved level on points with Barcelona at the top of Spanish La Liga after thrashing city rivals Rayo Vallecano 4-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday.

The home side bounced back from their shock defeat by Real Betis eight days earlier by racing into a three-goal lead inside the opening 35 minutes, making it four wins from their opening five matches of the new campaign.

Kylian Mbappe opened the scoring in the 14th minute when he sent Rayo goalkeeper Emil Audero the wrong way from the penalty spot after Alvaro Carreras was fouled inside the area.

The Frenchman, who earlier in the week said this could be the year he finally wins the Ballon d'Or, returned the favour to Carreras three minutes later by setting up the left-back to slam home and double his side's advantage.

England international Jude Bellingham added Real's third 10 minutes before half-time, side-footing Vinicius Jr's cut-back into the net at the end of a sweeping move. Mbappe was denied a second goal of the night, and a sixth of the La Liga campaign, at the end of the first half when he rattled the woodwork with a fierce effort.

Although the visitors pulled one back early in the second half



through Sergio Camello, it was Real who had the final say in stoppage time when Mbappe fired low and hard into the far corner to ensure Real made it 14 wins from their last 15 home meetings with Vallecano. Mbappe has scored 34 goals in 36 home games in La Liga.

Barcelona can re-establish a three-point lead over Real if they beat Levante on Sunday.

Elsewhere, Roberto Fernández kept up his strong start by scoring a double to lead Espanyol to a 2-0 win at Osasuna. Fernández has five

goals in as many games this season, after the striker scored only seven in La Liga all last season.

On a night of scoring in pairs across Europe, Yassir Zabiri found the net twice to lead the promoted Racing Santander to a 2-1 home win over Alaves. Zabiri has five goals already since joining Racing from Rennes on loan.

It was a first loss for Alaves after the surprisingly good start for the small Basque club. Iñaki Williams salvaged Athletic Bilbao a 1-1 home draw with Elche. - Agencies

EUROPEAN LEAGUES

Pulisic helps Milan rally for a draw against Lazio

MILAN: Christian Pulisic helped spark AC Milan's comeback at Lazio for a 2-2 draw on Saturday in the United States midfielder's first appearance for his Italian club this season.

Milan were trailing by two goals in the Serie A match in Rome when new coach Rúben Amorim sent on Pulisic and new signing Diego Moreira at halftime.

Pulisic made a quick impact in his first action in two months, lobbing a pass to the far post for Moreira to smash in his first goal in the 65th minute.

Moreira needed just two minutes to fire a second goal in from distance and split the points. Pulisic had not played since he sustained a bone bruise along with microfractures to his tibia and fibula when the US exited the World Cup in a loss to Belgium in July. Cagliari won at Atalanta 2-1 and Genoa drew with Frosinone 1-1.

Dortmund keep up winning form

Borussia Dortmund and Freiburg both made it three wins to start the Bundesliga. Felix Nmecha scored twice, including a late goal with a bicycle kick, to help Dortmund beat Paderborn 3-0.

"That was the best goal of my career," said Nmecha about his acrobatic strike, when he stretched to score a cross with



his back to the goal. Niko Kovac's side has won five in a row across all competitions, including a victory midweek over Villarreal in their Champions League opener. Germany defender Nico Schlotterbeck started for Dortmund in his return from an ankle injury sustained in the World Cup.

Freiburg top the table on goal difference after its 5-0 rout of Borussia Mönchengladbach.

Yannik Engelhardt and Igor Matanović scored two each to fuel Freiburg's big win. They both struck once when Gladbach was reduced to 10 men after Tim Kleindienst got a second booking.

Augsburg dropped points for the first time after Bayer Lev-

erkusen rallied from two goals down for a 2-2 draw. Michael Gregoritsch scored Augsburg's two goals early in the second half.

Eintracht Frankfurt beat Mainz 3-1. Hoffenheim downed Stuttgart 2-1 for their first win, while Werder Bremen drew at Cologne 1-1.

Monaco drop points for the first time

Monaco were held at Strasbourg to 1-1 and the French Ligue 1 leaders failed to win for the first time this season.

Toulouse drew at Lorient 2-2. Auxerre edged Nice 1-0, Paris FC drew with Lyon 0-0, and Le Havre drew with Angers 0-0. - Agencies

VS NASHVILLE

Messi scores his 19th MLS goal as Inter Miami held

MIAMI: Lionel Messi scored his MLS-leading 19th goal of the season as Inter Miami played first-place Nashville to a 2-2 tie on Saturday night.

Messi appeared to have Miami on their way to their first win over Nashville this season when he scored with a left-footed shot to make it 2-1 in the 62nd. Nashville's Sam Surridge equalised with his second goal of the night just a minute into stoppage time to keep his club unbeaten in four meetings with Miami this season.

The draw also kept Nashville nine points ahead of second-place Miami in the Eastern Conference standings.

Nashville struck just four minutes into the match when Surridge finished Andy Najar's pass

for his 14th goal of the season.

The score was evened in the 19th when Nashville defender Reed Baker-Whiting scored an own goal on a corner kick.

Messi had a shot blocked from outside the box in the 27th minute and sent a free kick wide shortly afterward before breaking through in the second half.

Rodrigo De Paul found Messi outside the penalty area, and the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner sent a left-footed shot into the bottom-left corner for his 19th MLS goal of the season.

Miami were looking to avenge a 4-1 loss to Nashville in the teams' previous meeting on Aug. 15. Nashville also eliminated Miami from the CONCACAF Champions Cup earlier this season. - Agencies



Gladbach fire Polanski as coach

MÖNCHENGLADBACH: Borussia Mönchengladbach fired coach Eugen Polanski on Sunday after starting the Bundesliga with three defeats.

Gladbach's 5-0 loss at Freiburg on Saturday was Polanski's last game in charge, with his assistant coach Tobias Trulsen also told to go.

"Despite a good pre-season and positive signs, the team failed to achieve the desired results in the Bundesliga," sporting director Rouven Schröder said. "Recent performances led to the decision to relieve Eugen of his duties with immediate effect. Eugen is a true 'Borusse' through and through."

Saturday's loss followed a 4-3 defeat at home to promoted Elversberg and an opening



3-0 loss at Leipzig. Gladbach's only win this season was a 5-0 rout of fifth-tier side Schott Mainz in the German Cup.

"It hurts so much that things have turned out this way," said Polanski, the former Under-23 team coach. "After successfully securing our top-flight status (last season), we made a number of changes for this season. We had big ambitions but failed to put them into practice." - Agencies



The Kazakhstan player ended the Belarusian's 20-match winning streak in the US Open, where the 2024 and 2025 champion hadn't lost since falling to Coco Gauff in the 2023 final

Rybakina

reigns supreme, claims world No.1 spot

NEW YORK: Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan denied Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka a third straight US Open title on Saturday, punctuating her rise to world No.1 with a victory over the player she's replacing at the summit.

Rybakina, already assured of supplanting Sabalenka atop the rankings by reaching the semi-finals in New York, triumphed 6-4, 5-7, 6-2 to claim her third Grand Slam title. She won her first at Wimbledon in 2022 and beat Sabalenka in the Australian Open title to claim her second in January.

"It feels amazing," Rybakina said. "It's still so difficult to process what happened. Too much achievements these few weeks. I'm super happy, very proud of all the work. It's just amazing."

She ended Sabalenka's 20-match winning streak in Flushing Meadows, where the 2024 and 2025 champion hadn't lost since falling to Coco Gauff in the 2023 final.

"I wish I could have performed a little better," Sabalenka told the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd, her voice breaking, "but I guess next year."

She had been vying to become just the third woman, after Chris Evert and Serena Williams, to win

three straight US Open titles.

The 28-year old from Belarus clawed back courageously in the second set, breaking Rybakina for the first time in the final game to force the third.

But with her trademark aplomb, Rybakina roared back to finish off a frustrated Sabalenka. With an early break in hand in the third set, Rybakina roared to the finish line. There was a final hiccup with two double faults as she served for the match before she secured the win with an ace.

"I feel like the match was so close," Rybakina said. "Even first set I got early break. Then it was kind of a little bit easier to step in, to be aggressive."

"Then in the second, we were taking our serve. She just played more aggressively in those same important moments."

"I had some little opportunities. Made a couple of mistakes. But then in the third set, I told myself that I can still do it. I need to focus on my serve and just risk a little bit more when I have the chance."

A disappointed Sabalenka exchanged a quick hug with the victor at the net, then smashed her racquet as she sat in her court-side



seat while Rybakina absorbed the cheers of the crowd.

"I'm obviously not really happy with the level I played today," Sabalenka said. "But she served incredible. She played really aggressive, great tennis."

'Better player today'

"She was simply a better player today than me," said Sabalenka, who will end the year without a major title for the first time since 2022.

The two biggest hitters in the women's game came out swinging,

a code violation warning for ball abuse. Sabalenka was looking increasingly desperate. Serving to extend the set at 5-3, she crushed an overhead several feet beyond the baseline and had to regroup before closing the game with an ace and a service winner.

But Rybakina wouldn't be denied, and she polished off the set 6-4 with a screaming backhand winner before Sabalenka sailed a shot long to end the deciding rally.

The second set started much the same, Sabalenka saved a pair of break points in the third game before thumping down a massive serve to hold.

She had yet to make any headway against Rybakina's serve, but she seemed to have found something on her own, twice holding to love as she took a 5-4 lead. Sabalenka's first break points of the match gave her a chance to close out the set, but she couldn't convert.

Nevertheless, Sabalenka was gaining in confidence. She held for a 6-5 lead then broke Rybakina with authority to force a third set - but it proved only a brief reprieve.

Rybakina earned \$5.5 million, the largest prize in Grand Slam history, and tied Sabalenka and

French Open winner Mirra Andreeva with a tour-high three titles this season. Sabalenka falls short of third straight title in New York

Sabalenka took home \$2.8 million but it was clear how little that meant to her, as she smashed her racket after a brief hug with Rybakina at the net.

Sabalenka was trying to become the first person since Serena Williams from 2012-14 to win three in a row at Flushing Meadows.

The third meeting of No. 1 vs. No. 2 in a U.S. Open women's final since 2000 was the first to go the way of the challenger. Williams was the top seed for the other two, beating her sister Venus in 2002 and Victoria Azarenka in 2013.

The numbers didn't signify much this time, because they are going to flip on Monday. Sabalenka has held the top spot for 99 consecutive weeks, but Rybakina gained enough points to unseat her simply by reaching the semi-finals.

She didn't stop there. The 27-year-old, born in Russia but representing Kazakhstan, won her first major title at Wimbledon in 2022 and now needs just the French Open to complete the career Grand Slam. - Agencies

SOLHEIM CUP

Europe and US locked at 8-8

DEN BOSCH: There has barely been any separation between Europe and the United States at this year's Solheim Cup. Something has to give on Sunday.

The teams were locked at 8-8 ahead of the start of singles play at Bernardus Golf in the Netherlands, where wet conditions greeted the arrival of players and fans on Day 3 and umbrellas lined the fairways as the early groups went out.

At stake is the crystal trophy that has been on show on the boisterous first tee all week and in the possession of the Americans since 2024. They need 14 points to ensure retaining it. Both teams require 14 1/2 points for an outright win. There was early European blue on the board, with Esther Henseleit and Nanna Koerstz Madsen taking



2-up leads. Charley Hull, who contributed just a half-point for Team Europe from four matches in a misfiring combination with Lottie Woad over the first two days, won the first hole of the lead singles match against Megan Khang and

held that lead heading to No. 7.

Out last will be Rose Zhang of the US vs. Celine Boutier of Europe. Jennifer Kupcho gave the US team some unlikely momentum with an outrageous finish on Saturday, pouring in birdie putts on Nos. 17 and 18 totaling around 120 feet to win a point and leave the teams tied again.

They were also level, at 4-4, after Day 1. It is the seventh time that the Solheim Cup has been tied after two days. The home team has a record of 5-0-1 on the six previous occasions.

In the past five editions of the event, the singles session has been tied three times and Europe has won 6 1/2-5 1/2 the other two times. Whoever wins, it's a day that rarely fails to deliver. - Agencies

LOCAL GOLFER



Lowry builds four-shot lead in Irish Open

DOONBEG: Shane Lowry thrilled his home crowd on Saturday in the Irish Open, which included a visit by President Donald Trump, by one-putting every green on the back nine for a 5-under 65, and a four-shot lead going into the final round.

Lowry lost his three-shot advantage at the start when Jacob Skov Olesen of Denmark finished the front nine eagle-birdie to go out in 31 and share the lead. And then the Irishman couldn't miss. It started with a 5-foot birdie on the 10th and a 10-foot par save on the 11th. Lowry made every putt on the back—three for birdies, six for pars—finishing with a superb pitch from left of the 18th green to 4 feet for one last par.

Lowry was at 16-under 194 at

Trump International Ireland, the Doonbeg course Trump bought in 2014. Trump stopped by after meeting with Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin in Dublin.

Trump is the first US president to attend a European tour event. He now has been to golf events on three circuits this year, having already gone to tournaments on his courses at the PGA Tour (Doral in Florida) and LIV Golf (Bedminster in New Jersey).

Skov Olesen didn't make another birdie after the ninth hole; he closed with a bogey on the 18th and had to settle for 66 that left him four shots behind. Joaquin Niemann shot 66 and was seven shots behind. - Agencies

TALBI CLAIMS MEN'S TITLE

Kenya's Kosgei clinches Great North Run women's race

LONDON: Kenya's Brigid Kosgei achieved a convincing victory in the women's race at the Great North Run after Great Britain's Eilish McColgan withdrew with injury on Saturday.

McColgan, 35, was continuing her return to racing after recovering from a broken toe, but she suffered a foot injury early in the half-marathon and limped off. Kosgei, an Olympic silver medallist and former London marathon winner, eased to the win in one hour, six minutes and 15 seconds.

Despite that being slower than the course record of 1:04:28 she set seven years ago, Kosgei, 32, dominated from the start and ran much of the 13.1-mile race solo.

She crossed the line over two minutes quicker than compatriot and last year's winner Sheila Chepkirui in second place.

Amy-Eloise Neale was the first British athlete to finish, coming fifth overall. McColgan, who finished third in last year's Great North Run, suffered the toe injury during the London Marathon in April where



she was the first British athlete to finish, taking seventh place.

The Scot had blood seeping through her shoe as she crossed the line and subsequently had to miss the Commonwealth Games in July. She made her comeback in last week's Big Half in London and won that race in 1:10:54, but McColgan admitted afterwards that she was still concerned about the injury and her fitness.

Talbi sprints to men's title

American Zouhair Talbi produced

a brilliant kick in the final mile to win the men's race as he got the better of last year's champion Alex Mutiso.

The pair were running side by side for most of the course before 31-year-old Talbi surged ahead in the closing stages and held on to win in 59:47.

He narrowly missed out on beating his personal best of 59:41. Mutiso finished 14 seconds behind Talbi in 1:00:01.

Yohei Ikeda of Japan came third, while Marc Scott - who won the

race in 2021 - was the first British athlete to finish in eighth place.

The course record of 58:56 for the men's race has stood since 2011, and was set by Martin Mathathi of Kenya.

Britain's David Weir won his 10th Great North Run title in the men's wheelchair race as he finished in 43:06, while Melanie Woods was the women's winner in 50:19. This year's race is the 45th edition and an estimated 63,000 runners took part, including Prime Minister Andy Burnham. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

BankDhofar delivers advanced digital solutions to meet customer expectations

BankDhofar continues to implement a range of digital initiatives aimed at simplifying processes, improving operational efficiency, and delivering faster, more flexible services to retail customers, businesses, and government entities

MUSCAT: In a world where digital transformation is accelerating and customer needs and expectations continue to evolve, technology has become one of the most significant factors determining the ability of financial institutions to compete and grow. In Oman, BankDhofar stands out as a leading example of a bank that has embraced digital transformation as a long-term strategic priority, placing innovation at the heart of its operations and services.

Digital transformation in the banking sector is no longer limited to providing services through mobile applications and online platforms. It now encompasses the complete redesign of the customer experience, the modernization of technological infrastructure, and the adoption of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and data analytics across various banking functions. In this context, BankDhofar continues to implement a range of digital initiatives aimed at simplifying processes, improving operational efficiency, and delivering faster, more flexible services to retail customers, businesses, and government entities.

The importance of this approach is further highlighted by the rapid shift toward a digital economy, where modern business environments require banking systems capable of seamless integration with a variety of digital platforms.



To meet these needs, BankDhofar has developed an advanced ecosystem based on Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), enabling businesses and institutions to connect directly with banking systems and execute financial transactions securely and in real time. This integration enhances cash flow management, reduces manual processes, and provides instant access to data, allowing organizations to make faster and more informed decisions.

Within the corporate banking sector, services are undergoing a significant transformation driven by automation and digitization. In response, the Bank has expanded its suite of digital solutions tailored to business customers. Alongside cash management, trade finance, and electronic payment services, BankDhofar has launched the Neo

CIB Corporate Internet Banking platform, offering a comprehensive digital experience that combines ease of use with enhanced flexibility. The platform enables businesses to manage accounts, payments, and various banking requests through a modern interactive interface supported by real-time information that facilitates decision-making.

As organizations worldwide increasingly adopt artificial intelligence in their operations, BankDhofar has entered an advanced phase of transformation through a strategic initiative built around an “AI-First” approach to technology development. This initiative reflects a forward-looking vision aimed at establishing systems that are more agile and better equipped to respond to the rapidly changing financial landscape. Artificial intelligence has supported the Bank in analyzing

existing systems, designing future solutions, and automating numerous processes, resulting in greater efficiency, faster execution, and improved resource management.

The impact of digital transformation is also clearly evident in the area of digital payments, which has witnessed substantial growth in recent years. BankDhofar was among the first financial institutions in Oman to introduce modern payment solutions that address customers’ growing demand for speed, convenience, and security. One of the Bank’s key initiatives is Dhofar Pay, which enables payments through smartphones using Near Field Communication (NFC) technology. In addition, support for Apple Pay and Samsung Pay has provided customers with a range of digital payment options aligned with global best practices.

Another example of the evolving banking experience is the relaunch of the Intilaga digital account opening application. Rather than visiting a branch and completing traditional paperwork, customers can now open accounts and verify their identities remotely using video communication technology and electronic integration with relevant authorities. This reflects the Bank’s commitment to delivering a more convenient and flexible banking experience.

Digital transformation extends beyond customer-facing services and includes continuous investment in the underlying technological infrastructure. In this regard, BankDhofar has implemented a comprehensive banking systems modernization program in collaboration with global technology partners and has adopted advanced

cloud computing solutions. These initiatives have strengthened performance, enhanced cybersecurity, and expanded the Bank’s ability to leverage data and artificial intelligence in developing future services.

As digital transformation continues to accelerate across all sectors of the economy, banks are increasingly expected to assume roles that go beyond their traditional function as financial institutions. Today, they are becoming key partners in fostering innovation and enabling the digital economy. Through its ongoing investments in technology, innovation, and customer-centric solutions, BankDhofar continues to reinforce its position as a leading contributor to Oman’s digital transformation journey and the future of banking in Oman.

BUILT TO CONQUER EVERY TERRAIN

Kia highlights Tasman in ‘New Identity, New Savings’ campaign

MUSCAT: Kia Oman continues its “New Identity, New Savings” campaign, this time turning the spotlight onto the Tasman — the brand’s newest and boldest entry into the pickup segment, and a truck engineered from the ground up, to master any terrain Oman can throw at it.

Customers who choose the Tasman this season can enjoy a Welcome Bonus of up to OMR 600 that is adjusted directly against the vehicle price.

Ownership is made even more rewarding with a service package covering 30,000 km, and a full year of complimentary registration. (Terms & Conditions apply).

The Tasman is engineered with a robust body-on-frame platform built to hold up under the harshest conditions and for genuine load-carrying resilience. The flagship 2.5-litre turbocharged engine delivers 277 HP, sent through an 8-speed automatic transmission, giving the Tasman the muscle to tackle steep climbs and heavy loads with confidence. A 2.2-litre turbo, diesel variant is also available for those who prioritize long-range efficiency.

With its 4WD system, no landscape is off-limits for the Tasman. Its offers a dedicated driving modes to match the terrain underfoot, while a dedicated X-Trek mode and an electronic differential locking system, help it push through the toughest obstacles.

Additionally, you also get good ground clearance of 252 mm resulting in fewer places the Tasman can’t reach. When the path gets tricky, drivers are backed by a full suite of visibility tech: the Surround View Monitor and Rear-View Camera give a clear picture of the vehicle’s immediate surroundings, while the Ground View Monitoring (GVM) — a virtual



under-body camera, lets drivers see the terrain beneath the front wheels, making it easier to place the Tasman precisely over rocks and obstacles that would otherwise be hidden from view.

Inside, the double cabin tells you an entirely different story — one of

comfort, luxury and modern design. A panoramic digital display merges a 12.3-inch infotainment screen with a 4-inch digital instrument cluster and a 5 inch HVAC display, while wireless smartphone charging, dual-automatic climate control and artificial leather

seating with ventilation keep every trip feeling comfortable and premium, regardless of the terrain outside.

Safety runs deep across the Tasman, with features including a Blind-Spot Collision Avoidance Assist (BCA), Lane Keeping/Fol-

lowing Assist, Multi-Collision Brake (MCB), Trailer Stability Assist (TSA) and Smart Cruise Control to add further reassurance during long journeys, keeping the driver firmly in command however the journey unfolds.

The Kia Tasman is now avail-

able for test drives at showrooms across Oman. Visit your nearest Kia showroom today.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the official distributor of Kia in Oman, continues to deliver a rewarding ownership experience for customers.



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