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HM, ANGOLAN PRESIDENT STRESS ON CESSATION OF GLOBAL HOSTILITIES

His Majesty returns home

SALALAH: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik returned home (Wilayat of Salalah) on Friday evening, having concluded two state visits to the Republic of Botswana and the Republic Angola. May Allah bestow upon His Majesty the Sultan blessings of wisdom, right guidance and continuous success. — **ONA**

The two leaders underscored the importance of deepening cooperation and agreed to explore new avenues for expanding ties



LUANDA: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President João Manuel Lourenço of the Republic of Angola, have stressed the importance of deepening cooperation, agreeing both to explore new avenues for its expansion and to advance initiatives and projects in strategic sectors of mutual interest. This was stated in a Joint Communiqué issued on the occasion of the state visit undertaken by His Majesty the Sultan to the Republic of Angola.

The following is the text of the Communiqué: “In response to an invitation extended by President João Manuel Lourenço of the Republic of Angola, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman, paid a state visit to the Republic of Angola on 17 and 18 September 2026, accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising

In honour of HM, Angola President hosts luncheon

LUANDA: In honour of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, President João Manuel Lourenço of the Republic of Angola, hosted an official luncheon at the Presidential Palace in the capital Luanda on Friday, within the framework of the state visit His Majesty and the accompanying official delegation are paying to the Republic of

Angola. Prior to the luncheon, His Majesty the Sultan and the President of Angola exchanged commemorative gifts, in a gesture reflecting the profound friendship and amicable ties uniting the two countries. The luncheon was attended by the two official delegations from the Omani and Angolan sides. — **ONA**

• See also >A4

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman firms explore Russian market

1 The participation of 16 Omani companies in the WorldFood Moscow 2026 exhibition is providing opportunities to promote national products. >A2

OMAN

Oman, Germany discuss navigation

2 Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received a telephone call from Dr. Johann Wadephul, German Foreign Minister. >A3

SPORTS

Oman takes part in Asian Games opening

3 The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Oman Olympic Committee, participated in the opening ceremony of the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya 2026, being hosted by Japan from September 19 to October 4. >A8

FORECAST

Oman may experience wetter winter season amid El Nino effect

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman may experience a relatively wet and fertile winter season from October 2026 through May 2027, as current indicators point to continued El Niño activity during the coming months, according to Abdullah Al Khadouri, Director General of Meteorology at Oman's Directorate General of Meteorology.

Al Khadouri explained that El Niño is a climatic phenomenon that occurs in the Pacific Ocean and can influence weather patterns in many parts of the world, including Oman.

He said that the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre, in coordination with the meteorological authorities and the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority,

is currently preparing a national report on El Niño, examining the phenomenon and its potential effects on Oman in detail.

The report will assess the expected weather impacts and provide forecasts and relevant

information to the concerned authorities as well as members of the public, he added.

Al Khadouri noted that previous studies have examined the relationship between El Niño events and weather conditions in Oman, particularly during the winters of 1982-83, 1997-98 and 2015-16.

He explained that statistical studies of historical rainfall events indicate an indirect relationship between El Niño and the winter weather systems affecting Oman, particularly the winter depressions that typically influence the

Sultanate between October and May. “God willing, we are optimistic about a fertile winter season,” Al Khadouri said, noting that the current indicators are based on the anticipated activity of El Niño during the coming period.

He stressed, however, that El Niño indicators do not constitute a definitive forecast, but rather provide an indication of possible weather patterns that should be taken into consideration.

Al Khadouri called for early preparedness in the event that the anticipated conditions materialise, noting that the national report being prepared by the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the phenomenon and its potential impacts on Oman. >A3

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COMMENTARY

Key Rules Governing Board Formation in Closed Joint Stock Companies

Oman's Commercial Companies Law, promulgated by Royal Decree 18/2019, establishes the framework for board formation in closed joint stock companies, with detailed provisions set out in the Corporate Governance Principles issued by Ministerial Decision 5/2025. These principles govern board composition, members' qualifications, independence and nomination, and apply to all closed joint stock companies except those in which the government holds shares.

Speaking to Times of Oman, Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Zadjali, Chairman of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm, stated that "boards must have an odd number of members, from three to eleven, elected by the ordinary general meeting through direct



secret ballot. Shareholders have votes equal to shares held and may split them among nominees, but one vote cannot go to more than one nominee. Members serve three years of the date of



convening of the general meeting in which the election was conducted to the date of third annual general meeting following such general meeting, unless extended by virtue of law. The

board then elects a chairman and deputy chairman, appoints a secretary, and files the resolution and minutes with the Registrar within seven days."

"At least one-third of members must be non-executive, and the chairman or deputy chairman of the board of directors cannot simultaneously serve as the company's chief executive officer. At least two independent members are required if the board has more than seven members, and at least one if the company's total assets exceed OMR 5 million in the audited financial statements or the number of shareholders exceeds fifty," he said.

He added that "board members must possess competence, experience and skills, and act with integrity while avoiding conflicts of interest. A public

announcement inviting nominations for independent membership must be issued at least fourteen days before the general meeting at which the board is to be elected, with the candidate list delivered to the legal adviser at least seven days before that meeting. Once elected, the board must appoint a secretary qualified in law, accounting, auditing or corporate secretarial work, with at least three years' management experience."

"Within ninety working days of the board's formation, the chairman must establish a system for introducing new board members to the company's business, particularly its financial and legal aspects, and for training them where necessary at the company's expense, covering governance, prevention

of administrative and financial abuses, and the skills board members are required to possess," he concluded.

(Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm (info@mohammedibrahim.net), (+968 244 87 600) was established on 14th December 2006 and is serving clients through its offices in Muscat and Sohar, as well as operating on a request basis in other areas. It offers legal representation across a wide range of practice areas that include Labour Law, Corporate, Commercial, Contracts, Banking and Finance, International Trade, Foreign Investment, Insurance, Maritime Law, Construction and Engineering Contracts, International Arbitration, Intellectual Property and more)

Oman companies explore Russian market for export

The ambassador said the exhibition provides small and medium enterprises with access to importers, distributors and potential partners

Times News Service

MOSCOW: The participation of 16 Omani companies in the World-Food Moscow 2026 exhibition is providing opportunities to promote national products, explore new export channels and build commercial partnerships in the Russian and wider Eurasian markets.

Hamoud Salim Al Tuwaih, Oman's accredited Ambassador to the Russian Federation, said the Russian market offers promising prospects for Omani products, while specialised international exhibitions provide an important platform for connecting exporters with importers, distributors and potential investors.

He noted that the 35th edition of the exhibition features more than 1,100 exhibitors from over 30 countries and 60 Russian regions, giving Omani companies an opportunity to assess market demand and develop trade relations into sustainable partnerships and export agreements.

Al Tuwaih said Russia's importance extends beyond its domestic consumer market, describing it as a potential gateway to wider markets in Eurasia and Central Asia.

He added that expanding into such markets supports Oman Vision 2040 objectives related to



economic diversification, development of non-oil sectors and enhancing the competitiveness of national products.

The ambassador stressed that participation in international exhibitions goes beyond displaying products, allowing companies to understand consumer and importer requirements, pricing, packaging and applicable technical and health standards. Such direct engagement can help Omani companies adapt products to target markets and strengthen their competitiveness.

He said the exhibition also provides small and medium enterprises with access to importers,

distributors and potential partners who may otherwise be difficult to reach through traditional marketing channels, creating opportunities for expansion beyond the domestic market.

Al Tuwaih highlighted the role of the Omani Embassy in Moscow in supporting companies seeking to enter the Russian market. This includes providing information on market characteristics, facilitating contacts with importers and distributors, supporting bilateral meetings and helping establish networks between the private sectors of Oman and Russia.

He said the embassy coordinates with relevant authorities in Oman to promote the country's economic and investment potential and identify opportunities to increase trade and investment exchanges between the two countries.

The ambassador also identified food security, food manufacturing, agriculture, storage, logistics and re-export as areas offering scope for expanding Oman-Russia economic cooperation. Russia's production capabilities in grains and agricultural and food products could complement Oman's strategic location, ports and lo-

gistics infrastructure. He said cooperation could therefore extend beyond conventional exports and imports to include investment and partnerships in production, manufacturing, storage, distribution and re-export.

Oman's geographical position and port network could also provide opportunities to serve markets across the region.

Al Tuwaih urged Omani companies to view participation in international exhibitions as part of a long-term strategy, following up on contacts made during such events and converting them into sustainable commercial relationships.

He expressed hope that the Omani participation in Moscow would translate into new export channels, partnerships and distribution networks, including opportunities in Central Asian markets.

The ambassador affirmed that the Omani Embassy in Russia will continue supporting national companies, connecting them with potential partners and highlighting available trade and investment opportunities to strengthen economic relations and expand the presence of Omani products in international markets.

INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Oman industrial survey to begin on Tuesday

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, will begin on Tuesday a comprehensive survey of industrial establishments across all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The survey aims to provide accurate and comprehensive statistical data on industrial activities, supporting industrial development plans, information-based decision-making and the enhancement of national databases related to the sector.

Ghalib bin Said Al Maamari, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Commerce and Industry, said the survey represents an important step in supporting industrial planning and investment by providing updated indicators on sector performance, growth rates, challenges facing industrial establishments and available investment opportunities.

He noted that the results will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Industrial Strategy 2040 by providing an updated industrial database that helps identify the sector's needs and supports the development of policies, programmes and initiatives.

Al Maamari stressed that the participation of industrial establishments and their timely and accurate submission of the required data are essential to the success of the survey.

A high response rate, he said, would enhance the quality and accuracy of the resulting indicators and statistics, strengthening the ability of authorities to plan and make decisions that support the sector's growth and competitiveness locally and internationally.

He also said work is under way to reclassify industrial licences, urging all establishments covered by the survey to actively cooperate with the field teams and provide the required information in accordance with approved standards.

Eng. Khalid bin Salim Al Qasabi, Director General of Industry, said the performance indicators of Oman's industrial sector reflect continued growth and an increasing contribution to the national economy.

He pointed out that manufacturing industries contributed about OMR869 million to GDP at constant prices during the first quarter of 2026, according to National Centre for Statistics and Information data.

The Industrial Strategy 2040 targets increasing the contribu-

tion of manufacturing industries to GDP to OMR5.44 billion by 2030 and OMR10.702 billion by 2040. The contribution of manufacturing industries to total GDP stood at about OMR3.7 billion at the end of 2025.

Al-Qasabi said re-exports grew by 64.4% through the end of May 2026, exceeding OMR1 billion, reflecting increased commercial activity associated with the industrial sector and its contribution to economic diversification and non-oil exports.

Non-oil merchandise exports also grew by 1.5% during the same period compared with the corresponding period of 2025, reaching about OMR2.739 billion.

He noted that the Industrial Strategy 2040 seeks to strengthen the presence of national products in international markets by raising the value of non-oil commodity exports to more than OMR10 billion by 2030. These include metal products, chemicals, energy-related industries and food products.

Dr Ahmed bin Khalfan al Badawi, Director of the Industrial Strategy Implementation and Evaluation Department, said the industrial survey forms part of efforts to formulate manufacturing-sector policies in cooperation with strategic partners.

He explained that current efforts focus on evaluating factory efficiency in line with the Fourth Industrial Revolution and modern technologies, while identifying the skills required by the labour market in coordination with relevant authorities and the Sectoral Governance Committee.

Al Badawi said this year's survey also supports digital transformation and complements the Ministry's efforts to develop and update electronic systems for collecting industrial data.

This will facilitate procedures for companies, improve the quality and accuracy of data, enhance national indicators and statistics, and strengthen integration and information exchange among stakeholders through interconnected government systems.

The survey covers industrial establishments with a capital of OMR5,000 or more and nine or more workers.

The Ministry called on all establishments covered by the survey to cooperate with the work teams and provide accurate and updated data, stressing that their participation will help produce reliable information to support industrial planning, decision-making and the development of policies and programmes aimed at strengthening the sector.



JUNE 1 AND AUGUST 31

Salalah Airport handles 686,808 travellers during Dhofar Khareef

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's civil aviation sector recorded a significant increase in passenger and flight movements during the Dhofar Khareef Season 2026, with Salalah Airport handling 686,808 arriving and departing passengers between June 1 and August 31.

The airport recorded a total of 5,148 arriving and departing flights during the period, including 2,561 arriving flights and 355,045 arriving passengers. The number of arriving flights increased by 4 percent compared with the same period last year.

Passenger traffic rose steadily throughout the season, with 92,735 travellers in June, increasing to 236,088 in July and reaching 357,985 in August.

Flight movements followed a similar trend, rising from 957 arriving and departing flights in June to 1,854 in July, before reaching 2,337 flights in August.



The figures highlight the close integration between the aviation and tourism sectors during the Khareef season, when the sharp increase in tourism demand translates directly into higher passenger and flight movements.

The Civil Aviation Authority said the growth also demonstrates the sector's capacity to accommodate substantial seasonal changes in demand, while underscoring

the importance of continuing to improve operational efficiency and the ability of the air transport system to support rising passenger and flight numbers.

Hamed bin Ahmed al Barashdi, official spokesperson for the Civil Aviation Authority, said the results recorded during the 2026 Khareef season reflect the growth in travel and the need for greater integration among the various compo-

nents of the civil aviation sector to efficiently manage the seasonal increase in passengers and flights.

He said the Authority, in its regulatory and supervisory role, is working to provide the necessary regulatory environment for the growth of air traffic, monitor safety requirements and ensure the smooth flow of air traffic.

The Authority also supervises air navigation and meteorological services and coordinates with various entities operating in the sector to strengthen the efficiency of Oman's air transport system and its ability to meet growing demand.

Al-Barashdi stressed the importance the Authority attaches to enhancing the efficiency of the civil aviation sector, noting that air transport is a key enabler of tourism, supports economic activity and strengthens connectivity between Oman's governorates and regional and international destinations.

His Majesty’s visits to Botswana and Angola opens up new avenues

His Majesty’s visit to Angola represents an opportunity for OQ to expand its presence in African markets and explore commercially viable partnerships across the energy value chain

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The high-level visits of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Botswana and Angola have opened new avenues for strengthening Oman’s economic and investment ties with African markets, particularly in the energy sector.

Omani officials have said the agreements and Memoranda of Understanding signed by the Sultanate of Oman and Angola reflect a shared commitment to expanding cooperation and strengthening the partnership between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi said the agreements and MoUs reflect the commitment of the two countries’ leaderships to establishing a partnership that supports their development priorities, expands economic and investment cooperation, and promotes the exchange of expertise.

He said the agreements provide an institutional foundation for developing cooperation and creating



conditions for joint projects that benefit from the resources and capabilities of both countries. They would also strengthen the role of business institutions in advancing mutual interests for the benefit of both peoples.

Sayyid Badr said the diversity of areas covered reflects the opportunities that greater integration between the two countries could create, whether through supporting productive sectors, developing services and infrastructure or building capabilities and exchanging knowledge. He highlighted the importance of following up on the agreements and translating them into tangible results.

He added that the visit gives new momentum to Oman-Angola relations and reflects Oman’s interest in developing partnerships with friendly African countries based on mutual respect and shared interests, and in support of development and prosperity.

Anwar bin Hilal Al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, told the Oman News Agency that His Maj-

esty’s visits to Botswana and Angola establish a new phase of economic partnership with Africa.

They also reflect Oman’s drive to expand its international partnerships, open new markets for Omani products and investments and attract high-quality investment that contributes to economic diversification.

Investment projects

He said the MoUs signed during the visits reflect a shared determination to advance economic relations and transform available opportunities into tangible partnerships and investment projects, with the private sector playing a central role and benefiting from the economic potential and promising opportunities available in Oman, Botswana and Angola.

The Minister said the MoU between the Governments of Oman and Botswana on investment promotion establishes an integrated framework to strengthen investment cooperation, exchange opportunities and connect companies and investors.

to build upon, while economic, investment and trade agreements create an environment conducive to greater capital flows and bilateral trade. Cooperation in transport and agriculture also addresses development needs in both countries.

The Ambassador added that the agreements and MoUs represent a step towards moving Oman-Angola relations beyond diplomatic ties towards a broader economic and development partnership.

He noted that while diplomatic relations provide the foundation, their value increases when they translate into benefits for people and create opportunities for development, investment, trade and cooperation.

Ashraf bin Hamad Al Maamari, Chief Executive Officer of OQ, said the Royal visits provide strong momentum and confidence to economic relations, helping move cooperation from the exploration of opportunities towards the development of concrete partnerships and projects.

He said His Majesty’s visit to Angola represents an opportunity for OQ to expand its presence in African markets and explore commercially viable partnerships across the energy value chain, while promoting the exchange of expertise and capacity building.

Al Maamari noted that opportunities under evaluation in Angola include exploration and production, liquefied natural gas, fertilisers, ammonia and petrochemicals, as well as trading in petroleum products.

OQ has signed two memoranda of cooperation with the Angolan side. The first, with Sonangol, establishes a framework for assessing investment opportunities of mutual interest and exchanging technical and operational expertise across the energy value chain.

The second, signed by OQ Alternative Energy and Angola’s Ministry of Energy and Water, provides a framework for evaluating the de-

velopment of a renewable energy project with a capacity of about 500 megawatts, together with a battery energy storage system.

Al Maamari said the agreements represent an important step in strengthening Oman-Angola cooperation and identifying economically viable projects that create sustainable value for both sides.

He added that cooperation with Angolan counterparts covers oil and gas, refining, petrochemicals, fertilisers, trading and renewable energy. OQ Alternative Energy is also exploring renewable energy projects with a combined capacity of up to 500 MW, including battery storage.

Regarding Botswana, he said the visit resulted in the signing of a memorandum of cooperation on energy security by O-Green. The company will seek to transmit energy generated from its projects in Botswana to neighbouring countries through a renewable energy plant currently under construction.

He said OQ’s integrated portfolio, spanning exploration and production, refining, petrochemicals, trading and alternative energy, enables the group to assess investment opportunities across the entire value chain and identify areas where Omani and African capabilities can complement each other.

OQ stressed that its international partnerships are based on economic feasibility, strategic alignment, knowledge transfer and capacity building, with the objective of developing commercially sustainable projects and expanding Oman’s presence in global markets.

The group already has a commercial presence in several African markets through its subsidiaries. The two memoranda signed with Angola build on that presence and provide a framework for exploring new investment opportunities and expanding OQ’s African portfolio.

MEETING

Oman envoy presents copy of credentials to Kazakh President

ASTANA: President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan received the credentials of Sheikh Dr. Salah Salim Jaaboub as envoy of Oman to the Republic of Kazakhstan at the Palace of Independence in Astana.

During the meeting, Ambassador Jaaboub conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Majesty’s wishes for good health and happiness to President Tokayev, continued progress and prosperity for the people of Kazakhstan, and further growth and development in bilateral relations.

President Tokayev, for his part, entrusted the ambassador with conveying his greetings to His Majesty for good health and well-being, and to the Omani people



for continued progress and prosperity. The Kazakh president also expressed his wishes for Oman-Kazakhstan relations to continue

developing and expanding in a manner that serves the aspirations of the two friendly peoples.

-ONA

IN HORMUZ, RED SEA

Oman, Germany discuss freedom of navigation



MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister received a telephone call from Dr. Johann Wadephul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany yesterday.

The two ministers discussed

a number of regional issues and exchanged views on efforts to resume freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea. They also reviewed ways to support efforts aimed at reducing tension and escalation, with a view to enhancing prospects for regional security and stability.

WEATHER SYSTEMS

Increased chances of rain in winter

<FROM A1 The expected conditions could include heavy rainfall and increased activity of winter weather systems during the period extending from October 2026 to May 2027, subject to the development and evolution of weather patterns.

The upcoming national assessment is expected to provide a clearer picture of the potential impacts of El Niño on Oman and support early preparedness and coordination among the relevant authorities.



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HM the Sultan and President of Angola hold bilateral meeting

In an address, the President of Angola renewed his welcome to His Majesty the Sultan and his accompanying official delegation

LUANDA: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President João Manuel Lourenço of the Republic of Angola, held a bilateral meeting at the Presidential Palace in the capital, Luanda on Friday.

During the meeting, the cordial relations between the two countries and the means of enhancing them were reviewed in a manner that secures further mutual benefits for the two countries' peoples, and the latest developments on the international arena and issues of mutual interest were discussed.

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister and Tête Antónico, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Angola, presented a briefing on the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Thereafter, an expanded official session of talks was held, attended by the Omani official delegation and a number of officials from the Angolan side.

The session explored fields of cooperation between the two countries, encompassing domains of industry, mining, energy, clean energy, ports, maritime transport, logistics services, agriculture, food security and fisheries.

The President of Angola delivered an address in which he renewed his welcome to His Majesty the Sultan and his accompanying official delegation, expressing the hope that this visit would be crowned with the realisation of further aspirations and investments. The President of Angola affirmed that this historic visit represents an advanced executive stage for broadening the shared economic, investment and commercial partnership.

He noted the direct positive outcomes of bilateral cooperation, embodied in the opening of the African Bank of Oman in Luanda this year and the entry of Omani companies into mineral mining investments in Angola. He further noted the exploration of future cooperation horizons for private investment opportunities in the agriculture, fisheries, mineral resources, oil and gas and pharmaceutical manufacturing sectors.

His Majesty the Sultan delivered an address on this occasion, reading as follows: "Excellency President João Manuel Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola



Distinguished Guests,
It is our great pleasure to be here in the capital of your historic country. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your warm reception and generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation.

We also would like to express our great satisfaction with the development of relations between our two countries. We highly appreciate your personal interest and your government efforts in developing the economic partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Angola.

This visit aims to continue the constructive dialogue and the consultations we have held with Your Excellency during your visit to Oman.

We would like to express our satisfaction with the constructive consultations we have held together, which have led to launching a new chapter of strategic partnership during that visit.

This visit also reaffirms our strong commitment and full support for further developing these relations, which have witnessed a significant growth in recent years



in economic, business and investment sectors. Accompanying me on this visit are several ministers responsible for these sectors, who are keen to explore further opportunities for cooperation.

Your Excellency,

We look forward to achieving our joint vision and greatly increasing the volume of the trade in the years to come, although it does not reflect currently the strength of our economic partnership.

The agreements and the memorandum of understandings signed during this visit which has a total

value of more than 1.5 Billion USD, provide a strong foundation and create lasting opportunities for our peoples.

Therefore, we encourage all relevant parties from the public and private sectors in both countries to maintain their efforts in order to explore the opportunities of this partnership and to empower businesspersons to benefit from the promising business and investment opportunities, which will bring to both countries prosperity, security and overall well-being.

We also look with great opti-

mism toward promising prospects and partnership in the fields of oil, mining, food security, maritime and air transport as well as other sectors, thereby contributing to economic diversification in both nations.

Now that the Technical Cooperation Program agreement has been signed, I hope that its outcome will extend beyond the programme itself and bring tangible benefits to the Angolan people. This programme, and initiatives of this kind, will help build strong and lasting bonds between the people of our two countries, reflecting our broader strategy for international cooperation.

Your Excellency,

Allow me once again to express my deep appreciation for the warm reception and generous hospitality. We also look forward to the continuation of mutual visits and constructive dialogue to further strengthen our ties and enhance the spirit of cooperation between our two countries.

We extend our sincere wishes to the friendly Angolan people for continued progress and prosperity and to our relations for ever-greater strength and growth.

"Thank you". -DNA

TWENTY-ONE-GUN SALUTE

HM accorded official reception



LUANDA: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik was accorded an official reception ceremony at the Presidential Palace in the capital, Luanda on Friday. The ceremony was held on the occasion of the state visit His Majesty is paying to the Republic of Angola.

Upon His Majesty the Sultan's arrival at the Presidential Palace, President João Manuel Lourenço of the Republic of Angola led the welcoming party for His Majesty. President of Angola welcomed His Majesty the Sultan and the accompanying official delegation, expressing his profound delight at this gracious visit, as the artillery fired a twenty-one-gun salute in honour of His Majesty the Sultan.

Thereafter, His Majesty the Sultan and the President of Angola ascended the dais of honour, and the Royal Anthem of Oman and the Angolan National Anthem were played. Then, His Majesty the Sultan inspected the Guard of Honour.

Subsequently, His Majesty the Sultan shook hands with the senior dignitaries receiving him on the Angolan side, while the President of Angola shook hands with the Omani official delegation. -DNA



HM visits Botswana’s Diamond Hub

His Majesty toured the Hub’s main plant, during which he was briefed on the technical operations across the various stages of production

GABORONE: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, accompanied by President Duma Gideon Boko of the Republic of Botswana, visited the Diamond Hub in the capital, Gaborone on Thursday.

Upon His Majesty the Sultan’s arrival at the Diamond Hub, he was received by Bogolo Joy Kenewendo, Minister of Minerals and Energy, and the Director-General of the Hub.

His Majesty the Sultan was



briefed on the Hub’s activities and competences, the stages of work in the diamond sector, and the roles it assumes in the fields of sorting and evaluating diamonds, alongside the Hub’s endeavours in developing the added value of this sector.

Thereafter, His Majesty the Sultan toured the Hub’s main plant, during which he was briefed



and expertise the Hub possesses. At the conclusion of the visit, His Majesty the Sultan graciously inscribed the Book of Distinguished Guests, extending his thanks and appreciation to those in charge of the Hub, wishing them continued success and prosperity, and commending the substantial work and endeavours the Hub undertakes in the mining sector.

His Majesty also accepted a commemorative gift presented by the Hub in celebration of his gracious visit while His Majesty presented a commemorative gift to the Hub.

His Majesty the Sultan and the President of the Republic of Botswana graced, during the visit to the Diamond Hub in Gaborone, the signing of the agreement on Co-Development –Heads of terms Co-operation- Mining Exploration. -ONA

STATE VISIT

HM concludes Botswana’s visit

GABORONE: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik departed Gaborone, concluding his visit to the Republic of Botswana, en route to the Republic of Angola on a two-day state visit.

His Majesty was seen off by President Duma Gideon Boko of the Republic of Botswana. Prior to departure, the Royal Anthem of Oman and Botswana National Anthem were played. Thereafter, His Majesty inspected the Guard of Honour, while the artillery fired a twenty-one gun salute in honour of His Majesty the Sultan.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan, accompanied by the President of Botswana, viewed the farewell tableau of traditional Botswanan arts.

Thereafter, the President of Botswana shook hands with the Omani official delegation, while His Majesty the Sultan shook hands with the Botswanan farewell party.

Prior to departure, His Majesty the Sultan sent a cable of thanks to the President of Botswana. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his profound thanks and appreciation for the warm reception and generous hospitality. His Majesty commended the constructive outcomes the visit yielded, which reinforced the march of bilateral relations and propelled the partnership and cooperation between the two countries towards broader horizons. -ONA





MUSCAT GOVERNORATE
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. 33 /2026

Muscat Municipality at Al Seeb invites Companies specialized in the field and registered with Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority, to participate and obtain tender documents from the website via the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

No.	Tender No	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
1	PRES/26/017	Design and construction of surface stormwater drainage in Wilayat Seeb (Phase5)	05.10.2026	26.10.2026
2	PRES/26/018	Proposed Stormwater Drainage Improvement at Al Mabela North	05.10.2026	26.10.2026

1. Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.

2. Clarification and Support:

- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@gstb.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).

Website: www.mm.gov.om



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Tender Announcement for Proposed Construction of Female Dormitory 5 & CPS buildings work.

Location: Dhofar University Campus at Salalah

Dhofar university S.A.O.C, one of the leading Universities in the Sultanate of Oman and accredited nationally by Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAAQA), invites bid from eligible Contractors, specialized in building construction works and registered with tender Board in the Sultanate of Oman, for the “**Proposed Construction of Female Dormitory 5**” and “**Proposed Construction of Center for Preparatory Studies**” in Dhofar University campus:

Sl. No.	Tender Package	Tender Name	Last date for collecting Tender	Last date of Tender Submission	Tender Price (Non-Refundable)
1	Dorms Package - 1	Proposed Construction of Female Dormitory 5 – Building 1 & 2	05 Oct 2026	19 Nov 2026	RO.150/-
2	Dorms Package - 2	Proposed Construction of Female Dormitory 5 – Building 3 & 4	05 Oct 2026	19 Nov 2026	RO.150/-
3	CPS Package - 1	Proposed Construction of Center for Preparatory Studies – North Phase	05 Oct 2026	19 Nov 2026	RO.150/-
4	CPS Package – 2	Proposed Construction of Center for Preparatory Studies – South Phase	05 Oct 2026	19 Nov 2026	RO.150/-

- Tender documents can be obtained from the Purchase Department at Dhofar University, Salalah. Starting from **20 September 2026**, the tender documents will be available for collection on any working day between 8.30am – 2.30pm. Any site visit can also be made during the same time.
- Tender queries, if any, should be addressed to M/s. Al Hatmy Engineering Consultancy. Email: arup@alhatmyoman.com & alhatmysll@gmail.com with a copy to client at phase2projects@du.edu.om not later than **29 Oct 2026**.
- Tender should be submitted in envelopes and sealed with red wax. The Tender name should be written on top of the envelope containing the Tender. The exterior of the sealed envelope must not reveal the identity of the Tenderer.
- Tenders should be addressed to Dhofar University and deposited in the office of the Vice Chancellor of Dhofar University, Salalah on or before the last date of submission.
- Dhofar University reserves the right not to accept the lowest or any Tender received and also to cancel the Tender without assigning any reason.

Tenders Notice

وزارة الزراعة والسمكية وموارد المياه

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources



The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

Tender no.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are eligible to participate	Tender Document fee (R.O)
49/2026/ MAFWR/ HQ-3- Recall-1	RELOCATION OF FERRY INTEGRAL TANK LINKSPAN AT DIBBA FISHERY HARBOUR, MUSNDAM GOVERNORATE	Tuesday 15/9/2026	Sunday 27/9/2026	Monday 5/10/2026	Specialized companies registered with, Excellent, First, Second, Third, and Fourth grades	(50/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
634/2026/ MAFWR/ HQ-46	Supply of Laboratory Equipment for the Diagnosis of Shrimp Diseases for the Central Veterinary Laboratory 2026	Tuesday 15/9/2026	Sunday 4/10/2026	Monday 26/10/2026	Specialized companies registered with, Excellent, First, Second, Third, and Fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

- Above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402244 or etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

BILATERAL RELATIONS

His Majesty, President of Angola exchange views

<FROM A1 President João Manuel of the Republic of Angola received His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik at the Presidential Palace, where the two leaders held a private meeting, followed by talks between the delegations of the two countries.

These meetings were characterised by a friendly atmosphere, reflecting their desire to enhance cooperation founded upon the integration of the two countries' economies and to elevate the welfare of the Angolan and Omani peoples.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik congratulated the President of Angola on the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Angola, which fell on 11 November 2025. He also welcomed the commemoration of the Twenty-Fourth Anniversary of the establishment of peace in Angola, as a milestone in the country's history that brought an end to the long civil war and laid the foundations for national reconciliation and political stability.

For his part, President João Ma-

nuel congratulated His Majesty the Sultan of Oman on the occasion of the Omani National Day, which will be celebrated on 20 November of this year.

The two leaders exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues, and affirmed the convergence of their perspectives on various matters of mutual interest.

The two leaders stressed the importance of deepening cooperation, agreeing both to explore new avenues for its expansion and to advance initiatives and projects in strategic sectors of mutual interest, notably diplomacy, oil, energy, mineral resources, finance, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, transport, logistics and housing. In this context, the two leaders graced the exchange of a number of instruments signed between the two friendly countries, comprising ten legal instruments of cooperation and three memoranda of understanding between government-owned companies.

The two leaders agreed to hold periodic bilateral political consultations to assess the extent of

implementation of the commitments agreed upon between the two countries.

In this framework, they agreed to convene the next round of political consultations, as well as the first session of the Joint Committee, in Muscat, the capital of the Sultanate of Oman, on a date to be agreed upon through diplomatic channels.

With regard to regional and global issues, the two leaders expressed their deep concern over the ongoing conflicts in Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. They called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and urged the parties concerned in these conflicts to engage in peaceful dialogue aimed at reaching lasting solutions.

As for the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz, President João Manuel voiced his solidarity with the affected states and called for a return to normal conditions. He lauded the efforts exerted by the Sultanate of Oman to de-escalate tensions and pursue dialogue with a view to reaching a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

With regard to the State of Pal-

estine, the two leaders affirmed their support for the principle of peaceful coexistence, the right of peoples to self-determination and United Nations resolutions. They condemned human rights violations and indiscriminate attacks against civilian populations.

With respect to the issues on the international agenda, the two leaders recognized the priority of recourse to international law, respect for the sovereignty of states and non-interference in their internal affairs.

The two leaders also expressed their satisfaction with the level of the talks and the outcomes of the visit, which constitutes a historic milestone in the enhancement of the partnership between the Republic of Angola and the Sultanate of Oman.

At the conclusion of the state visit, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman, expressed his profound thanks and gratitude to President João Manuel of the Republic of Angola, and to the Angolan people, for the warm reception and generous hospitality accorded to him." — **ONA**



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GCC MINISTRIES OF FINANCE

Enhancing GCC joint financial, economic integration reviewed

MUSCAT: The Committee of Undersecretaries of GCC Ministries of Finance held its 76th meeting via videoconferencing.

The meeting aimed to review a number of topics related to enhancing the march of economic and financial cooperation and integration among the Council states.

The Sultanate of Oman was represented at the meeting by Abdullah Salim Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance.

along with the studies and projects whose preparation is being followed up by the Economic and Development Affairs Authority Office within the framework of supporting economic and developmental integration among the Council states.

Economic unity

The meeting also touched upon developments in the programme for achieving economic unity among GCC states, and following up on the implementation of decisions from the 125th meeting of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, thereby contributing to supporting the pathways of joint Gulf action in financial and economic fields.

The convening of the 76th meeting of the Committee of Undersecretaries of Ministries of Finance comes within the framework of preparing for the 126th meeting of the GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee, and following up on financial and economic topics and dossiers of common interest among the Council states.

The meeting was attended by a number of officials from the Ministry of Finance, the Royal Oman Police (ROP), and the Tax Authority. — **ONA**

Gulf committees

During the meeting, the outcomes of the meetings of relevant Gulf committees were discussed, including the Committee of Governors of GCC Central Banks, the Customs Union Authority, and the Committee of Heads and Directors of Tax Administrations, as well as the outcomes of the meeting of the GCC Common Market Committee.

Free trade agreement

The meeting discussed the latest developments in free trade agreement negotiations between the GCC states and other countries and international blocs, as well as updates on the agreement linking payments among GCC states,

SCIENTIFIC COMPETITION

Winners of research studies track announced at third Dhofar Scientific Forum

SALALAH: The organising committee of the "3rd Dhofar Scientific Forum", organised by the Research and Innovation Authority in co-operation with the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Salalah, announced the final results of the winning teams in the research studies track, following a scientific competition that brought together a number of researchers and academics from various higher education institutions and research centres in the Sultanate of Oman.

Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony included the presentation of a visual display on the forum's activities and the honoring of the first-prize winners, the judging panel, and the forum's organising committee.

The results culminated in the oil spill study challenge team winning first place, comprising research-

ers Khadija Salim Al Hosni, Noura Al Murr Al Ghabshi, and Bushra Mohammed Al Kalbani, under the supervision of Dr. Zakia Said Al Amri.

Meanwhile, the tourist pressure study challenge team during the Khareef season secured second place. The study was prepared by a team consisting of Muna Khamis Al Alawi, Reem Saleh Al Harassi, Badriya Khamis Al Fleiti, and Ohood Khamis Al Jabri, under the supervision of Dr. Noor Masoud Kashoob.

Rigorous evaluation

The outputs underwent rigorous evaluation by a judging panel comprising a number of experts and specialists according to criteria that included scientific research methodology, quality of visual presentations, and effectiveness of executive recommendations.

Dr. Nasreen Yahya Al Balushi,

in charge of managing the Department of Building Research and Innovation Capabilities at the Research and Innovation Authority, emphasised that the success of the 3rd Dhofar Scientific Forum represents an important milestone in utilizing scientific research and innovation to serve society and address priority developmental challenges in Dhofar Governorate.

She explained that the strategic research studies track at the forum, which came in partnership with the Chair of Strategic Technical Studies, focused on diagnosing a number of vital challenges. These included economic challenges, supporting small and medium enterprises, addressing oil spills, managing tourist pressure during the Khareef season, water resource management, and sustainable agriculture, as well as preserving intangible cultural heritage. — **ONA**

AL DHAHIRAH

Pact signed to rehabilitate Aflaj, drill wells

Ibri: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources signed 40 agreements for the rehabilitation and maintenance of aflaj systems and the drilling of auxiliary wells across the various wilayats of Al Dhahirah Governorate, at a total cost of OMR621,363, as part of ongoing efforts to develop the water sector and restore the efficiency of the traditional irrigation system. The agreements were signed on behalf of the Ministry by Eng. Amer Saif Al Barhi, Director General of Agriculture and Water Resources in Al Dhahirah Governorate and representatives executing the projects. — **ONA**

Hamna Arif Wins Entrepreneur of the Year – Community Impact Award



Hamna Arif, Founder and CEO of She Unites GCC, was felicitated with the 'The Origin Entrepreneur of the Year – Community Impact 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.

Founded by Hamna in 2019, She Unites GCC has grown into a women-focused platform dedicated to creating meaningful connections and opportunities for women across the region. Built around the belief that women thrive when they have access to the right networks, resources and support, the platform brings together entrepreneurs, professionals, influencers and aspiring businesswomen to connect, collaborate and grow.

Hamna's entrepreneurial journey goes beyond building a professional network. Under her leadership, She Unites GCC has undertaken community-focused initiatives including breast cancer awareness activities, beach clean-



ups and donation drives, alongside programmes designed to bring women together around shared interests and causes.

Her recognition as Entrepreneur of the Year – Community Impact celebrates her ability to transform an idea into a growing community that enables women to connect, collaborate, lead and succeed.

Hamna's journey demonstrates the impact of purpose-driven entrepreneurship and community building. Her recognition at The Origin 2026 celebrates not only her entrepreneurial achievements, but also the wider community of women she continues to bring together and empower across the GCC.

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



وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية
Ministry of Social Development



Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
452/2026	Pharmaceutical needs of the boarding unit (home for the severely disabled)	Companies specialized in the field of supplying medical supplies and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Sunday 04-10-2026 02:00 PM	Monday 19-10-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
453/2026	Supply of consumer medical tools and personal supplies to the boarding unit (home for the severely disabled)	Companies specialized in the field of supplying medical supplies and supplying food, beverages and luxuries and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Sunday 04-10-2026 02:00 PM	Monday 19-10-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at theTender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Sunday 20/09/2026

❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) Tel. (24402200)

"The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry"

www.mosd.gov.om

Nepal Embassy holds awareness programme to empower workers

The event was organised to mark the Constitution Day, to educate and empower Nepali workers working in different sectors of Oman, to provide training on labour permit renewal and social security payment

Times News Service

MUSCAT: On the occasion of the Constitution Day of Nepal, the Embassy of Nepal in Muscat organised a Labour Safety and Awareness programme at Nepal



House Muscat on 18 September 2026.

The event was organised to mark the Constitution Day, to educate and empower Nepali workers employed in different sectors of Oman, to provide training on labour permit renewal and social security payment and to offer condolences to those who lost their lives due to the devastating flood of 26 August 2026.

The programme brought together

representatives of Oman based Nepali organisations, Members of Expert group, volunteers and Nepali community.

One-minute silence

The event commenced by playing the National Anthem of Nepal. A one-minute silence was observed to pray for the victims of flashflood in Bhotekoshi river.

During his address, Bishesh Kumar Sah, Chargé d'Affaires,

welcomed the guests and thanked them for their participation.

Sah extended his greetings on the occasion of the Constitution Day of Nepal. He also highlighted the features of the Constitution of Nepal and mentioned how it has paved the way for inclusiveness and participation of all Nepalis.

He informed the gathering about the Embassy's initiatives to promote Nepal-Oman bilateral relations and its upcoming pro-

grammes.

He further outlined the important aspects related to the Workers safety, Labour awareness and also spoke on the need of financial literacy. Sah appreciated the support of Nepali organisations and expressed the Embassy's commitment to supporting the Nepali community in Oman.

He expressed his heartfelt condolences to those who lost their lives in the Bhotekoshi river flood

on 26 August 2026.

Damodar Gnawali, Labour Attaché, explained the kinds of labour problems being faced by the Nepali workers and the steps being taken to find the solutions. He underscored the importance of awareness to educate every Nepali citizen to seek information before heading for foreign employment.

He requested the Oman based Nepali community members to assist in creating awareness and providing support to those who find themselves in trouble.

A highlight of the event was a presentation by Shyam Krishna Bhattarai, a member of the Expert Group, where he practically guided on the process to obtain Labour permit through DOFE website.

He also demonstrated the procedures for making payments to the Social Security Fund.

He even requested everyone to learn these processes and guide others who could not do it themselves.

A lamp-lighting ceremony was held to pray for the departed souls and for the swift recovery of the injured during the severe flash flood in Nepal. All the participants lighted the lamp.

THE ALLURE OF SILVER

National Museum inaugurates exhibition in Belarus

MINSK: The National Museum inaugurated the exhibition "The Splendour of Silver: Treasures from the Omani Court" at the Grodno State Museum of the History of Religion in the Republic of Belarus.

This event marks the exhibition's third station in the Republic of Belarus; its first station was held at the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus in the capital, Minsk, in December 2025, before making its second stop at the Vitebsk Regional Museum of

Local Lore in July 2026 as part of the programme of the International Arts Festival "Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk." The exhibition celebrates manifestations of Omani silver as a historically leading craft, showcasing a carefully selected collection of objects associated with the Sultans of Oman in Muscat and Zanzibar.

The exhibition will run until 20 November, 2026 and serves as an extension of the exhibition held at the National Art Museum in Minsk in December 2025.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Her Highness Sayyida Dr. Mona Fahd Al Said, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University for International Cooperation and Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum. The event was attended by Yuri Khadzhimuratovich Karaev, Chairman of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee, along with a number of officials and individuals interested in cultural and museum affairs in the Republic of Belarus.

The exhibition features a range of museum objects that highlight the allure of silver within the Omani cultural context, where expressions of luxury and elegance are clearly manifested. It sheds light on the diverse roles of silver; this precious metal whose use was not limited to the courts of the sultans, but extended into the details of daily life.

The exhibition also highlights the craftsmanship of Omani silversmiths, offering visitors an opportunity to explore a world in

which silver becomes a symbol of beauty, protection, and the essence of Omani craftsmanship.

The exhibition is divided into five main sections: the Omani khanjar; the Culture of Fragrance; the Art of Silver-Making; Traditional Dress; and Elite Attire of Prominent Omani Figures in East Africa during that period.

The Omani khanjar (dagger) section highlights its symbolism as an integral element of the emblem of the Sultanate of Oman, tracing its history and develop-

ment since the third millennium BCE, with reference to historical evidence confirming the continuity of its form across the ages. The section also presents types of Omani khanjars and their accessories, most notably the Sa'idi khanjar attributed to the ruling Al Said family and crafted specifically for them, alongside the Nazwani and Suri khanjars. The Culture of Fragrance section focuses on the importance of fine scents in the daily life and social occasions of Omanis. — OMA

4TH EDITION



BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2026

 26th OCTOBER 2026

 JW MARRIOTT HOTEL MUSCAT

Marking its 4th edition, the **Times Business Leadership Summit** brings together senior government officials, business owners, C-level executives, SMEs and industry experts. Under the theme **Business Leadership in an Era of Unprecedented Change**, the Summit will examine how organisations can navigate a shifting geopolitical and economic landscape, build resilience, adapt strategies and turn emerging challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth.

TIMES BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Celebrating exceptional achievers in Oman's business landscape, the Times Business Leadership Awards recognise outstanding individuals and companies.

Award Categories:

- Business Leader of the Year
- Entrepreneur of the Year
- Young Business Leader of the Year
- Woman Business Leader of the Year

- Lifetime Achievement Award
- SME of the Year
- Company of the Year...and more



FOR AWARDS, PARTNERSHIPS AND SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES, CONTACT:

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SPORTS

Asian Games open in Nagoya with a spectacular ceremony



HH Sayyid Azzan bin Qais Al Said, President of the Oman Olympic Committee, led the Oman delegation at the opening ceremony; Japan Emperor Naruhito declared Aichi-Nagoya 2026 open as more than 11,000 athletes from 45 nations and regions gather for Asia's biggest multi-sport event

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The 20th Asian Games opened in Nagoya, Japan, on Saturday with a glittering ceremony of dance, music and fireworks, following a buildup marked by operational and logistical problems.

Five years after the Tokyo Olympics were held largely behind closed doors because of COVID-19 restrictions, Japan welcomed fans to the Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium for a curtain-raiser that began in subdued fashion before developing into a vibrant celebration of colour and sound.

Japan Emperor Naruhito formally declared the Aichi-Nagoya Games open after watching the parade of 45 participating nations and regions from the dignitaries' table alongside International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Kirsty Coventry.

The Omani delegation participating in the opening ceremony was headed by HH Sayyid Azzan



bin Qais Al Said, President of the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC), in the presence of a number of officials from the committee.

Naruhito's attendance, accompanied by members of the Imperial Family, prompted a major security operation, with organisers saying up to 10,000 police would be deployed for the ceremony.

"While the world is too often divided by conflict, they (the Asian athletes) remind us that sport re-

mains a powerful force for peace, understanding and friendship among nations," Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) President Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani said in his address.

Japan's father-and-son duo of Shigenobu Murofushi and Koji Murofushi, both former Asian Games hammer throw champions, jointly lit the cauldron after climbing a set of stairs at the conclusion of the torch relay.

The ceremony, directed by Nagoya-born filmmaker Yukihiko Tsutsumi, initially featured classical music and dance on a heart-shaped stage before the parade of nations.

The programme later gathered pace with performances inspired by Nagoya's manufacturing heritage, including dancers in boiler suits, before fireworks brought the evening to a close.

The ceremony's theme, "Harmonic Heart Beat", was designed to reflect Asian solidarity and the links between athletes, spectators and the continent's diverse cultures. More than 11,000 athletes are competing for 369 gold medals across 43 sports.

While competitions in basketball, football, hockey and several other sports have already begun, the first gold medals are expected to be awarded on Sunday, with triathlon among the early contenders.

Alongside traditional Olympic sports, the Games feature Asian favourites such as kabaddi and sepak takraw, while esports returns after its debut at Hangzhou. Teyball, combining elements of table tennis and football, and virtual taekwondo are among the new additions.

Shooter Shibli carries Oman's flag at opening ceremony

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman shooter Bati Al Shibli, making his Asian Games debut, had the honour of carrying Oman's flag at Saturday's opening ceremony of the 20th Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan.

Oman are participating in ten sports at Aichi-Nagoya 2026, with the delegation led by Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) President HH Sayyid Azzan bin Qais Al Said.

Speaking after the ceremony, Sayyid Azzan described the Games as an important milestone for Omani sport and an opportunity for the country's athletes, coaches and administrators to gain valuable experience through competition against athletes from across Asia.

"We were pleased to attend the opening ceremony of the 20th Asian Games, a continental sporting event that brings together athletes from different countries of Asia and demonstrates the ability of sport to strengthen communication and bring people closer together," he said.

He added Oman's participation in ten sports reflected the diversity and breadth of its



presence at the Games, while providing its athletes with an opportunity to compete at a high level.

Sayyid Azzan also wished Oman's athletes success, urging them to compete with commitment, discipline and sporting spirit and make the most of their experience at the continental event.

Oman's shooting team begins its campaign on Sunday, with Amina Al Tarshi and Al Anoud Al Khalili competing in the women's 10m air rifle qualification. The eight-member squad

also includes Al Shibli in men's trap, Naghmoush Al Hattali in skeet, Salim Al Hinai in 10m air pistol, Khalid Al Kalbani in 10m air rifle and mixed air rifle, Hamad Al Khatiri in 50m three positions and 10m air rifle, and Yaqub Al Siyabi in 25m pistol.

Oman's beach volleyball delegation also arrived in Japan on Saturday. The four-player squad comprises Mazen Al Hashmi, Hood Al Jalboobi, Ahmed Al Hosni and Khalfan Al Maamari.

Earlier on Friday, Oman's hockey team lost 2-0 to China in their opening match.

JORDAN NATIONAL RALLY

Al Rawahi makes it back-to-back wins in Jordan



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's Abdullah Al Rawahi continued his impressive run in the Jordan National Rally, claiming a commanding victory in the fifth round alongside Jordanian co-driver Atta Al Hamoud to make it back-to-back wins in the championship.

Driving his Škoda Fabia R5, Al Rawahi led all six stages at the Dead Sea and maintained a com-

fortable advantage throughout the rally. Jordanian drivers Shaker Jweihan and Badr Al Fayeze completed the podium in second and third places respectively.

The victory comes just over a month after Al Rawahi won the fourth round of the Jordan National Rally, where he also led from start to finish. His latest triumph underlines the Omani driver's growing familiarity with the Škoda Fabia R5 as he continues to devel-

op the car and fine-tune its setup for upcoming international competition. The fifth round proved a demanding test, with the crews facing extremely high temperatures and the challenging terrain around the Dead Sea. Al Rawahi nevertheless set the pace throughout the six-stage competition, combining speed with consistency to secure another clear victory.

For Al Rawahi, however, the result was about more than another



trophy. The event provided an important opportunity to continue developing the car and gain valuable experience on stages that are also used for the Jordan International Rally.

"The fifth round was difficult for everyone because of the high temperatures, and the rally was somewhat long," Al Rawahi said after the finish.

"Our primary goal and focus were to improve the car's per-

formance and test it on the same stages that hosted the Jordan International Rally, at different speeds, while also minimising the mistakes I made in this year's international rally."

Reflecting on his second consecutive National Rally victory, Al Rawahi added: "Thank God for today's victory — our second in a row. I thank everyone here for their cooperation in making the rally a success, and I thank our support-

ers for standing behind us in every event." "We are now working on our plans for the upcoming events and hope to compete in the Cyprus International Rally next month."

Al Rawahi's participation in the Jordan National Rally has been part of his programme to build mileage in the new Škoda and progressively refine its technical setup. He had opted for the Jordan National Rally after missing the 2026 Lebanon International Rally.

PRODUCER PRICE INDEX
Oman's Producer Price Index (PPI) increased by 32.7 percent during the second quarter of 2026, compared to the second quarter of 2025. Data released by the NCSI indicated that this increase was attributed to a 31 percent rise in mining and quarrying prices.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



PROPERTY PRICE INDEX RISES
The real estate price index in the Sultanate of Oman registered an increase of 22.7 percent during the second quarter (Q2) of 2026, compared to the same quarter of 2025.

Gulf investors boost purchases on Muscat Stock Exchange

Trading data issued by the MSX indicated that individual investors' sales rose by 22.3 percent of the total trading value, compared to purchases of 19 percent

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Gulf investors have increased their purchases on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) during the week's trading, accounting for 13.5 percent of the total trading value, compared to sales of 8.4 percent of trading. These investors benefited from the declines witnessed by many leading stocks during the past two weeks, with the increase in geopolitical tensions in the region and the decline of many stocks to the levels targeted by investment institutions.

Trading data issued by the Muscat Stock Exchange indicated that individual investors' sales rose by 22.3 percent of the total trading value, compared to purchases of 19 percent. Local investment institutions also turned to selling, with their sales accounting for about 65 percent of the total trading value, com-



pared to purchases of 63.5 percent.

Trading value during the week to reached OMR202.9 million, compared to OMR196.9 million during the previous week, with investors focusing on shares of OQ Group, banks, and Omantel. The market capitalisation of the Muscat Stock Exchange recorded losses of about OMR49 million concluding the week's trading at OMR39.39 billion.

The week saw the prices of 49 securities decline, compared to 29 securities whose prices rose while 23 securities remained unchanged at their previous levels. This put pressure on the main index, which recorded its first weekly decline after 7 weeks of continuous rise and closed at the end of Thursday's trading session at 7,603 points, down 44 points.

During the week, investors targeted OQ Basic Industries stock, which saw trading worth OMR51.5 million, representing 25.4 percent of the total trading value. The stock witnessed 7,273 transactions and closed at 257 baisa, declining by one baisa during the week.

Bank Sohar International's stock attracted investors with

trades exceeding OMR47 million, representing 23.2 percent of the total trading value. Bank Muscat saw trades worth OMR21.2 million, OQ Gas Networks' stock saw trades worth more than OMR18 million, while Omantel saw trades worth OMR17.8 million, representing 8.7 percent of the total trading value.

The share of Al Sharqiyah Desalination recorded the best rise in the regular and parallel markets, rising by 9.3 percent and closing at 175 baisa. The share of Gulf Mushroom Production rose by 9 percent and closed at 480 baisa. The share of Muscat City Desalination also rose by 9 percent and closed at 96 baisa. The share of Financial Centre rose by 7.4 percent and closed at 101 baisa. The share of Bank Nizwa rose by 6.1 percent and closed at 156 baisa. The share of Oman India Fertiliser Company (Omifco) recorded a rise of 6 percent and closed at 229 baisa in trading that exceeded OMR14.4 million.

Salalah Mills shares led the decliners, falling by 8.3 percent to close at 550 baisa. Oman Refreshments shares dropped to OMR1.10, a decline of 8.1 percent. Barka Wa-

Oman's stock market softens on geopolitical concerns

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market closed the week slightly lower, with the MSX 30 index down 0.58% to 7603.23 points. Overall market capitalisation slipped by 0.08% while the value of shares traded increased by 3.04%, and the number of shares traded inched higher by 2.46%.

The postponed Gulf-Iran diplomatic meeting weighed on sentiment, dampening hopes of tension relief and a solution to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Caution remains in place, especially amid low shipping traffic and persistent maritime disruptions, according to an industry watchers. "Attention also remains on US President Donald Trump's meeting with Gulf countries next week, as possible de-escalation signals could boost sentiment," said Joseph Dahrieh, Managing Director at Tickmill.

"While oil surged earlier



amid the ongoing risks and the shutdown of the East-West pipeline, it retreated later this week following slightly eased supply concerns on Saudi efforts to return pipeline capacity online,' he added.

Markets also focused on the Federal Reserve's latest decision. The central bank raised interest rates by 25 basis points, its first hike since July 2023 and signaled possible monetary tightening ahead. The move could dampen investor sentiment and weigh on global stock markets, including

Oman's MSX 30, as the country's central bank followed the Fed's move, raising its repo rate by 25 basis points to 4.5%.

At the sector level, the financial index inched higher by 0.44% this week, closing at 13,618 points. The services index edged lower by 1.55%, finishing at 3029 points. Meanwhile, the industrial sector eased by 0.55%, closing at 9891 points.

Looking ahead, Joseph Dahrieh further said, Sentiment could be shaped by clear progress in diplomatic efforts, material updates on the Oman-Iran shipping corridor, or improved conditions in the Strait of Hormuz."

"Traders are also on the lookout for de-escalation signals from Donald Trump's meeting with Gulf countries next week. At the same time, the impact of the recent rate hikes and any future Fed guidance could influence market sentiment,' he further added.

ter and Power shares fell to 150 baisa, a drop of 5 percent. National Aluminium Products shares declined by 4.7 percent to close at 100 baisa, and National Oman Engineering and Investment shares fell by 4.5 percent to close at 147 baisa. The Omani Company for Edu-

cational and Training Investments announced its preliminary financial results for the fiscal year ending August 31. The company clarified that its net profits rose to OMR12.5 million, compared to profits of OMR10.3 million in its previous fiscal year.

Majan College announced that the parent company's net profits for the fiscal year ending August rose to OMR1.068 million, compared to profits of OMR735,000 in the previous fiscal year. The group's net profits rose from OMR742,000 to OMR1.041 million.

AMBITIOUS STRATEGY

BankDhofar drives retail banking innovation with customer-first strategy

MUSCAT: Ahmed bin Saeed Al Ibrahim, Head of Retail Banking and Government Business at BankDhofar, affirmed that the bank continues to advance banking innovation in the Sultanate of Oman through an ambitious strategy that places customers at the heart of its operations.

Speaking to Al Roya, Al Ibrahim said BankDhofar's retail banking strategy is centered on delivering integrated and innovative financial solutions while advancing digital transformation and financial inclusion and developing products and services tailored to the needs of different segments of Omani society.

Al Ibrahim explained that the bank is committed to designing products that keep pace with market developments and evolving customer expectations, drawing on customer surveys, feedback and market insights.

BankDhofar offers a diverse portfolio of solutions serving children, youth, women, high-income individuals, affluent customers and investors. Its offering also includes long-term deposit and savings products, including retirement and education savings plans, designed to help customers achieve their financial goals at different stages of life.

"The bank continues to develop flexible financing programmes, including personal loans, vehicle finance and home finance, in addition to financing solutions specifically designed to meet customers' seasonal and emergency requirements," Al Ibrahim said.

"We focus on simplifying procedures and accelerating approvals. The bank also strives to enhance value for customers through credit and debit cards offering competitive benefits, including rewards, cashback, travel privileges and exclusive offers, while providing specialized services for small and medium-sized enterprises in collaboration with global partners such as Mastercard."

Al Ibrahim noted that BankDhofar draws on customer behavior analysis, data insights and continuous feedback while investing in modern technologies and artificial intelligence to enhance services and improve the overall banking experience.



The bank is also committed to expanding advanced digital banking services that enable customers to conduct transactions conveniently and securely through mobile and electronic channels.

He emphasized that excellence in retail banking extends beyond individual products and requires a comprehensive banking experience combining innovation, flexibility and accessibility.

This approach is supported by BankDhofar's extensive network of more than 145 branches and over 400 ATMs, cash deposit machines and multi-service terminals across the Sultanate of Oman, strengthening its ability to serve customers efficiently and respond to their evolving expectations.

Digital transformation reshapes everyday banking
Commenting on BankDhofar's digital transformation journey, Al Ibrahim said: "Over the past few years, BankDhofar has undergone rapid digital transformation that has significantly reshaped the way banking services are delivered. The focus has shifted from relying solely on traditional channels to building an integrated digital ecosystem that enables customers to perform most transactions easily, securely and around the clock."

This transformation extends across the banking experience, from remotely opening digital accounts and making local and international transfers to paying bills, managing cards and financing, and accessing modern payment services such as Apple Pay, Samsung Pay and Dhofar Pay.



The development of mobile banking applications and self-service solutions has given customers greater flexibility and faster access to services without the need to visit a branch.

This has contributed to increased use of digital channels and growth in transactions conducted through mobile applications and online platforms. At the same time, branches continue to play an important role in financial advisory services, specialized banking solutions and transactions requiring direct customer interaction.

Al Ibrahim explained that BankDhofar follows an integrated model combining digital channels with its traditional branch network, enabling customers to access services through whichever channel best suits their preferences and requirements.

While many customers prefer to conduct routine transactions digitally, others continue to value face-to-face interaction when making important financial decisions or accessing specialized services.

BankDhofar continues to invest in modern technologies, artificial intelligence and digital platforms while enhancing the efficiency of its branch network, with the aim of delivering a seamless banking experience, promoting financial inclusion and supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Exclusive services for priority banking customers
Turning to services for affluent customers, Al Ibrahim said BankDhofar's Al Riadah Account is a key pillar of the bank's strategy to provide

premium banking services tailored to high-income customers.

The account is designed for customers earning a monthly salary of at least OMR 3,000 or maintaining deposits of OMR 30,000 or more, offering a comprehensive banking experience combining privacy, flexibility and personalized financial solutions.

Among its key benefits is access to a dedicated relationship manager who oversees customers' financial requirements and provides tailored advice. Customers also enjoy priority service across branches and banking channels, together with access to a carefully selected range of banking and financing products designed to deliver added value and an enhanced banking experience.

"Al Riadah customers also benefit from a range of credit cards and related privileges, including rewards, cashback, travel benefits, airport lounge access and exclusive offers from numerous local and international partners, all aligned with their lifestyle and aspirations," Al Ibrahim said.

Investment and savings solutions
Al Ibrahim highlighted BankDhofar's commitment to providing a diverse range of investment and savings solutions designed to help customers grow their wealth and achieve their long-term financial goals. These include fixed and recurring deposits, savings accounts offering competitive returns, retirement plans, and savings programmes dedicated to education and families' future financial security.

"The bank leverages digital technology to provide a seamless banking experience, enabling customers to monitor their accounts and investments and manage their finances conveniently and securely, anytime and anywhere," he said.

Through these services, BankDhofar aims to build long-term relationships with Al Riadah customers based on trust and genuine value extending beyond conventional banking, empowering them to manage and preserve their wealth while pursuing their future financial aspirations.

Supporting youth and new entrants to the workforce
Turning to individual financing and support for young people entering the workforce, Al Ibrahim said BankDhofar places strong emphasis on supporting Omani youth and those beginning their professional careers through financing programmes tailored to their needs at different stages of life.

"The bank believes that empowering young people financially is a key driver of economic growth and financial stability for individuals and families," he said.

BankDhofar provides flexible personal financing products with straightforward procedures and suitable repayment periods to help young customers meet a variety of needs, including education, marriage, vehicle purchases and other significant personal expenses. It also offers seasonal financing promotions tailored to customer requirements throughout the year.

On housing finance, Al Ibrahim said: "BankDhofar offers financing solutions that help citizens own homes and achieve family stability through flexible financing options, extended repayment periods and competitive rates."

Beyond financing, the bank encourages young people to build a sustainable financial future through savings and investment products, including savings accounts, deposits and long-term retirement plans, helping foster a culture of early financial planning.

Supporting entrepreneurs and SMEs
Al Ibrahim also highlighted the importance of small and medi-

um-sized enterprises, describing SMEs as the backbone of the economy and underscoring BankDhofar's commitment to supporting their growth and expansion and enhancing their contribution to national GDP.

To this end, BankDhofar launched Numa, a dedicated banking brand for SMEs that combines specialized centers across various locations with digital platforms and applications designed to meet the evolving needs of entrepreneurs.

The future of retail banking
Looking ahead, Al Ibrahim said the rapid advancement of financial technology and artificial intelligence is fundamentally changing the future of personal banking.

"With the rapid advancement of financial technology and artificial intelligence, BankDhofar views the future of personal banking as one driven by personalization, speed and accessibility, where banking services become more integrated into customers' daily lives than ever before," he said.

"BankDhofar continues to invest in modern digital infrastructure and smart technologies that enable us to deliver a smoother, safer and more efficient banking experience."

The bank is also expanding its presence in digital payments, open banking and fintech partnerships to deliver more flexible and innovative services to individuals and businesses. These efforts are complemented by continued investment in cybersecurity and data protection to maintain high levels of security and trust across its digital environment.

Looking to the next generation of products and services, BankDhofar customers can expect increasingly intelligent digital solutions powered by automation and artificial intelligence, alongside further enhancements to mobile banking applications and self-service platforms.

New features are expected to support easier and more effective money management, saving and personal financing, while the bank continues to develop innovative digital payment solutions and savings and investment products tailored to different age groups, lifestyles and financial needs.

MARKET

Oman’s property price index rises by 22.7% in second quarter of 2026

The commercial real estate price index recorded an increase of 12.4 percent, driven by a rise in commercial land prices of 19.2 percent, while the prices of shops decreased by 12 percent, and the prices of industrial land decreased by 3.9 percent

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The real estate price index in the Sultanate of Oman registered an increase of 22.7 percent during the second quarter (Q2) of 2026, compared to the same quarter of 2025.

Data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that the commercial real estate price index recorded an increase of 12.4 percent, driven by a rise in commercial land

prices of 19.2 percent, while the prices of shops decreased by 12 percent, and the prices of industrial land decreased by 3.9 percent.

Oman’s residential property price index also rose by 24.6 percent during the second quarter of 2026, compared to the same quarter of 2025 led by the rise in residential land prices by 28 percent, residential apartments by 17.2 percent, villas by 10.8 percent, in addition to the rise in other house prices by 0.6 percent.



At the governorate level, Muscat Governorate recorded the highest increase in residential land prices during the second quarter of 2026, at 40.6 percent compared to the same quarter of 2025, followed by Musandam Governorate at 29.1

percent, and then North Al Batinah Governorate at 29 percent.

Residential land prices also increased in the South Al Batinah Governorate by 18.9 percent, the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate by 17.3 percent, and the Dhofar

Governorate by 16.4 percent.

The South Sharqiyah Governorate recorded an increase of 14.2 percent, the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate 9.8 percent, and the Al Dhahirah Governorate 6.7 percent, while the increase in the Al Burai-

mi Governorate was 3.1 percent.

In contrast, the Al Wusta Governorate recorded a decrease in residential land prices of 16 percent during the second quarter of 2026, compared to the same quarter of 2025.

MARMOMAC EXHIBITION

Oman to showcase its thriving natural stone products in Italy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman, represented by the Supervisory Team for Promoting Omani Products (OPEX), is set to take part in the 60th edition of Marmomac, the international exhibition for stone, design and technology, which will commence on Tuesday in Verona, Italy.

Marmomac serves as a leading global platform covering the entire natural stone supply chain, from quarrying and material processing to advanced technologies, machinery and tools.



identify export, partnership and investment opportunities that can contribute to the sector’s development and competitiveness.

Al Hadabi emphasised that expanding Oman’s participation in the exhibition aligns with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 to build a diversified and competitive economy by strengthening the role of the private sector, developing non-oil exports, empowering SMEs, and maximising the value of natural resources by transforming them into value-added products capable of competing in global markets.

Eng. Dawood bin Salim Al Hadabi, CEO of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) and Head of OPEX Team, stated that the Sultanate of Oman’s participation in this year’s edition comes with an expanded presence, reflected in a larger pavilion and a greater number of participating Omani companies. “This provides the Omani companies with wider exposure to showcase their products and establish business relations with investors, buyers and specialists in the marble and natural stone sector from around the globe,” Al Hadabi pointed out.

Al Hadabi noted that this year also marks a significant development in the implementation of the Sultanate’s pavilion, with its design and construction entrusted, for the first time, to a local company registered with the SMEs Development Authority (Riyada) and managed by Omanis. “The move reflects efforts to empower the local enterprises and provide them with opportunities to contribute to Oman’s participation at international events, while enhancing in-country value and showcasing the capabilities of Omani talent,” he said.

He added that Marmomac provides Omani companies with an opportunity to showcase their products to an international audience, explore the latest trends in natural stone extraction, processing and design technologies, and

The participation of Oman forms part of 2026 plan of OPEX team, which comprises Madayn, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), and the SMEs Development Authority (Riyada).

Through its international participation, OPEX seeks to diversify marketing channels for Omani products, support national companies and factories in accessing new markets, explore emerging trends in trade and exports, and establish direct relations with international partners and investors.

Marmomac 2026 features a programme bringing together business, technology, architecture, design and culture, presenting specialised displays, sessions and training activities. The 60th edition also features the launch of the new “The Bedrock” exhibition format, in addition to Marmomac Academy activities aimed at promoting knowledge and expertise exchange among professionals in the natural stone sector.

DATA

Oman’s producer price index rises by 32.7%

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s Producer Price Index (PPI) increased by 32.7 percent during the second quarter of 2026, compared to the second quarter of 2025.

Data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated that this increase was attributed to a 31 percent rise in mining and quarrying prices, driven by a 31.9 percent increase in crude oil and natural gas prices. Prices for stone and sand products also rose by 0.5 percent, while prices for mineral ores fell by 14.3 percent.

Prices in the manufacturing sector rose by 40.3 percent, driven by



a 55.3% increase in prices for other transportable goods, with the highest increases among refined petro-

leum products (88.2 percent) and chemical products (21.4 percent).

Prices for the metal products,

machinery and equipment group rose by 31.7 percent, with prices for products made of iron, steel or aluminium recording the highest increase within the group at 48.9 percent, followed by prices for power transformers, electrical distribution equipment and cables at 39.8 percent.

Prices for food, beverages and textiles also rose by 2.8 percent, with footwear prices recording the highest increase within the group at 6.7 percent, followed by woven fabrics at 2.8 percent.

Water prices rose by 4.4 percent, while electricity prices increased by 13 percent during the second quarter of 2026 compared to the second quarter of 2025.

SIGNIFICANT

Instant credit cards with Bank Muscat mobile banking

MUSCAT: In line with its vision of delivering a fully digital customer experience, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the launch of its instant credit card issuance service through the Mobile Banking application for the first time in the Sultanate. This service enables customers to apply for a new credit card entirely through their smartphone, with no requirement to visit a branch or complete any physical documentation.

This launch marks a significant milestone in Bank Muscat’s ongoing journey towards a comprehensive digital banking experience for customers across Oman. Previously, customers applying through Digital Banking platforms were required to visit a branch in person to sign their documents; the new instant service delivers a fully end-to-end digital journey from eligibility verification through to card activation. It also complements the bank’s re-



cently introduced instant digital debit card service, with customers being able to apply for a Digital Credit Card, ensuring a seamless, digital only experience.

The service is designed for maximum simplicity. Customers log into the Bank Muscat Mobile Banking application, navigate to the credit card section and choose from the Bank’s full range

of retail credit cards (subject to their eligibility). Upon approval, the digital credit card is issued instantly and customers can view their CVV and expiry date securely in-app for online purchases, while the card can also be tokenised and added to Apple Pay and Samsung Pay for immediate contactless payments.

Commenting on the launch, Abdullah Hamood Al Jufaili, Assistant General Manager - Digital Banking, Bank Muscat, said: “In continuation of our “instant” theme this year, we are proud to launch end-to-end digital credit card. Oman is generally a debit card market, but we have seen an increase in the usage of credit card in the past 2 years. Our intention is to simplify the onboarding journey by empowering the customers to complete the full process on their own and at ease”

The digital credit card carries the same fees and limits as a standard card, with the added flexibility of enabling or disabling

international usage directly from the app at any time.

Security is built into every layer of the experience through advanced authentication mechanisms and One-Time Passwords (OTP). In addition, if the customer would like to obtain the physical card, they can have it delivered to them with complimentary courier service.

Bank Muscat continues to provide a full suite of secure banking services to its customers across the Sultanate. These state-of-the-art services meet the requirements of the Bank’s tech-savvy customers and are further easing the delivery of various services. This approach towards digital transformation remains an ongoing process with new features and services being continuously added for the benefit of customers. The biggest advantage of digital banking is that it gives people more ways than ever to access the services they need for their daily banking needs.

CAMPAIGN

Škoda launches ‘Drive More, Save More’ summer offer across its range

MUSCAT: Škoda Oman, represented by Premium Motors, has announced its new “Drive More, Save More” summer campaign, bringing together attractive prices, intelligent European engineering and a comprehensive ownership proposition across the Škoda model range.

More than a seasonal promotion, the campaign reflects Škoda’s customer focused philosophy of delivering lasting value beyond the moment of purchase. At its heart is Škoda Advantage 5555, an ownership promise created to give customers greater confidence, convenience and reassurance throughout their journey with the brand.

Škoda Advantage 5555 includes five years of scheduled service or 75,000 kilometres, five years of manufacturer warranty or 150,000



kilometres and five years of roadside assistance. The fourth “5” reflects Škoda’s strong commitment to five star safety, placing protection, reliability and peace of mind at the centre of the ownership experience.

More than an offer, Škoda Advantage 5555 is a promise that travels with every customer.

The campaign provides customers with access to a versatile range of Škoda vehicles suited to different lifestyles and driving needs. The Škoda Kushaq starts from OMR 6,900, the Škoda Octavia from OMR 8,600, the Škoda Karoq from OMR 10,500, the Škoda Kodiaq from OMR 12,950 and the Škoda Superb from OMR 15,200.

Customers will also receive free vehicle registration and complimentary window tinting, with VAT included in the advertised prices. The “Drive More, Save More” summer campaign is valid until 28 September. Terms and conditions apply.

Commenting on the campaign, Muhammad Faisal Nawaz Mar-

keting Manager, Škoda Oman, said: “At Škoda, we believe the customer journey should become more rewarding long after the vehicle leaves the showroom. Škoda Advantage 5555 represents our commitment to supporting customers through dependable service, warranty protection, roadside assistance and a strong focus on safety. It is not simply a collection of benefits, but a promise of confidence, convenience and care throughout the ownership journey.”

From the urban versatility of the Škoda Kushaq and Karoq to the spacious capability of the Kodiaq, the dynamic character of the Octavia and the premium comfort of the Superb, the campaign offers a model for every kind of journey. Each vehicle reflects Škoda’s approach to creating cars that combine thoughtful design, advanced

technology, generous space and everyday practicality.

Premium Motors continues to strengthen Škoda’s presence in the Sultanate by providing customers with a complete automotive experience. Its professional sales and aftersales teams support customers at every stage, from selecting and test driving a vehicle to servicing, maintenance and long-term ownership care.

Nawaz further added: “Together with Premium Motors, we are making Škoda’s intelligent design, European engineering and practical innovation more accessible to customers in Oman. The Drive More, Save More campaign provides customers with an excellent opportunity to choose a vehicle that suits their lifestyle while enjoying the reassurance of a comprehensive ownership package.”



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Chartered Accountant, 23 years' experience as Finance Head & Auditing firm in Oman. Well versed with Banking, IFRS and taxation, Banking & E-invoicing (basics) seeks suitable position.

Contact : 94274470

PROCUREMENT

15+ yrs experience in Oman EPC, EPCM manufacturing, PEB & Oil & Gas sector.

Good in Logistics & Freight, Import & Customs clearance Incoterms2020.

Whatsapp : 75123132

FINANCE

Indian male, MBA (Finance), with +9 years of experience in Accounting & Finance, seeking a position as an Audit Associate. NOC available. Valid driving license.

CONTACT : 72420067, 95272057

FINANCE

FINANCE MANAGER/ Chief Accountant 17+ years' Oman experience (Logistics, hospitality, manufacturing, contracting, trading). OACPA Consultant. Expert in IFRS, VAT, corporate tax, banking facilities & project costing.

WA: 79788708 | neilks2020@gmail.com

SALES/MARKETING

Seeking a suitable position in Sales, Marketing having 16 yrs of experience in Oman & 25 yrs of total experience in the field of Infrastructure, Industrial & Building material products.

BE Mechanical, DIM, Valid D/L

Contact : 94976056

ENGINEER

PMP-certified Construction Project Manager with 10+ yrs Oman experience. M.E., Construction Eng. & Mgmt., and skilled in project execution, coordination, & team leadership. Immediately available.

Contact : 91736863

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☎ 94194399 ✉ Ahmadoman015@gmail.com

MANAGER

PROJECT MANAGER/ PROJECT DIRECTOR

seeking senior management/ leadership position in major civil engineering projects. Experienced, available & ready to lead.

☎ 94108621 ✉ princejacub@gmail.com

TEACHER

Lady teacher, Assistant professor MBA, B.Ed, Ph.D. (Management studies) pursuing 2nd yrs, with 16 yrs' experience, seeks teaching position in Oman. Immediate joining.

Email: mohammediyasmeen5@gmail.com

Contact: +968 77866559

QS MANAGER

Senior QS, B. Sc in Civil, 15+ yrs of Oman experience, Pre & Post Tendering, Contracts Management, FIDIC, Value Engg, Cost Control & Budgeting. Available in Oman for immediate joining.

Email: qsprofessionalsk@gmail.com

WA/Call: +968 91117043

JOB WANTED

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

40 yrs female (MBA Fin) as accountant 14 yrs exp in Oman with D/L & own car. GSM: 98582376

Finance, accounting professional 20yrs Oman & UAE, experienced tourism, retail, wholesale & distribution, handled treasury, cash-flow, fund-flow, AR/AP, SOA reconciliations, MIS reporting. Seeking a suitable position. Contact : +968-90114599. Email : mukesh.gurnani@gmail.com

Indian male Senior accountant with 11 yrs experience in Financial reporting, cost control, audit, VAT & MS office. Seeking suitable positions. Contact: 92719164. Email: gah489337@gmail.com

CA with 15 yrs experience in construction, oilfield seeks suitable placement. Contact: 96543236

Indian male Bcom Accountant looking for suitable job, 4yrs experience now in oman. Contact: 76369011

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Looking for job in Accounts with D/L Cont. 92092486

Indian Male - CPA, CMA, CA Finalist, MCom with 13+ yrs Finance exp. in Reporting, FP&A, Budgeting, MIS & ERP Implementation. Seeking Senior Finance role. Ph: 98078321

Pakistani finance professional with MBA and (OACPA certified) with 19 yrs experience in Oman since 14 yrs capable of handling all accounting-related works, with Oman D/L, NOC Contact: 99128007

M.Com with 4 yrs of experience in the accounting, admin executive. Seeks a suitable job with D/L. Presently in Oman & can join immediately. Contact: +96878585714 Email: sifath774@gmail.com

Accountant having 10 yrs gulf experience in accounts, D/L and NOC Available. Contact : 79192017

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Indian female MCom qualified, 10 yrs of experience in home country seeking job. Tally ERP, busy, Manager.io Contact : 95473637

Senior Accountant cum procurement (FMCB, construction), finance job required with D/L & NOC MBA-finance, 8+yrs experience in accounts, finance, admin (finalization, audit, MIS, banking, cash flow, VAT, payroll, etc). Contact: 94822604

ADMINISTRATION

Indian female, MSc Industrial Psychology graduate with 1 yr HR experience, seeking HR, Administration, Sales or Marketing roles. Excellent communication, coordination & people management skills. Contact : 99680529, Email: evapraisay@gmail.com

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

DRIVER

Driver with 15 yrs experience looking for job as house driver. Contact: 92503551

Driver with 9 yrs experience looking for job. Contact: 78345120

Driver with 6 yrs experience looking for job as house driver. Contact: 90900158

ENGINEER

MEP, HVAC Eng: 4+yrs Oman experience with valid D/L is available. Contact : +968-75020107

B.E. Mechanical engineer with 6+yrs experience seeks job. Contact: 75270710, Email: jinsonrijo@gmail.com

IT

Indian male 26 yrs Software Engineer with 2+ yrs GCC experience in full-stack web development (PHP, JS, React, MySQL). Presently in Muscat, ready for immediate joining. Contact: +96896094823 Email: sadullah2000@gmail.com

IT

Indian male, MCA, IT professional (Experience as Network Engineer, IT support and Odoo ERP). Contact : 79701775.

IT support, system support Engineer with 1.5 yrs experience in India seeking opportunities in Muscat. Currently in Oman, available for immediate joining. Contact: +968 95848213

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PURCHASE/ PROCUREMENT

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Three Palestinians killed in Israeli drone strikes on Gaza

Medical sources reported that a Palestinian was killed in Shuja'iyya neighbourhood, while a girl succumbed to injuries sustained after being shot by Israeli forces and a young Palestinian man was killed and several others injured in a drone strike

RAMALLAH: Three Palestinians, including a child, were killed and others wounded on Saturday morning in Israeli drone strikes targeting different areas across the Gaza Strip. Medical sources reported that a Palestinian was killed when Israeli forces struck the Shuja'iyya neighbourhood, east of Gaza City. In central Gaza, a girl succumbed to injuries sustained after being shot by Israeli forces north of Nuseirat refugee camp. In the north, a young Palestinian man was killed and others injured in a drone strike west of Jabalia refugee camp, while another young man was seriously injured by Israeli army gunfire east of Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza.

Israeli colonists open live ammunition at Palestinian homes Meanwhile, Israeli colonists fired



live ammunition on Saturday at Palestinian homes in the village of Al-Mughayyir, northeast of Ramallah, while occupation forces raided two homes in the village, detaining and interrogating members of one family. arzuou Abu Naim, a member of the Al-Mughayyir village council, told WAFA by phone that a group of colonists stormed the Sha'b al-Loz area of the village and opened live fire toward Palestinian homes. No injuries or confrontations were reported.

He added that occupation forces raided the home of Haj Abu Ata for the second time within hours, searched it, and occupied its rooftop before detaining and interrogating members of his family. The forces also raided and searched the home of Rasmi Abu Aliya.

Israeli colonists cut water line serving village Meanwhile, Israeli colonists cut the water line supplying the village of Ad-Daqiqah in the Masa-



fer Yatta area, south of Hebron, on Saturday, depriving around 700 Palestinians of water.

Anti-settlement activist Osama Makhamreh told WAFA that colonists, under the protection of Israeli forces, cut the water line supplying the village at its entrance along the main road, as part of their ongoing attacks on villages, hamlets, and Bedouin communities in

Masafer Yatta and their residents. He added that cutting the water line has deprived around 700 Palestinians of the water supply they rely on to meet their basic needs.

Israeli forces set up military checkpoint Also on Saturday Israeli forces set up a military checkpoint beneath Jabara Bridge at the southern entrance to the city of Tulkarm. Local sources told WAFA that Israeli soldiers stopped vehicles leaving the city, searched them, and obstructed traffic. Earlier today, Israeli forces completely closed the iron gates installed beneath the bridge. The closure lasted several hours before the gates were reopened.

The measures come amid tightened Israeli military restrictions at the entrances to Tulkarm and its towns, which have been subjected to an Israeli assault for the 601st consecutive day, restricting the movement of Palestinians and vehicles. —WAFA

EU urges US to reconsider visa denial to Palestinian delegation

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Saturday urged the United States to reconsider its decision to deny visas to President Mahmoud Abbas and members of the Palestinian delegation to attend the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, expressing regret that the measure has been repeated for a second consecutive year.

An EU diplomatic service spokesperson said the bloc regretted the extension of the denial of entry visas to members of the Palestinian delegation, stressing that, in light of the United States' existing headquarters agreements with the United Nations and its obligations as host country, Washington should reconsider the decision.

On Thursday, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution by a vote of 152 in favor to three against, with four abstentions, allowing the State of Palestine to participate in the high-level general debate virtually and calling on the United States to reverse its decision preventing the Palestinian delegation from attending in person.

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates criticized the US decision and said it had ignored reforms that the State of Palestine had implemented, including unifying the social protection system on the



basis of social and economic need and carrying out a national reform program in the financial, administrative, educational and legal fields through clear, transparent and verifiable mechanisms. The ministry rejected any restrictions preventing the full participation of the official Palestinian delegation in UN meetings, describing such measures as an infringement on its rights and on the United Nations, and called for ensuring access to UN meetings for all accredited members of the official Palestinian delegation.

It also called on the US administration to reconsider the decision, end its policy of sanctions and restrictions, and engage in direct and serious Palestinian-US dialogue to address outstanding issues and resume bilateral relations on the basis of mutual respect, relevant UN resolutions and the peace plan. —WAFA

UN SECURITY COUNCIL



UNSC conducts third straw poll

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council (UNSC) on Friday held its third straw poll on the candidates for the next UN secretary-general.

The candidates will be informed of the results through the respective permanent representatives of their nominating member states, Jerome Bonnafont, the UN ambassador of France, told reporters after the conclusion of the secret vote. France holds the rotating presidency of the Security Council for the month of September.

Security Council straw polls on secretary-general candidates are informal closed-door ballots used to determine the viability of the candidates, whose results are not officially released. Through straw polls, the Security Council selects a candidate to recommend to the General Assembly for appointment as the next UN secretary-general.

However, Friday's straw poll results were leaked.

Rebeca Grynspan, a former vice president of Costa Rica and current secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, led Friday's poll with nine votes in favor, according to "1 for 8 Billion," a global campaign advocating a fair, open and inclusive process to appoint the first woman UN secretary-general. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Guyana's permanent representative to the United Nations, followed with eight votes.

Grynspan got five negative votes, and Rodrigues-Birkett got six negative votes, according to "1 for 8 Billion."

Security Council members were believed to receive one ballot per candidate, containing the candidate's name followed by three options: "encouraged," "discouraged," and "no opinion expressed," according to "What's in Blue," a publication which provides insights on evolving Security Council actions.

In the first straw poll on July 30, Grynspan won 10 votes in favor, followed by Rodrigues-Birkett, with nine votes in favor. In the second round on Aug. 21, however, they swapped places. Rodrigues-Birkett led by eight votes in favor, followed by Grynspan with seven votes in favor.

In the third straw poll, negative votes grew for both candidates.

The remaining six candidates are: Ivonne A-Baki, a former Ecuadorean minister and a diplomat; Michelle Bachelet, a former Chilean president and former UN high commissioner for human rights; Maria Fernanda Espinosa, a former UN General Assembly president and former foreign minister of Ecuador; Rafael Grossi of Argentina, current director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency; Olara Otunnu of Uganda, a former UN under-secretary-general; Macky Sall, a former president of Senegal. — Xinhua

WORLD INSIGHTS

Greater BRICS expands cooperation and amplifies voice of Global South

BEIJING: Twenty years after its inception, BRICS has grown from an economic grouping into a broader platform for cooperation, with an expanding membership and a widening agenda spanning development, technology and global governance.

Following the recently concluded BRICS Summit in New Delhi, scholars said the grouping is opening up more opportunities for Global South countries to cooperate and increase their voice in global affairs.

The BRICS cooperation mechanism was formally launched in 2006, with the first summit held in 2009. The grouping has since expanded its membership and cooperation agenda.

Today, BRICS members account for nearly half of the world's population, around 30 percent of global GDP and one-fifth of global trade.

"BRICS has not only expanded its membership but also deepened the scope of cooperation," said Mikatekiso Kubayi, senior researcher at the University of Johannesburg, pointing to areas such as energy, culture, transport, technology and security. Marcus Vinicius De Freitas, visiting professor at China Foreign Affairs University and senior fellow at the Policy Center for the New South, a Moroccan think tank, described BRICS as an invaluable mechanism for managing differences and turning common interests into practical cooperation in an increasingly multipolar world.

"China is the driving force behind BRICS, yet its leadership is more consensual, reflecting its win-win perspective in foreign policy and global trade," he said.

As BRICS has grown, so too has its potential to give developing countries a stronger voice in shaping global governance.

Gan Tian Loo, vice president of the Malaysia-China Public Relations Association, said BRICS countries have built consensus over the past two decades in responding to challenges including financial crises, the pandemic and unilateralism.



He said recent proposals place greater emphasis on contributing to discussions on global governance and promoting the equal application of international rules, an issue of particular relevance to the Global South.

"Acting collectively in discussions on global governance reform could give Global South countries greater bargaining power than pursuing such calls individually," Gan said.

Kubayi said this emphasis on the Global South reflects the original objectives of BRICS, including strengthening the voice of developing countries and promoting access to development instruments for developing and least developed countries.

"His continuous reference to the Global South is important because that's the whole purpose of BRICS in the first place," Kubayi said, referring to Chinese President Xi Jinping's remarks on BRICS cooperation.

At the summit, Xi called on BRICS to be a pioneer in advancing innovation-driven development, a pioneer in upholding peace and stability, a pioneer in facilitating mutual learning between civilizations, and a pioneer in reforming and improving global governance.

Julia Rognifard, senior lecturer

at Taylor's University in Malaysia, said such initiatives could help build consensus among Global South countries through practical cooperation.

"Through the day-to-day support of each other in tech, health security, agriculture and other areas between BRICS full members, partner countries and the wider Global South, that is how they can strengthen their collective voice and influence," she said.

As BRICS enters its third decade, the focus is increasingly shifting toward implementation.

Kubayi highlighted the five initiatives proposed by Xi for greater BRICS cooperation: open source and inclusive AI, trade and investment facilitation, digital industry cooperation, intelligent manufacturing cooperation, and science and technology talent development.

He pointed to AI as a field in which emerging economies want not merely to adopt new technologies but also to help shape how they are developed and governed.

"They should actively participate in shaping international frameworks and standards concerning AI safety, ethics, interoperability and governance," said Luan Camargo, executive director of the Institute for Brazil-China

Business Research.

Economic cooperation is another area where such efforts are taking shape.

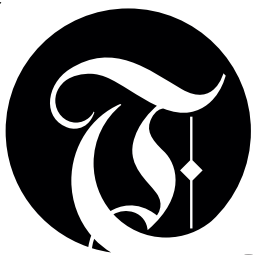
In Brazil, Maria Elena Rodriguez, deputy director of the BRICS Policy Center and professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, deems China a crucial partner for Brazil's ecological transition, including through investment in areas such as electric vehicles, photovoltaic equipment and green steel.

Camargo said sustainable development and innovation require peace and effective governance, while lasting multilateral partnerships also rely on people-to-people exchanges.

For BRICS, the next stage will therefore be measured not only by further expansion, but also by whether existing consensus can be translated into practical cooperation.

With China set to assume the BRICS chairmanship in 2027, Kubayi voiced hope that the Chinese chairmanship will give fresh impetus to translating the grouping's expanding agenda into action.

"We would expect a BRICS group that is a bit more buoyant about cooperation next year. That is clearly the agenda being placed on the table," he said. — Xinhua



LIFESTYLE

Corals as climate archive: Are El Ninos intensifying?

Records from the past few decades show that, during this period, El Nino events have been frequent and often extreme. But is this normal, or is it the result of climate change? Corals can give us a clear indication

A storm is gathering. Most likely a very big one. El Nino is a natural climate phenomenon occurring every two to seven years, towards the end of the year, but it comes in various different strengths, depending on the prevailing conditions.

El Ninos are considered strong if the surface temperature of the water off the west coast of South America is more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above average. In July this year, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was already observing temperature increases of greater than three degrees Celsius in the eastern and central Pacific.

The German Meteorological Service believes this “could in all likelihood develop into one of the strongest El Nino events since records began.”

But a recent article by the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology states that whether or not strong El Nino events will intensify as a result of climate change “remains the subject of ongoing research.”

The data gap: What corals can tell us about El Nino

The problem is that the data on ocean surface temperatures is only truly reliable from the 1980s onward, with the start of satellite observation. And this data doesn’t tell us how El Nino behaved before industrialisation and the burning of fossil fuels.

US researchers say corals can help to close this knowledge gap. Julia Cole, a climate scientist and

paleo-climatologist at the University of Michigan, and her team recently published a study on this subject in the journal Science.

“We’ve known for a long time that the last 40 or 50 years has really strong El Nino events,” says Cole. “It’s been hard to say whether the recent strong El Nino that we’ve had is part of a natural cycle, or if it’s something a little bit unusual related to being in a warmer than normal world.” The coral analysis points firmly in one direction: Unusual. Not normal.

Corals: A repository of 1,000 years of climate history

Cole and her team examined fossilised and living corals around the Galapagos Islands off Ecuador in the eastern Pacific. Corals grow between one and two centimetres per year, and in doing so form a structure similar to growth rings on trees. “We made use of the fact that corals record ocean temperatures as they grow, in the chemical composition of their skeleton,” Cole explains.

Corals are living creatures that construct external skeletons through calcification, adding a band of new growth each year with calcium carbonate precipitated from the surrounding water. In this way, over decades and centuries, corals have formed entire reef systems. Other chemical elements are also incorporated into the skeleton during the calcification process — strontium, for example. Sometimes more is deposited, sometimes less, depending on the temperature of the water.

“In colder temperatures, it [the skeleton] absorbs more strontium, in warmer temperatures less,” says Cole. The ratio of strontium to calcium in the skeleton provides information about changes in temperature.

Specific isotopes of oxygen in coral skeletons provide clues, as well. “The rare oxygen-18 and the common oxygen-16 are also taken up in a ratio that reflects temperature,” says Cole. In colder condi-

El Ninos are considered strong if the surface temperature of the water off the west coast of South America is more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above average. In July this year, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was already observing temperature increases of greater than three degrees Celsius in the eastern and central Pacific.

likelihood of extreme eastern Pacific El Nino events in the 2030s,” says Jens Zinke, professor of paleobiology at the University of Leicester in England.

However, other scientists are more circumspect in assessing the study’s significance. “Coral data does achieve a high temporal resolution — monthly to seasonal — but its accuracy is dependent on local conditions, meaning that direct comparisons with modern measurement data are fraught with uncertainty,” says Andreas Fink, professor of meteorology at the Institute for Meteorology and Climate Research in Karlsruhe. According to Fink, the significance of the study is undermined by its regional limitation to the eastern Pacific.

Cole is also aware of her study’s limitations. “Our data does fill a gap, but I want to be clear that our record isn’t continuous,” she says. “We don’t have every single year over the last millennium. We have a little bit under half of the years covered.”

Floods, droughts, record heat — the consequences of stronger El Ninos

Although the epicenter of the El Nino phenomenon is the Pacific, it changes the weather across the globe. In countries like Ecuador and Peru it can cause heavy rains and flooding, while Australia and Indonesia may experience a lack of rain, leading to drought and wildfires. El Niño also causes global

temperatures to rise for a while.

If the predictions prove right and this El Nino does in fact become a Super El Nino, the coming year, 2027, will probably be another of record heatwaves, according to Thomas Felis. Felis leads the research group on coral paleoclimatology at the MARUM Centre for Marine Environmental Sciences at the University of Bremen, and has conducted a similar study to Cole’s.

Heat-stressed oceans: El Nino is a threat for corals

A year of record heat “will very probably lead to another global coral bleaching,” says Felis. This has happened before, in the years 2023–24 and 2015–16, which were also El Nino years.

Corals get their characteristic colors from certain algae with which they live in symbiosis. Through photosynthesis, the algae provide the energy the corals need to live. If the temperature of the ocean is too high, the algae start to produce toxins, and the corals end the partnership. The coral remains, in its skeleton.

It can survive like that for a few weeks, and if the temperature drops again, the algae return. “But if this state, with abnormally high summer temperatures, goes on for too long, the coral becomes so sick that it eventually dies,” Felis explains.

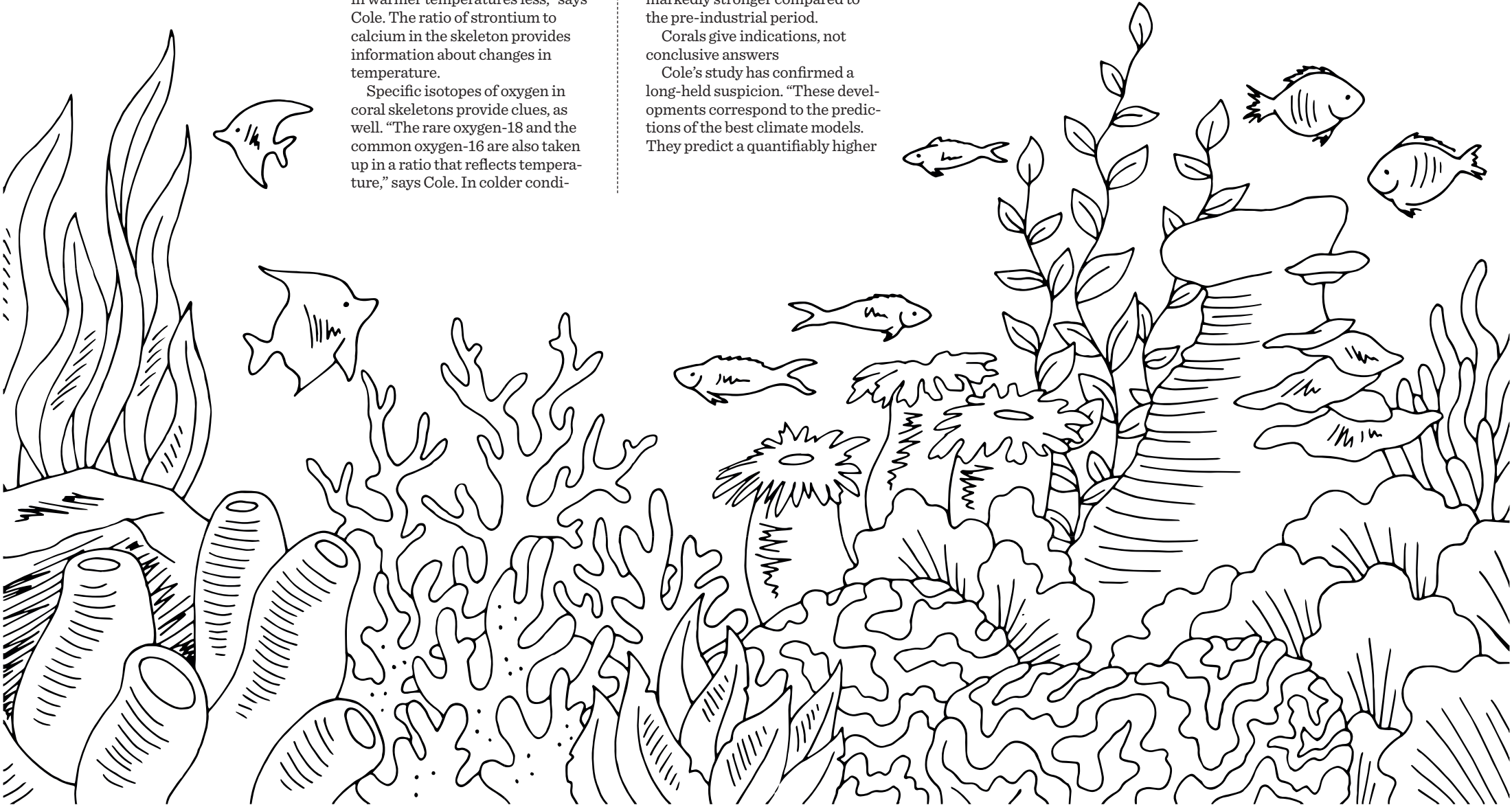
Worldwide coral death would mean not just the end of a unique ecosystem, but the destruction of an archive that preserves the history of the oceans. — **ow**

tions, more oxygen-18 is absorbed than in warmer temperatures.

In this way, researchers were able to reconstruct the changes in ocean temperatures over the past 1,000 years, according to the age of the corals. Their conclusion was that El Nino events have become markedly stronger compared to the pre-industrial period.

Corals give indications, not conclusive answers

Cole’s study has confirmed a long-held suspicion. “These developments correspond to the predictions of the best climate models. They predict a quantifiably higher



SPORTS

Record-breaker Kane blazes to century of Bundesliga goals

The England striker achieved the milestone in 99 games as Bayern Munich hit seven against Union Berlin

MUNICH: Bayern Munich star Harry Kane scored twice on a historic night, becoming the fastest player to reach 100 goals in the German Bundesliga as his team thrashed Union Berlin 7-0 on Friday.

England striker Kane, 33, achieved his milestone by converting a 39th-minute penalty to extend Bayern's lead to 3-0 before halftime. Jamal Musiala had opened the scoring in the 18th, while Michael Olise added another in the 43rd. Kane struck again in the 54th, bringing his total to 101 goals in 99 matches.

The previous record for the fastest to a century was set at 123 games by Dieter Müller, a prolific striker for Cologne in the 1970s. Olise then completed a hat-trick in the 73rd and 76th. Ismael Saibari was also on target.

"Very proud, to be honest, to reach 100 goals in the Bundesliga," Kane said.

"Obviously, I've done it in the Premier League, so now to have it in a different league is something I'm really proud of. All I can say is a big thanks to the team."



On average, Kane has found the net once every 78.3 minutes since his arrival in Germany in 2023, surpassing the likes of Erling Haaland (87 minutes), Robert Lewandowski (100) and Gerd Müller (105).

Following two unconvincing Bundesliga performances against promoted teams, a goalless draw with Schalke and a 2-1 win over Elversberg, the victory gave leaders Bayern 10 points through four matches. They are one point ahead of Freiburg and Borussia Dortmund, who both have a game in hand.

Monaco extend impressive start
In France, Monaco continued their



impressive start to the season under new coach Filipe Luis, defeating Lens 2-1 to remain unbeaten at the top of Ligue 1.

Paris Brunner put Monaco ahead in the 32nd, but Matthieu Udol equalised in the 57th. Jonathan Gradiot then scored an own goal in the 84th.

Brunner is still awaiting a likely sanction for a throat-slitting gesture during a goal celebration last weekend.

Lens coach Dino Toppmöller was dismissed in the week after just six games in charge.

Monza pull off upset
In Italy, Gustavo Varela scored twice as Monza pulled off an upset by beating Sassuolo 2-1 to secure

their first Serie A win of the season. Varela found the net in the 51st and 63rd for the Biancorossi, who had lost three of their opening four matches. Vasilije Adžić pulled a goal back for Sassuolo in the 88th, but it was a disappointing night for a side coming off a 3-2 victory over Juventus.

Elche no longer at bottom
In Spain, Elche recovered from the early sending-off of Federico Redondo to climb off the foot of the table with a 3-1 win at Espanyol. Fer Nino scored twice for Elche and Germán Valera also struck. Espanyol replied with an own goal from Víctor Chust.
Elche are now fourth-bottom while Espanyol are ninth. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE



Brentford sweep aside Chelsea to reach third

LONDON: Brentford climbed to third in the English Premier League after a crushing 3-0 win over west London rival Chelsea on Friday. It was a puzzling display by Xabi Alonso's Chelsea side, which has now gone three league games without a win.

Jaidon Anthony, Igor Thiago and Fabio Carvalho all scored in the second half for Brentford.

"Disappointed with the second half, disappointed with the result," Chelsea manager Alonso said. "This is not how to compete in the Premier League. We were punished."

"At the moment we are not being consistent enough to compete during the whole game, 45 minutes is not enough, you need to compete for the whole game. It's about everything, it's about tactical things that we need to keep improving and do much better."

This was a Chelsea lineup containing all the elements of their off-season transfer rethink, with a solid, experienced spine which saw Jordan Henderson and Danny Welbeck make their first league starts for the club.

Something appeared to have clicked. The visitors did not look half as chaotic defensively in the first half as they have done at times this season, standing up physically to Brentford, winning duels and not allowing Keith Andrews' side to dominate second balls.

But old habits crept back in after the break. The marking from Mikkell Damsgaard's 61st-minute corner was poor, Jannik Schuster headed on and Anthony finished it off. Thiago was then left free to score after Kevin Schade's shot was saved, and a low cross was

whacked in during stoppage time by Carvalho to send Brentford fans into dreamland.

"It was a really good evening," said Brentford manager Andrews. "It's important that you enjoy evenings like this because you work so hard and there are so many tough days in this game."

"When you play against a west London rival, you build up to a game and you go on a bit of a journey with the team. There are always bumps along the way, but we were in a really good place and it's nice to see it come into fruition tonight."

Brentford have nine points from five games and are three points behind co-leaders Arsenal and Manchester City, who play on Saturday and Sunday respectively. Chelsea are down to seventh with seven points from five games. - Agencies

NATIONS LEAGUE

France coach Zidane picks five new faces; Benzema, Kante out

PARIS: Zinedine Zidane started building the France team of the future by picking several new faces on Friday when naming his first squad since taking charge.

Rennes striker Esteban Lepaul, Liverpool center back Jeremy Jacquet, Como midfielder Lucas Da Cunha, Inter Milan's Andy Diouf and Toulouse goalkeeper Guillaume Restes are set for their debuts in upcoming Nations League games.

"They are players who deserve to be here, players I want to see," coach Zidane said Friday at the French football federation's headquarters. "Everyone will be involved."

France play in Türkiye on September 25 and Belgium three days later, then hosts Italy on October 2 and Belgium on October 5.

"What inspires me is the game," Zidane said. "I want to see these players and this team playing."

The 21-year-old Jacquet has made a solid start since joining Liverpool from Rennes in the off-season in a deal worth a reported 70 million euros (\$80 million).

"I like his profile a lot," Zidane said. "I've followed him for a long time because he played alongside my son in the youth teams."

Diouf plays in midfield for his club but Zidane is adamant he won't for France.

"He plays in a different way for Inter Milan," Zidane said. "I want to see him playing left back."



Lepaul scored 20 league goals for Rennes last season and has netted three in four games in this campaign, including one against defending champion Paris Saint-Germain in the opening game, when he stood out.

"He has a different profile from what we're used to seeing," Zidane said.

"I like this kind of player who can play in tight spaces, he scores goals. I want to see him up close."

Zidane also recalled Adrien Truffert, whose only cap came four years ago. Fullback was one of France's weaker positions at this year's World Cup.

No Benzema comeback, au revoir Kante
Zidane ruled out a return for 38-year-old forward Karim Ben-

zema and turned the page on 35-year-old midfielder N'Golo Kante's international career.

"To help this team evolve. It's nothing to do with his quality, he's an extraordinary player, magnificent," Zidane said of Kante, who won the World Cup in 2018.

"But these are choices. N'Golo is 35 and I have made choices, which are different."

Zidane was close to Benzema when he coached him at Real Madrid. But he decided against a recall for the 2022 Ballon d'Or winner, who has not played for Les Bleus since leaving the World Cup four years ago because of injury.

"I adore Karim. But he's a certain age, a bit like N'Golo," Zidane said. "I need to see younger players and what we will do together." - Agencies

Mazzola, Inter Milan star, dies at 83

MILAN: Sandro Mazzola, the former Inter Milan captain who was one of Italy's most acclaimed players, has died. He was 83. His death was announced on Saturday by Inter, the club where he spent his entire 17-year playing career.

"FC Internazionale Milano, its President Giuseppe Marotta, Vice President Javier Zanetti, head coach Cristian Chivu and his staff, the players, and everyone at Inter mourn with profound sorrow the passing of Sandro Mazzola, a Nerazzurri and world football legend," Inter said in an statement.



ment. "Sandro Mazzola was one of the greatest footballers in history. Not only in the history of the Nerazzurri."

Mazzola, a midfielder or second striker, scored 158 goals in 565 matches for Inter, helping the Nerazzurri to four Serie A titles and two European Cups. He also won the European Championship with Italy in 1968. - Agencies

UPCOMING GAMES

Ronaldo included in squad by new Portugal coach

LISBON: Cristiano Ronaldo was included in Portugal's squad by new coach Jorge Jesus for its upcoming Nations League games on Friday.

The 41-year-old Ronaldo said that this summer's World Cup was his last, but the global star has yet to say when he plans to retire from international play. He will be 43 by the time the 2028 European Championship, the next major tournament, is held.

This was the first squad named by Jesus, who was hired to replace Spaniard Roberto Martinez after Portugal lost 1-0 to Spain in the round of 16 of the World Cup.

Jesus' previous coaching job was with Ronaldo's club Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia, where they won



the league together last season.

Regarding Ronaldo's role, Jesus said "all the called-up players are at my disposal."

"If he performs well, he plays. If

he doesn't perform well, he doesn't play. That's how I treat everyone," Jesus said, before adding a caveat.

"Now, does Cris have a different status? Yes. His career is different," he said. "He has five Ballon d'Or awards. But does that influence my decisions? No. It doesn't influence anything, zero, but he is different from the others."

The 72-year-old Jesus has also coached several Portuguese clubs, including Benfica and Sporting Lisbon.

Ronaldo is the leading scorer for men's international football with 146 goals. His greatest achievement with Portugal was helping them win the 2016 Euros.

He is now chasing 1,000 career goals. He currently has 979. When

asked if he imagined Ronaldo hitting that milestone, Jesus said he doubted it would be with Portugal.

Xavi leaves Depay out
THE HAGUE: New Netherlands coach Xavi Hernandez left the country's all-time top scorer, Memphis Depay, out of his 26-man squad for upcoming Nations League matches and called up the son of former Netherlands midfielder Mark van Bommel for the first time.

The 32-year-old Depay, who now plays for Brazilian club Corinthians, has scored 55 goals in 112 international appearances. Ruben van Bommel, 22, a left winger is son of Mark, head coach of the Belgium national team. - Agencies

Giants reign supreme again as Yalla Shabab claim D50 crown



The winners displayed remarkable fighting spirit to prevail upon Royal Oman Stallions by 36 runs in the Oman D50 final recently

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Yalla Shabab Giants produced a remarkable recovery with the bat before their bowlers completed the job, defeating Royal Oman Stallions by 36 runs in the Oman D50 final at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground recently to retain their title.

The back-to-back titles for Giants brought the curtains down on an 18-day competition featuring six of Oman's leading Premier Division sides.

After a single round-robin league, Giants and Stallions emerged as the top two, each having suffered just one defeat, setting up a final between the competition's strongest sides, owned by one owner, Chaitanya Khimji.

Winning the toss, Giants opted to bat but were immediately under pressure as both openers departed inside the first two overs. Vinay Radha scored 24 from 56 balls and Ameer Zeeshan made 17 off 43, but wickets continued to tumble and the defending champions were reduced to a precarious 64 for seven.

With the innings in danger of collapsing, experienced campaigner Zikriya Islam joined 14-year-old Shравan Kurup to launch a crucial recovery.

Islam's 43 off 55 balls and Kurup's composed 51 from 88 deliveries formed the backbone of a vital eighth-wicket partnership that transformed the Giants' fortunes. Their efforts carried the defending champions to 173 before they were bowled out in 49.5 overs.

Muhammed Nadeem was the

Stallions' most successful bowler, finishing with three for 32.

The target, however, proved beyond Stallions as their chase quickly unravelled. Four wickets fell inside the opening 10 overs, with Usman Ali Afridi claiming three early wickets and Yashas GL taking one to leave the runners-up in serious trouble.

Sabin Raj briefly threatened to revive the chase with an aggressive 46 from just 30 balls, but Giants refused to surrender control. Islam and Kamaleshwaran A claimed two wickets apiece as the Stallions' resistance faded. Stallions were eventually bowled out for 137 in 32.1 overs, giving Giants a 36-run victory and their second successive Oman D50 crown.

Islam's all-round contribution earned him Player of the Match honours, while Stallions' Gowtham Sagar was named Player of the Tournament after an outstanding campaign in which he scored 312 runs and claimed eight wickets in six matches.

Oman Cricket Director – Cricket Operations & Chief Development Officer Duleep Mendis praised the standard of the competition and its importance to the country's domestic structure.

"It was an excellent competition between six of the most competitive sides in Oman. We congratulate the players and management of Yalla Shabab Giants and Royal Oman Stallions on claiming the Champions and Runners-Up positions respectively," Mendis said.

"The Oman D50 has once again provided a strong platform for our domestic players to compete at a high level.

"The tournament also served as valuable preparation for members of our national pool ahead of the upcoming ICC CWC League 2 fixtures against Nepal and Canada in early October."

At the closing ceremony, Oman Cricket Chairman Pankaj Khimji and Mendis presented the individual and team awards.

Brief scores: Yalla Shabab Giants 173 all out in 49.5 overs (Shравan Kurup 51, Zikriya Islam 43; Muhammed Nadeem 3/32) beat Royal Oman Stallions 137 all out in 32.1 overs (Sabin Raj 46; Usman Ali Afridi 4/44) by 36 runs.

One owner, two finalists and a remarkable legacy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: There was something uniquely fitting about this year's Oman D50 final. Yalla Shabab Giants lifted the trophy, but even if rivals Royal Oman Stallions had won, one thing was certain—the trophy would have remained within the cricketing set-up of Chaitanya Khimji, the owner of both Premier Division teams.

For the second successive year, Khimji's Yalla Shabab Giants stormed into the Oman D50 final, providing a striking snapshot of a remarkable journey that has seen his sides repeatedly challenge for honours across Oman's domestic cricket landscape.

Affectionately known as Chaitanya Bhai, his association with cricket stretches back to his playing and academy days. His involvement has since developed into a sustained commitment to building competitive teams, developing players and creating squads capable of challenging consistently across formats.

The numbers tell much of the story

In the 2021-22 season, Yalla Shabab Giants, then known as Ruwi Rangers, captured both the Oman D10 and D20 titles, while Royal Oman Stallions, formerly Amerat Royals, won the Oman D50 championship.

The following season brought two more runners-up finishes for Stallions in the Oman D10 and D50 competitions.

The 2023-24 campaign was another productive one. Stallions won the Oman D10 title and the Premier League 50-over championship, while Giants claimed the Oman D20 crown and finished runners-up in the D50 competition.

Success continued in 2024-



25. Stallions retained the Oman D10 title, while Giants finished runners-up. Giants then went on to win the 50-over Premier League and Oman D50 titles, with Stallions finishing runners-up in both competitions.

The 2025-26 season added further silverware. Giants were crowned Premier 50-over champions, while Stallions finished runners-up in the Oman D20 and Premier 50-over competitions. Giants also continued their successful run

in the Oman Super League, winning both the D20 and 50-over titles.

Then came the 2026-27 Oman D50 campaign, with the two Khimji-owned sides reaching the final for the second year running.

It was a remarkable repeat of last year's title clash, again bringing two teams from the same cricketing stable face-to-face for the biggest prize. Giants eventually prevailed to retain the championship, but the significance of the occasion extended beyond the result.

For Chaitanya, the emphasis has consistently been on building teams that can sustain success rather than relying on one-off campaigns.

His approach has included strengthening squads, creating depth and putting in place a management and coaching structure designed to help players develop and compete at a high level.

Vinu Mathew is serving as team manager, with Prashanth Chandran as head coach, forming part of the support structure around the teams.

Chaitanya has previously summed up his approach to success by stressing the importance of continuity and teamwork, saying: "Back-to-back titles are never an accident; they are the rewards for discipline, belief and relentless teamwork."

That philosophy is reflected in the consistency of his teams across seasons.

From Amerat Royals and Ruwi Rangers to Royal Oman Stallions and Yalla Shabab Giants, the names have evolved, but the presence in title races has remained.

The significance also extends to the wider domestic game. Competitive teams provide players with regular opportunities to perform at a high level, creating greater depth for Oman's cricketing structure and a pathway for players to push towards national selection.

The latest D50 final therefore represented more than another trophy in the cabinet.

And with the story still being written, the 2026-27 season has added another memorable chapter to Chaitanya's remarkable journey in Oman cricket.

BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP



McIlroy stays in contention for top honours

WENTWORTH: Rory McIlroy stayed in contention with a five-under 67 to sit four strokes behind second-round leader Ryan Gerard at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth on Friday.

The Northern Irishman made three birdies in his opening five holes and recovered from dropped shots on the eighth and 16th by picking up four strokes on the back nine, including birdies on the 17th and 18th holes.

Reigning Masters champion McIlroy's hopes of winning a record-equalling eighth Race to

Dubai title were also buoyed by the withdrawal of Patrick Reed after nine holes.

The American, who currently leads the standings on the DP World Tour, had been well placed after the first round but was forced to retire through injury while nine-over par for Friday's round.

"Unfortunately he's pulled out this week, which gives me an opportunity to try to claw back some ground that I lost last week in Ireland," said McIlroy, who is at eight under overall. "This weekend is a big weekend for me to pick up a

few points and make the race even tighter going into these last few weeks. I'm in a great spot heading into the weekend."

Gerard made five birdies and an eagle in a flawless round of 65 to leave him two shots clear of Australia's Adam Scott and Italian Filippo Celli, who are at 10 under.

US PGA Championship winner Aaron Rai, who played alongside McIlroy and Open champion Ryan Fox in a marquee group, also enjoyed a birdie-birdie finish as he signed for a 69.

The Englishman, who had shared the lead overnight, was at nine under alongside Spain's Manuel Elvira, with McIlroy and Fox among a quintet of players a further shot back.

Five-time major champion Brooks Koepka was among the big names to miss the cut at one over.

Englishman Tommy Fleetwood will also miss the weekend after a 74 left him at three over, while Spain's Jon Rahm endured another day to forget, following up a six-over-par 78 on Thursday with a 77 to end 138th and last of all those to finish on Friday. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Ford Oman unveils Grand Summer Delights summer campaign

The campaign covers the Ford Territory, Taurus, Everest, Mustang, Mustang Mach-E, Expedition, Explorer, Bronco, Ranger and F-150, with Transit and Super Duty models excluded from the offer

MUSCAT: Ford Oman has unveiled its latest summer campaign, “Ford Grand Summer Delights.” Running till 30 October, the campaign rewards customers across



the Ford line-up with a generous package of benefits, including 5 years of service and warranty, complimentary registration, free accessories on select models, a trade-in bonus, a loyalty bonus for existing owners and the chance to win exciting prizes through an exclusive raffle draw. (Terms & Conditions Apply)

The campaign covers the Ford Territory, Taurus, Everest, Mustang, Mustang Mach-E, Expedition, Explorer, Bronco, Ranger and F-150, with Transit and Super Duty models

excluded from the offer. At the heart of the promotion is a 5-year or 100,000 km service package (which ever comes first), covering 10 services at 10,000 km intervals under normal operating conditions, available on the Territory, Taurus, Everest, Mustang, Expedition, Explorer, Bronco, Ranger and F-150.

This is backed by a matching 5-year or 100,000 km manufacturer’s warranty offered across all models in the range. Adding further value, customers purchasing any eligible model for private use

can enjoy complimentary one-year vehicle registration. While select variants — the Territory, Everest XLS, Expedition, Explorer, Bronco and Ranger — come with complimentary accessories to enhance the ownership experience.

To make the season even more rewarding, Ford Oman is running a “Buy and Win” raffle draw for customers who purchase the Territory, Taurus, Everest, Mustang, Mustang Mach-E, Expedition, Explorer, Bronco, Ranger or F-150 during the campaign period. Par-

ticipants stand a chance to win one of four exciting prizes: a fuel card worth OMR 100, a dinner voucher for four, a one-night weekend hotel stay for a couple or an Amouage perfume gift voucher. The draw will take place at the end of the campaign, with a total of 38 lucky winners announced.

The campaign also brings added savings for customers looking to upgrade or reward their loyalty. A trade-in bonus of up to OMR 400 is available for customers who trade in their existing vehicle through Best Cars and purchase a Territory, Everest, Expedition, Explorer, Bronco, Ranger, Mustang or F-150 (Taurus, Transit and Super Duty are excluded from this offer). Meanwhile, existing Ford owners can benefit from a loyalty bonus of up to OMR 100 when purchasing a Territory, Taurus, Everest, Expedition, Explorer, Bronco, Ranger, Mustang or F-150 during the scheme period, with Transit and Super Duty excluded.

This summer’s line-up showcases the full breadth of Ford’s model range in Oman. The Ford Taurus continues to impress with

its bold design and refined performance, while the Territory offers a striking presence and spacious, tech-forward cabin ideal for everyday family life. The Everest brings rugged 4x4 capability together with a premium, home-inspired interior for up to seven passengers. Adventure seekers can look to the Explorer and Expedition, both offering powerful performance, advanced terrain management and generous passenger space, while the Bronco and F-150 remain the go-to choices for customers seeking uncompromising off-road strength and towing capability. The Ranger rounds out the line-up as a versatile pick-up built for work and play alike and for customers looking to the future, the all-electric Mustang Mach-E delivers thrilling performance paired with sustainable innovation.

With unmatched peace of mind, generous rewards and the chance to win exciting prizes, “Ford Grand Summer Delights” gives customers even more reasons to choose Ford this season. In Oman, Ford vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

RESIDENTIAL SUMMER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Sohar International supports Aspire Oman to empower youth with future-ready skills

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its commitment to advancing youth development and contributing to Oman’s human capital priorities, Sohar International is supporting Aspire Oman 2026, a three weeks residential summer development programme developed by Takatuf Oman to equip Omani youth with future-ready skills aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. As part of its support, the Bank is sponsoring the participation of five Omani students in the programme, enabling them to benefit from an intensive learning experience focused on leadership, innovation, entrepreneurship, digital technology and critical thinking.

Mahira Saleh Al Raisi, Chief People Officer at Sohar International, stated, “Investing in young people is about more than preparing them for their first step into the workforce; it is about helping them recognize their potential, build confidence and develop the mindset to navigate an increasingly dynamic world. Programmes such as Aspire Oman create an environment where young Omanis can learn beyond the classroom, challenge their perspectives and discover new ways of thinking and working. At Sohar International, we are proud to support opportunities that nurture these qualities and contribute to a strong pipeline of Omani talent capable of bringing fresh perspectives, creativity and purpose to the workplace and to the wider community.”

Badr al Jahwari, Head, Sohar International Academy at Sohar

International said, “The strength of any nation’s future is shaped by the capabilities, ambition and adaptability of its next generation. At Sohar International, we see our role in supporting youth development as part of a broader responsibility to contribute to the foundations of a knowledge-driven and competitive economy. Our support for Aspire Oman 2026 reflects this long-term perspective, creating pathways for young Omanis to engage with new ideas, broaden their horizons and develop the confidence to contribute meaningfully to Oman’s evolving economic and social landscape. Through initiatives of this nature, we remain committed to supporting the national priorities of Oman Vision 2040 and the development of a generation equipped to shape the future.”

Delivered by Takatuf Oman, Aspire Oman 2026 brings together students from Grade 10, aged 16, from across Oman. The programme combines academic development with experiential learning, providing participants with opportunities to strengthen their cognitive, social and leadership capabilities while gaining exposure to emerging areas including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital technologies.

Through the programme, participants will undertake an intensive learning journey designed to foster problem-solving, communication, collaboration and entrepreneurial thinking, while encouraging them to explore emerging technologies and develop a forward-looking mindset.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Sohar International strengthens investment connectivity between Oman and Asia Pacific

MUSCAT: Sohar International has signed two strategic Memoranda of Understanding with E Fund HK and Templewater during the 11th Belt and Road Summit in Hong Kong, translating the bank’s new on-the-ground presence in Asia Pacific into practical channels for cross-border investment.

The agreements connect Sohar International’s regional banking, asset management and capital markets capabilities with two established investment platforms in Asia Pacific, expanding access to international opportunities for eligible clients while creating new routes for capital from Asia Pacific and enabling institutions and businesses across the region to engage with Oman.

The agreements formed part of the bank’s participation in the 11th Belt and Road Summit with attendance of Said Mohamed Al-Aufi, Chairman of Sohar International, held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 9 and 10 September 2026 alongside delegates from the Oman Investment Authority (OIA). Through its presence at the exhibition, Sohar International promoted its newly opened Asia Pacific Office in Hong Kong and highlighted how its banking, advisory and investment capabilities can connect opportunities across Hong Kong and the Asia Pacific region with clients and partners in Oman. The Summit activity coincided with the official opening of Sohar International’s Asia Pacific Office in Hong Kong, the first presence of an Omani bank in Hong Kong and Sohar International’s first office in Asia Pacific. The opening ceremony at Grand Hyatt Hong Kong brought together senior government and business representatives from Oman and Hong Kong.

Commenting on the agreements, Abdulwahid Mohamed Al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said, “Our Hong Kong presence is designed to turn stronger market access into prac-



tical opportunities for our clients and partners. While the reciprocal arrangement with E Fund HK creates a two-way route for investment products and capital markets opportunities, the Templewater framework can connect eligible clients with alternative investment, co-investment and project-finance opportunities. Together, these agreements strengthen our ability to attract capital and expertise into Oman, while helping Omani clients and institutions build stronger relationships across the Chinese Mainland and the wider Asia Pacific region.”

The MoU with E Fund HK was signed on behalf of Sohar International by Khalil Salim Al Hedaifi, Acting Chief Wholesale Banking Officer, and on behalf of E Fund HK by Xue WANG, CEO, E Fund HK. E Fund Management (Hong Kong) Co., Ltd (‘E Fund HK’) was established in 2008 and is licensed by the Securities and Futures Commission of Hong Kong to conduct Type 1 (Dealing in Securities), Type 4 (Advising on Securities) and Type 9 (Asset Management) regulated activities. E Fund HK is a wholly-owned subsidiary of E Fund Management Co., Ltd (‘E Fund’). As the international business platform of E Fund, E Fund HK provides asset management services in fixed income, equity, index and alternative investment for investors all over the world.

Its award-winning products have been recognized by leading institutions such as Morningstar, Lipper, Asian Investor and Benchmark.

Established in 2001, E-Fund Management Co., Ltd. describes itself as China’s largest mutual fund manager, with approximately US\$638 billion under management as of 30 June 2026 and more than 400 China-focused investment professionals. The reciprocal arrangement positions Sohar International as E Fund HK’s exclusive partner in Oman. Sohar International will market E Fund HK’s investment products through its Asset Management and Origination & Placement businesses, while E Fund HK will introduce the Bank’s investment and capital markets offerings to its client network in China.

The MoU with Templewater was signed on behalf of Sohar International by Mr Aziz Mohamed Al Jahdhami, Chief International Business and Private Banking Officer, and on behalf of Templewater by Dr. Yufeng WAN, Partner and Head of Technology Investment. Templewater is a private equity investor and alternative asset manager operating across Asia Pacific, with offices in Hong Kong, Singapore, Muscat and Seoul and approximately US\$2.5 billion in assets under management. The framework covers investment opportunities for eligible Sohar

International clients, potential co-investments and project-financing opportunities, as well as banking services for Templewater portfolio companies operating in Oman. It also gives the Bank and its clients access to Templewater’s sector expertise across artificial intelligence and digital infrastructure, robotics and intelligent manufacturing, semiconductors and advanced materials, mobility and energy-transition technologies.

Together, the office opening, the Bank’s exhibition presence and the two MoUs establish a practical platform for long-term engagement between Oman and Asia Pacific. The new Hong Kong presence will help Sohar International develop institutional relationships and market intelligence closer to the source, promote investment and business opportunities in Oman, and support Omani clients seeking connections across Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and the wider Asia Pacific region.

The activity supports Oman Vision 2040 priorities for private-sector growth, international co-operation and greater integration with the global economy. It also advances Sohar International’s role in bringing international capital, expertise and opportunity to Oman while connecting Omani businesses, investors and institutions with markets around the world.

SPONSORSHIP

Al Mouj Muscat champions Oman’s next generation of football talent ahead of historic FIFA U-15 World Cup debut

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat, the Sultanate’s premier destination for major sporting and lifestyle events, has announced its sponsorship of the Oman U15 national football team as they prepare to represent the Sultanate at the upcoming U15 World Cup. The partnership with the Oman Football Association reflects a shared commitment to investing in young Omani talent and creating opportunities that contribute to the long-term development of national sport.

The 14-player national squad will represent Oman at the inaugural



FIFA U-15 World Cup & Festival 2026 in Azerbaijan, beginning on 22 October. The milestone represents a significant step forward for Omani youth football, giving some of the country’s most promising young players the opportunity to test themselves internationally and gain valuable experience at a formative stage in their development.

Sayyid Sulaiman bin Hamood Al Busaidi, Chairman of the Oman Football Association, said: “Oman’s appearance at a U15 World Cup is an important step in the development of our young players and our ambi-

tions for Omani football. Building strong pathways for emerging talent requires partners who recognise the importance of investing at an early stage. Al Mouj Muscat’s support demonstrates the value of organisations working alongside the Oman Football Association to help shape the future of the game.”

Ahmed Al Massan, Acting CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said: “The strength of any nation’s sporting future depends on how effectively we turn young talent into opportunity. That means giving the next generation the exposure, experi-

ence and confidence to fulfil their potential and broaden their sense of what is possible. At Al Mouj Muscat, we see sport as a powerful investment in Oman’s human potential, building ambition, strengthening communities and inspiring young people to pursue excellence. We are proud to play our part in creating those opportunities for Omani talent.”

The sponsorship extends Al Mouj Muscat’s longstanding role in using sport as a platform for community participation, national pride and positive social impact.



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