

Times

GOLDEN JUBILEE

OF OMAN

51

YEARS OF
LEGACY

Founded 1975 · Volume 51 No. 130 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

بنك مسقط
bank muscat

Find Out More

24656666

Activate and spend!

First-year annual fee waiver
on Meethaq Credit Cards*

Available on Primary and Supplementary Cards for new and existing Meethaq customers.
Offer valid until 31 December 2026. *Terms and conditions apply.

MEETHAQ
المصرف الإسلامي
Islamic Banking

C.R. No: 1/14573/B

SHARP GAINS

Oman oil price tops \$101
per barrel as US-Iran
fight fuels supply fears

MUSCAT: The official price of Oman oil, for delivery in next November, rose by \$1.75 and settled at \$101.56 on Wednesday.

It is worth noting that the monthly average price of Oman crude oil for delivery in September 2026 amounted to \$76.36, marking a decline of \$2.73 compared to the delivery price for August.

According to media report oil prices also rose by nearly 1% in early Asian trading on Wednesday, extending sharp gains from the previous session, as renewed US-Iran hostilities heightened fears of disruptions to crude supplies from the Middle East.

Brent crude futures rose 87 cents, or 0.92%, to \$95.52 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures gained 80 cents, or 0.89%, to \$91.02 a barrel. Both benchmarks surged more than \$4 on Tuesday, with Brent settling at its highest level since July 24 and WTI at its highest since July 23. Brent rose \$4.16, or 4.6%, while WTI gained \$4.46, or 5.2%.

The latest gains came after the United States and Iran exchanged strikes overnight, reviving concerns over the security of oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz and raising doubts about a quick de-escalation of the conflict.

Earlier, in its monthly report, Opec had cut its forecast for growth in global oil demand due to escalating trade disputes and sees further downside risk.

Opec has estimated that world oil demand will increase by 1.14 million bpd this year, 70,000bpd less than previously expected.

OMAN TESTS DRONES TO SUPPLY
MEDICINES TO REMOTE ISLANDS

The mission is being executed using the ‘Sahm’ drone, capable of carrying approximately 150 kilograms of medical supplies and equipment

SALALAH: The second phase of the ‘Sky Bridge’ initiative, which utilises unmanned aerial vehicles to transport medical supplies and equipment to the Al Halaniyat Islands, was launched yesterday from Dhofar Governorate.

The event was held under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and was attended by a number of officials and representatives of government entities and private sector institutions in the governorate.

The initiative forms part of the activities of the Gulf Green Mobility Forum, organised by the Ministry of Transport, Commu-

nications and Information Technology, under the supervision and follow-up of the Civil Aviation Authority, and in coordination with the Air Navigation Department of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in the Governorate and the Aviation Safety Department of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation Regulation.

The mission is being executed using the “Sahm” (Arrow) drone, capable of carrying approximately 150 kilograms of medical supplies and equipment, covering the distance from Salalah to the Al Halaniyat Islands at a speed exceeding 120 kilometres per hour

and at an altitude of up to 2,000 metres. The initiative aims to test and apply drone-based air cargo technologies and to explore their potential in transporting supplies to remote areas, thereby contributing to enhancing the efficiency of transport and logistics systems and addressing challenges associated with distance and geographical terrain.

The initiative aligns with the strategic approaches of Oman Vision 2040 in supporting innovation, localising modern technologies, and developing national capacities in knowledge- and technology-based sectors.

The mission is being executed entirely by the Ibn Firas Centre for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, with an Omani team overseeing all stages of the operational process, from planning, preparation, and load handling, through to drone operation, flight monitoring, safety procedures, and operations management.

The team has undergone specialised training and qualification programmes in the operation of cargo drones, covering navigation, load management, interaction with aviation systems, and emergency response and safety protocols. **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Oman explores fog
harvesting in Dhofar

1

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources is implementing a fog harvesting project in the mountains of Dhofar to assess the potential of utilising fog associated with the Khareef season as a non-conventional water source. **>A2**

OMAN

Oman participates in
Moscow Book Fair

2

The Sultanate of Oman participated with an official pavilion in the Moscow International Book Fair, which kicked off yesterday at the Gostiny Dvor Centre in Moscow, with the People's Republic of China participating as the guest of honour. **>A4**

WORLD

Ebola infections in
DRC top 6,000

3

The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to escalate, with confirmed infections now topping 6,000 and the death toll reaching 2,911, according to the government. The outbreak has spread to 60 zones in six provinces. **>B4**

Khareef Dhofar
supports youth
projects

A4

NCSI

Oman motorists show growing taste for orange, purple vehicles

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Orange and purple vehicles are gaining popularity among motorists in Oman, with the two colours recording the fastest year-on-year growth, according to the latest vehicle registration statistics.

The number of orange vehicles increased by 23.4%, rising from 17,694 in July 2025 to 19,357 in July 2026, according to National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Purple vehicles, meanwhile, increased by 19.5%, from 235 to 263 during the same period.

Dark blue vehicles recorded the third-highest growth, rising 14.2% to 2,060, while grey vehicles increased by around 12% to 204,952.

For some motorists, the growing appeal of brighter colours reflects a desire to move away from tradi-

Color	2025	2026	Growth
Purple	235	263	19.5%
Orange	17,694	19,357	23.4%
White	1,904,534	2,049,534	4.9%

White and silver are practical and common, but younger buyers in particular seem more interested in colours that reflect their personality. Purple and orange can make a car look different without changing anything else about it,” the motorist said.

Despite the growth of these less common colours, white remains

overwhelmingly dominant on Oman's roads.

There were 802,190 white vehicles registered in Oman at the end of July 2026, accounting for 42.1% of the country's total 1,904,534 registered vehicles.

The number of white vehicles itself grew 4.9% year-on-year, increasing by 20,215 vehicles, from

Times
Exclusive

781,975 in July 2025 to 802,190 in July 2026.

Silver was the second-most popular colour, with 243,782 vehicles (12.8%), followed by grey with 204,952 vehicles (10.8%). Black and blue accounted for about 5.5% each, with 104,269 black vehicles and 104,880 blue vehicles.

Pearl-coloured vehicles numbered 87,724 (4.6%), while red accounted for 76,804 (4%) and gold for 67,773 (3.6%).

Overall, Oman's registered vehicle fleet increased 5.4% year-on-year, from 1,851,469 vehicles in July 2025 to 1,904,534 in July 2026.

TheGuide

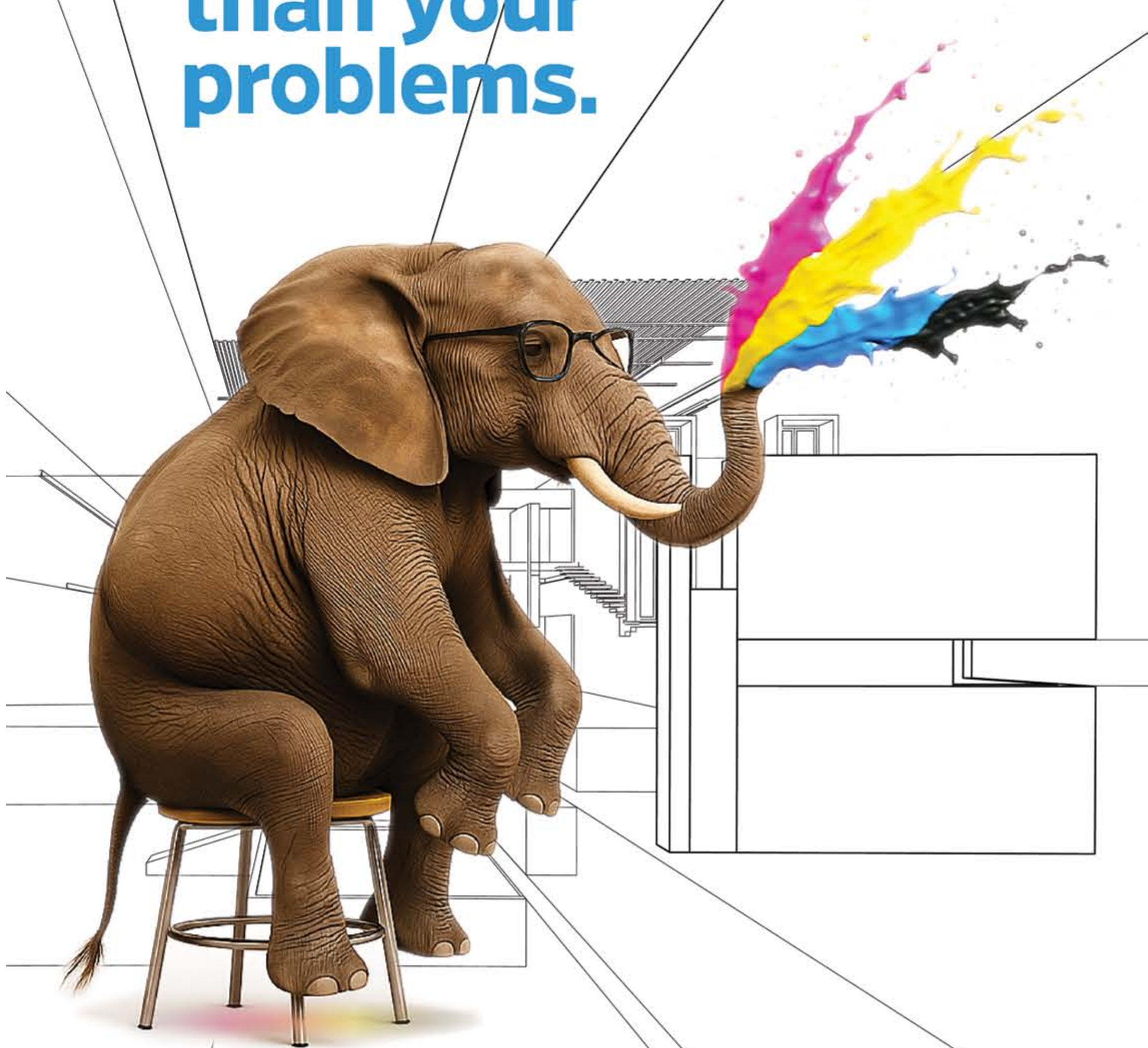
A unique experience

theguideoman.com

34⁰

MUSCAT

We make your Business bigger than your problems.



We get you ahead on

- Booth production
- Event conceptualisation
- Event management



Wait, there's more

- Large format digital printing
- Flex banners
- Vinyl stickers
- Back drops with metal frames
- Wooden standalones
- Backlit flex banners



Oman explores fog harvesting in Dhofar to boost water resources

The project aims to enhance scientific knowledge of the quantities of water that can be harvested and identify the most suitable locations for applying the technology in the future



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources(MAFWR) is continuing to implement a fog harvesting project in the mountains of Dhofar Governorate to assess the potential of utilising fog associated with the Khareef season as a non-conventional water source.

The project aims to enhance

scientific knowledge of the quantities of water that can be harvested from this natural phenomenon and identify the most suitable locations for applying the technology in the future.

Eng. Khalid bin Salem Al Hooti, Director of the Artificial Rain Enhancement Centre at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and

Water Resources, said the project forms part of the ministry's efforts to study non-conventional water resources and utilise modern technologies and available natural resources to enhance water sustainability and support the diversification of water sources in Oman.

He explained that fog harvesting is a promising technology for

utilising atmospheric moisture. It works by capturing water droplets present in fog and converting them into usable water.

The technology has relatively low energy requirements, making it worthy of study in areas where fog occurs frequently, including the mountains of Dhofar during the Khareef season.

The project includes the establishment of a specialised network to monitor and track fog in the mountains of Dhofar.

Twelve fog-collection stations have been installed across nine locations to collect field data during the Khareef season and measure fog condensation rates and the quantities of water that can be collected at different sites.

Al Hooti noted that the stations are not limited to collecting water, but also monitor a range of climatic and topographical data associated with fog.

This will enable researchers to study the relationship between fog characteristics and the natural and climatic factors affecting the amount of water that can be harvested.

He added that the project uses spatial modelling and statistical analysis techniques to analyse the collected data and develop a predictive model capable of identifying locations with the highest potential for harvesting water from fog.

This is expected to enhance the efficiency of future projects and maximise the use of harvested water.

Al Hooti stressed that the importance of the project extends beyond the quantity of water that can be harvested, encompassing the development of the scientific knowledge needed to understand the phenomenon and assess its water potential.

This, he said, will support future decision-making based on accurate field data.

The fog harvesting project is part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources' efforts to explore and develop non-conventional water sources and employ innovation and modern technologies in water resource management, in line with Oman's efforts to improve water-use efficiency, ensure resource sustainability and diversify water sources.

-ONA

NCSI

Khareef Dhofar visitors exceed 881,000 by mid of August 2026



MUSCAT: The number of visitors to Khareef Dhofar (monsoon) season increased by 6.6% during the period from 21 June to 15 August 2026, reaching 881,424 visitors, compared with 827,115 visitors during the same period in 2025, according to the preliminary estimates of Khareef Dhofar 2026 visitor numbers released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The estimates showed that Omani visitors accounted for 72.5% of the total number of visitors, representing the largest share among

the nationality groups, reaching to 639,360 visitors, compared with 591,577 during the same period in 2025.

Visitors from GCC countries reached 156,216

Visitors from the GCC countries reached 156,216 compared with 143,431 during the corresponding period of the previous year, while visitors of other nationalities numbered 85,848, compared with 92,107 during the



same period in 2025.

The results also showed that the number of visitors arriving by air increased by 13.6%, reaching 212,562 visitors, compared with 187,153 during the same period in 2025. Meanwhile, the number of visitors arriving through land border crossings reached 668,862, compared with 639,962 during the corresponding period of the previous year.

In terms of the breakdown of visitors by period, the number of visitors during 21-30 June 2026

reached 21,094 visitors, compared with 20,594 during the same period of the previous year.

July 2026 recorded the highest number of visitors, with 451,355 visitors, compared with 421,506 in July 2025. Meanwhile, the number of visitors during 1-15 August 2026 reached 408,975 visitors, compared with 385,015 during the same period of the previous year. This represented 46.4% of the total number of visitors recorded since the beginning of the season.

-ONA

28TH MEETING

Discussion on eplatform for judicial notice exchange

MUSCAT: Represented by the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, the Sultanate of Oman today took part in the 28th meeting of undersecretaries of ministries of justice in GCC states.

At the meeting, held via video conferencing, Oman was represented by Dr. Yahya bin Nasser Al Khusaibi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs. The meeting discussed an initiative to establish an electronic platform for exchanging judicial notices and notifications among ministries of justice in GCC (as proposed by the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endow-

ments in the Kingdom of Bahrain). It also studied draft unified rules for combating crimes of information technology in GCC states.

In addition, the meeting reviewed three main topics: The outcome of the meeting of the Committee of Directors and Heads of Judicial and Legal Training Centres and Institutes in GCC states; The 2026 report of the committee of officials tasked with international cooperation and international relations departments in GCC ministries of Justice; and The draft agenda of the 36th meeting of Ministers of Justice in GCC states.

-ONA



RECREATIONAL DESTINATION

Duqm launches design competition for '10,000 Trees Park' to create a sustainable tourism destination

Times News Service

DUQM: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and Tatweer Duqm have launched a design competition for the "10,000 Trees Park", inviting students from engineering colleges to submit innovative concepts for a sustainable tourism and recreational destination serving families, children and visitors to the zone.

Organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and OQ8's Duqm Refinery, the competition seeks to harness students' engineering knowledge and skills to develop designs for an integrated park spanning approximately 400,000 square metres within SEZAD.

The initiative aims to engage young talent in developing a distinctive environmental and urban project that combines the expansion of green spaces with the creation of attractive public areas.

It also seeks to strengthen links between academic institutions and the development projects underway in Duqm.

Abdullah bin Ali Al Alawi, Head of the Afforestation Section at SEZAD, said the competition represents a practical step towards harnessing the creativity and innovative ideas of young people



to develop a project that adds environmental and social value to Duqm's urban landscape.

He added that the project would contribute to creating a sustainable public destination that brings together recreation, tourism and quality of life. Al Alawi explained that inviting engineering students to participate is intended to translate academic knowledge into design concepts with the potential for further development and implementation.

The proposed designs are expected to take into account the site's characteristics, climatic

conditions and efficient use of resources, while presenting innovative solutions that support the project's long-term sustainability and attractiveness.

He further noted that the park is expected to constitute a valuable addition to public amenities at SEZAD, serving both the local community and visitors amid the zone's rapid economic, investment and urban growth.

For his part, Mohammed bin Hamoud Al Batashi, Survey Engineer at Tatweer Duqm, said the competition provides engineering students with an opportunity to

engage with a large-scale, real-world project and apply their academic knowledge by developing concepts that respond to the site's physical and topographical characteristics while optimising the use of available space.

He added that preparing an integrated design for the park requires a carefully considered balance between green spaces, facilities, circulation routes, seating areas and recreational zones to ensure accessibility, functional integration and sustainability. Al Batashi pointed out that the submitted designs would provide a range of engineer-



ing and urban-planning concepts that could inform the development of the project's final vision.

He stressed the importance of proposals combining innovation, clarity and development potential while responding to Duqm's characteristics and the needs of future park users. The submitted designs are expected to contribute to shaping an integrated vision for the park, making optimal use of its total area and providing a suitable environment for family and recreational activities while preserving the site's natural identity and strengthening sustainability

throughout its planning. Registration is open to students from engineering colleges from 30 August to 10 September through the competition's designated online form.

The competition reflects the commitment of SEZAD and Tatweer Duqm to integrating environmental and social considerations into the development process and strengthening partnerships with educational institutions and the industrial sector.

It also supports the development of sustainable projects that enhance Duqm's urban environment and quality of life.

بنك ذوفار
BankDhofar

Promises kept.
Standards raised.
A first in Oman's banking experience.



Our customers are served in under
10
minutes

For you

www.bankdhofar.com 2479 1111

CLIMATE CHANGE

Oman intensifies efforts for active participation in COP31

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority (EA) yesterday convened the first workshop for national implementation teams and participants in the thirty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31), with the participation of teams responsible for the various tracks of Oman's engagement in the Conference.

The workshop forms part of the early preparations for national participation, aimed at assessing the readiness of the teams, reviewing action plans, tasks, and responsibilities, and enhancing coordination among them, so as to contribute to achieving an integrated and effective Omani presence at this international climate



forum. The Oversight and Governance Team presented the overarching framework for supervising national participation, as well as the coordination and follow-up mechanisms among the various teams, to ensure the integration of efforts and the execution of plans

and tasks in line with the defined objectives for participation. The Negotiation Team also delivered a presentation on its preparations for engagement in the climate negotiation tracks, the efforts undertaken to coordinate national positions and monitor priority

files for the Sultanate of Oman, and the enhancement of its presence in international discussions and dialogues related to climate action.

The Media Team reviewed its plan to accompany Oman's participation in the Conference, highlighting the Sultanate's efforts, initiatives, and projects in the fields of climate change and sustainability, while reinforcing the media presence of the national participation and conveying its messages to local, regional, and international audiences.

The workshop also featured a presentation by the Pavilion Team on the preparations for the Omani pavilion and its role as a platform to showcase the national experience and present initiatives, projects, and solutions related to climate

action and sustainability.

The Youth Team presented its preparations for participation and for highlighting the role of Omani youth in climate action, while the Innovation and Indicators Team addressed aspects related to innovation and the measurement of indicators supporting the objectives of national participation.

The workshop further discussed matters pertaining to logistical support and coordination mechanisms among the participating teams, with a view to providing the necessary organizational and technical requirements and ensuring the readiness of Oman's participation across the various stages of the Conference.

The workshop underscored the importance of working as a

unified team and achieving integration across the negotiation, media, organizational, youth, and innovation tracks, so as to enhance the effectiveness of the Sultanate of Oman's participation in COP31, and to showcase its national efforts in addressing climate change challenges and transitioning toward a more sustainable future.

These preparations are part of the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to strengthening its presence within the international climate action system, leveraging the Conference of the Parties as a platform to foster cooperation, partnerships, and knowledge exchange, and supporting efforts aimed at achieving national climate and development goals. -ONA

Oman affirms its cooperation to UNICEF mission

Oman expressed its appreciation to the Republic of Estonia for its stewardship of the UNICEF Executive Board for 2026



NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman has affirmed its commitment to sustaining cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and international partners, in support of the organisation's endeavours to build a more just, sustainable, and equitable future for every child.

This came in a statement delivered by Ambassador Omar Said Al Kathiri, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, before the second

regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board for 2026, convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Sultanate of Oman expressed its appreciation to the Republic of Estonia for its stewardship of the UNICEF Executive Board for 2026, and likewise conveyed its gratitude to the Executive Director of UNICEF.

Oman also valued the dedication of the organisation's personnel in safeguarding children's rights and advancing their well-being, particularly amid escalating humanitarian and developmental challenges.

The Sultanate of Oman further noted that this session carries particular significance, as it marks the final session in which it participates in its capacity as a member of the UNICEF Executive Board and as Vice-President of the Board representing the Asia-Pacific Group for 2026.

In this regard, the Sultanate expressed its pride in the confidence bestowed upon it by Member States, as well as in the opportunities afforded by its membership to contribute to fostering consensus and constructive dialogue. -ONA

SUPPORT CANCER PATIENTS

OCA unveils schedule for 22nd annual walkathon



MUSCAT: Oman Cancer Association on Wednesday held a press conference during which it outlined details of the 22nd annual walkathon aimed to support cancer patients.

The walkathon, which takes the slogan "Walk with Hope", is scheduled to be held on 29 and 30 October 2026 at Qurum Natural Park, as part of the programme of "October Breast Cancer Awareness Month".

The walkathon constitutes one of the most prominent annual community events to raise public awareness about cancer.

It lends support to patients and their families in a manner that alleviates the burdens associated with the disease, in addition to

underlining the importance of early detection of the disease and means of protection against its development.

Dr. Waheed bin Ali Al Kharousi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Cancer Association, said in a statement during the press conference that "the cancer walkathon gains significance due to the fact that it represents a stand by cancer patients, survivors and their families".

The walk also stresses the importance of the prevention of cancer, the early detection of the disease and the need to adopt healthy lifestyles, he explained.

Dr. Waheed pointed out that the cancer walk's programme will begin with an open day that

includes educational events, early detection services offered to breast cancer patients, measuring of blood pressure and checking blood sugar levels. The second day includes a symbolic walk of less than two kilometres, he added. For his part, Dr. Talal bin Mohammed Al Balushi, member of the Board of Directors of Oman Cancer Association, said that the previous edition of the cancer walkathon saw participation of more than 8,000 people.

He pointed out that public engagement in the event, in different parts of the Sultanate of Oman, reflects the community's growing interest in cancer awareness and initiatives of prevention of the disease. -ONA

TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

Oman restores 200-year-old Seeb Fort as heritage landmark

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Seeb Fort, one of Muscat Governorate's prominent historical and cultural landmarks, has been restored to reflect its traditional architectural character after more than two centuries of history.

The fort was built in 1820 during the reign of Sultan Said bin Sultan Al Busaidi and served as the residence of the Wali and his family.

It later became the administrative headquarters of the Wilayat of Seeb, where citizens' affairs were managed, disputes were settled and judicial rulings were issued.

According to Asma bint Hilal Al Kharousi, Acting Director of the Department of Castles, Forts and Historical Landmarks, the restoration was carried out using available historical evidence, including old photographs, historical sources and oral accounts.

Work on the reconstruction began on September 11, 2023, and was completed on October 15, 2025.

The restoration team also uncovered remnants of the fort's original foundations during site



cleaning and debris removal. These remains were documented and used to determine the locations, dimensions and architectural features of the reconstructed buildings.

Covering an area of 2,975 square metres, Seeb Fort consists of a main structure known as Al Qasaba, along with administrative and service facilities including the Sabla, a guards' rest area

and a steam room.

Al Qasaba has two floors, with two rooms on each floor. The upper rooms were originally used as the residence of the Wali and his family, while the ground-floor rooms served as storage areas.

The upper rooms were later converted into offices for the Wali and judge when the fort became exclusively an administrative headquarters.

The Sabla served as a waiting area for visitors to the Wali and judge and as a council where the Wali met residents. It was also used for gatherings during occasions such as Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha.

The fort also contains traditional defensive features, including high walls and arrow slits, as well as a water well in its courtyard.



The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is now seeking to give the landmark a renewed role while preserving its historical character.

A competition was launched in April for the management, operation and adaptive reuse of the fort, with the aim of introducing contemporary functions compatible with its heritage value.

Sheikh Ali bin Mansour Al Amri, Member of the Shura Council

representing the Wilayat of Seeb, praised the ministry's efforts to restore the landmark, saying the fort is expected to become an important tourist attraction for visitors from Oman and abroad.

The Seeb Wali's office was moved from the fort to its current premises in November 1994, marking the end of the fort's long-standing role as the administrative centre of the wilayat.

Oman showcases cultural heritage at Moscow International Book Fair

The pavilion reflects the richness of Omani intellectual, cultural, and cognitive production, presenting an image of Omani identity and its contributions in the fields of thought, literature, history, knowledge, and tourism

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman participates with an official pavilion in the Moscow International Book Fair, which kicked off yesterday at the Gostiny Dvor Center in Moscow, with the People's Republic of China participating as the guest of honour for this year's edition.

This participation is the first for Oman at the fair, coming within the framework of enhancing the Omani cultural presence abroad and utilising international exhibitions as effective platforms to introduce Omani intellectual and cultural production, as well as opening new horizons for cooperation with cultural and academic institutions, publishing houses, and researchers.

The pavilion reflects the richness of Omani intellectual, cultural, and cognitive production, presenting an image of Omani identity and its contributions in the fields of thought, literature, history, knowledge, and tourism, thus contributing to strengthening bridges of communication with Russian and international cultural circles.

Participating in the pavilion are the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and Sultan Qaboos University through a diverse collection of publications and content reflecting aspects of the cultural, scientific, and heritage movement in the Sultanate of Oman.



The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth presents a group of literary, intellectual, and cultural publications that embody the diversity of the Omani cultural scene, alongside books documenting literature, creativity, history, and national identity.

Sultan Qaboos University also participates with publications, studies, and scientific research produced by Omani researchers, reflecting the scientific and cognitive movement in the Sultanate of Oman and highlighting the university's role in knowledge

production and scientific research across various specialties.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism presents specialized publications on heritage, history, archaeological sites, and cultural legacy, in addition to publications introducing the tourism, natural,



and cultural potential of the Sultanate of Oman, thereby enhancing the presence of heritage as one of the pillars of national identity.

The Ministry of Information section features a selected collection of publications addressing the history, culture, identity, and civilizational legacy of the Sultanate of Oman, alongside publications in the fields of media, literature, thought, history, and Omani international relations.

The Ministry showcases the "Ayn" digital platform via a designated screen in the pavilion, highlighting its diverse cognitive and media content, which includes high-quality visual and photographic productions reflecting aspects of cultural and civilizational life in the Sultanate of Oman, alongside a collection of Omani books available as e-editions.

On the pavilion's main screen, the Ministry displays documentary films highlighting Oman's history and civilisation, alongside a special film tracking the development of Omani-Russian relations and the fruitful cooperation they witness across various fields.

An interactive screen allows

visitors to the pavilion to listen to a selection of audiobooks, while the "Children's Interface" of the "Ayn" platform displays educational, cultural, and entertaining materials aimed at developing youth knowledge and strengthening their connection to their national identity, coinciding with the 4th edition of the Moscow International Children's Book Fair.

Over 300 publishing houses from Russia and other countries are participating in the Book Fair, which continues through 6 September. The event features over 400 cultural and professional events, including author meet-and-greets, book launches, seminars, and literary discussions, alongside a professional program discussing issues related to the publishing industry and cultural cooperation.

The fair's accompanying programs cover a number of topics related to the future of books, the publishing industry, literature, translation, culture, and reading, as well as the transformations taking place in content creation amidst technological developments. -ONA

SALALAH

Khareef Dhofar Season 2026 enhances economic aspect, supports youth projects

SALALAH: In the coming days, Dhofar Governorate will lower the curtain on the activities of the Khareef Dhofar (monsoon) Season 2026, following a season rich with diverse programs distributed across various tourist destinations and wilayats of the governorate, encompassing a broad package of activities and events that provided ample space to display youth projects and promote Omani products.

Ammar Aoubad Ghawas, Director of the Department of Events and Awareness at Dhofar Municipality, stated in a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the municipality was keen to offer a renewed and diverse season that combines Omani identity with a global vision, creating an impact extending beyond entertainment to culture, society, economy, tourism, and investment, thereby enhancing Dhofar Governorate's standing as a leading tourist destination.

He added that the season featured more than 300 events and programs ranging across arts, culture, entertainment, and sports, in addition to heritage events, international shows, and global festivals, pointing out that this diversity reflects the municipality's direction toward offering multifaceted experiences catering to the varying interests of visitors and age groups, while conferring unique identities and experiences upon event sites.

Regarding the economic impact of the season, Ghawas explained that the municipality was keen to provide marketing opportunities



for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and highlight Omani products across various event sites, noting that the number of benefiting projects reached 1,742, while the number of job-seeking beneficiaries reached 4,215.

He said that these figures reflect an aspect of the economic and so-

cial impact of the season, which goes beyond organizing events to providing opportunities to participate in and benefit from the accompanying economic activity, supporting promising national small and medium enterprises and projects, and creating competitive marketing spaces for them to estab-



lish their presence in the tourism, entertainment, and service sectors.

He affirmed that the municipality worked to expand the participation scope of youth initiatives and projects across event sites, including Al Ghareef, Osara, Nova, La Mer Al Mughsail, city center sites, Ittin Square, and Oudat Al Madhi

(Return of the Past), alongside other sites in the wilayats of Taqah, Sadah, and Mirbat, while providing support to them throughout the season. This enhances youth presence in the events sector and opens doors for their initiatives and projects to be showcased to a broad audience with diverse inter-

ests from within and outside the Sultanate of Oman.

Just as cultural and heritage events focused on highlighting Omani heritage by reviewing lifestyles across various environments of Dhofar Governorate, these events simultaneously provided space to support productive families and national projects, promote local products, and involve Omani Women's Associations, alongside engaging small and medium enterprises, as well as local Omani performing arts and theatrical groups in delivering a number of events and programs.

Ammar Aoubad Ghawas, Director of the Department of Events and Awareness at Dhofar Municipality, stressed that through hosting international sports events during the Khareef season—such as the Tour of Salalah International and the Dhofar International Drag Race Championship—the municipality seeks to enhance the governorate's status as an attractive destination for regional and international sports championships and competitions, as these sports attract a wide segment of stakeholders and media from various countries around the world.

The diversity of the Khareef Dhofar Season 2026 came along an innovative track that enhances integration between events, tourist and cultural assets, and economic aspects in the governorate, supports national institutions and initiatives, and makes the local community an active partner in plans for the season's success. -ONA

COMMENTARY

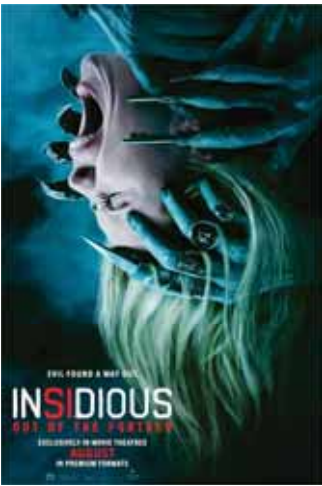
INSIDIOUS: Out of the Further — Familiar Frights with Few Fresh Ideas

Flickering lights, sudden movements in the shadows, distorted faces, and frightful situations paired with a menacing musical score have been a perfect formula for horror movies, and the Insidious franchise has gotten it right almost every time across all editions. It takes you into Further, into a terrifying supernatural realm beyond this world in this edition - Out of the Further.

Jacob Chase directed INSIDIOUS: Out of the Further, which introduces Gemma (Amelia Eve), a young mother raising her daughter Maya (Island Austin) in the same house she grew up in. Interestingly, there are visual sequences that repeat from her childhood and current times, bringing in a good connection with the overall narrative.

In the journey, Gemma discovers that she is special and that her childhood connection with the Further was not simply the product of trauma or imagination. She has a capability to enter into Further, a supernatural realm, and from there bring back into the real world what resides there.

The challenge this time is to get into Further and come out too, and that's the central idea on which the whole film narrative is built. From the beginning, the film creates a



decently uneasy atmosphere, especially using ordinarily domestic spaces to create horror with light, sound, and fast, sudden movements. In one of the sequences, Gemma travels

into a claustrophobic tunnel-like place just under the sofa and ends up meeting Acolytes in a frightening manner.

Visual imagination is genuine, especially the distinctly unpleasant dental imagery connected to Gemma's profession creates sudden horror even as the story goes slow sometimes and loses its pace.

Amelia Eve remains the backbone of the film and a major strength; she connects her past and present well and ensures the future of her daughter is preserved and safe. She isn't another typical horror film protagonist who is running away from ghosts, but she confronts the uneasy characters who appear in her life as she keeps discovering them.

Maya is also metaphorical for a young Gemma, who lost her

mother in an event surrounded by the supernatural realm. Gemma's wounds are still fresh, memories reappear, and she is determined to ensure no repeat of this for her daughter Maya.

Lin Shaye returns in this edition as Elise Rainer and plays a critical character in Out of the Further, creating a bridge between past and future editions of the franchise. Overall, the fresh premise comes wrapped up in a familiar manner, easy to connect with the earlier editions.

As the abilities of Gemma are discovered in the course of the film, the elements of shock, awe, and surprise take up a slight backseat in the mind of the audience as predictability sets in.

Yes, there are some inventive scares, which end up refreshing the formula used by the franchise in earlier editions. It's an imaginative film that delivers a genuine, effective and unforced horror while bringing out unpleasant things waiting on the other side of the door.

Out of the Further is an entertaining film without an overdose of gore. Watch it for its inventive sequences.

Praveen Nagda is the Founder Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and Culture Cinema Film Festivals

SKY BRIDGE

Experiment for drone-based air cargo system

<FROM A1 The deployment of national competencies in this mission reflects a strategic commitment to building Omani capabilities in the field of drone and air cargo technologies, while enhancing the readiness of national personnel to manage advanced air transport systems.

The second phase of the "Sky Bridge" initiative represents an applied experiment in utilising drones for supply transport, assessing their potential to support medical and logistics services, respond to emergency situations, and serve areas that are difficult to access through conventional transportation means.

The experiment also contributes to testing an integrated drone-based air cargo system

encompassing operations, navigation, load management, and safety, thereby providing practical indicators regarding the potential expansion of these technologies across various sectors.

The first phase of the "Sky Bridge" initiative involved the dispatch of an aerial shipment of medicines and medical supplies weighing 100 kilograms, covering a distance of nearly 100 kilometres from the Military Technical College to Al Jabal Al Akhdhar.

The drone, which was fully assembled in the Sultanate of Oman and features operational capabilities for navigating challenging mountainous terrain and valleys, successfully demonstrated its practical capacity to establish a rapid and secure supply line to remote areas. -ONA



TWO-YEAR PROJECT

Restoration of Al Raml Quarter begins in Ibri



IBRI: A project for the restoration of Al Raml Quarter in the Wilayat of Ibri began on Wednesday.

The two-year project aims to develop the tourism and service facilities of the heritage area to enhance its role in supporting tourism and economy in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Al Balushi, CEO of Operations at A'Dhahirah International Development and Investment Company, said that the first phase of the project targets the restoration of about 30 percent of the site's total area. This phase begins with the maintenance of the museum, the internal passages and 30 shops.

Al Balushi added that the first phase also includes the construction of a traditional caf  teria and a restaurant, two tourist lodgings and panoramic seating areas overlooking the site, in addition to the maintenance of the mosque (along with the addition of a prayer area for women).

The project also seeks to provide business opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs and the local community, said Al Balushi.

He affirmed that the project combines the preservation of heritage sites and their use in promoting tourism and economic development in Al Dhahirah Governorate. -ONA

Oman chairs UN talks on Middle East free of nukes

The session was presided over by Ambassador Omar Said Al Kathiri, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations



ference. This meeting forms part of the preparatory process led by the Sultanate of Oman for the upcoming session of the Conference, scheduled to convene in New York from 16 to 20 November 2026.

The Conference constitutes a negotiating track that brings together States of the region under the auspices of the United Nations, with the objective of concluding a treaty establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, thereby contributing to the strengthening of regional and international peace and security.

The current meeting addresses a number of pivotal issues pertaining to the prospective form of the future treaty and its implementation mechanisms.

Deliberations focus on the insti-

tutional arrangements the treaty may require to oversee compliance with its provisions and to facilitate cooperation among States Parties, as well as on the relationship between the future treaty and existing international agreements in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation, with a view to ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication of obligations.

Participants are drawing upon the experiences of other regions worldwide that have already established nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as the legal and technical expertise of specialists participating in the meeting.

This is intended to enable regional states to familiarise themselves with the options and best practices that may be leveraged during negotiations on a treaty

specific to the Middle East. In its national statement delivered before the meeting, the Sultanate of Oman emphasised the importance of continuing to work in a spirit of cooperation and consensus among Member States, noting that the meetings held throughout the current year have contributed to deepening shared understanding of a number of issues pertaining to the future treaty, and to benefiting from relevant international experiences and expertise.

This meeting forms part of a series of preparatory sessions convened by the Working Committee under the presidency of the Sultanate of Oman for the Seventh Session, with the aim of providing a space for technical and substantive dialogue among Member States in advance of the conference in November, and building a common ground that can facilitate progress in negotiations.

Through its presidency of the Seventh Session of the Conference, the Sultanate of Oman continues its efforts, in collaboration with Member States and the United Nations, to bridge perspectives and foster dialogue and consensus, thereby supporting endeavors to realise the shared objective of establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. -ONA

GUM BULLY

Wild tree that has sustained community for generations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: High in the rocky landscapes of Oman's Al Hajar Mountains, a distinctive wild tree quietly produces a seasonal fruit that has nourished mountain communities for generations.

Known locally as the Gum Bully tree, *Sideroxylon mascatense* is among Oman's notable native wild plants, valued not only for its edible fruit but also for its ecological and economic importance.

The Environment Authority has highlighted the species as part of efforts to raise awareness of Oman's rich plant diversity and encourage the conservation of native vegetation.

A tree of the highlands

The Gum Bully tree belongs to the Sapotaceae family and grows naturally across the rocky highlands of Oman's Eastern and Western Hajar Mountains.

It is generally found at elevations above 1,000 metres, where

rugged terrain and limited water make conventional agriculture challenging.

The medium-sized tree can grow to around four metres in height and is distinguished by its thorny branches, which help it survive in the harsh mountain environment.

During its flowering period, the tree produces small white to yellowish flowers that appear in clusters. These later develop into small berries that mature during the summer.

As they ripen, the fruits change colour, eventually becoming dark purple to almost black.

A fruit with a long local tradition

The Gum Bully fruit is edible and considered nutritionally valuable. For generations, people living in Oman's mountainous areas have collected the seasonal fruit, both for household consumption and for sale in local markets.

Its annual fruiting season pro-



vides a natural food resource in areas where farming can be difficult because of steep slopes, rocky ground and scarce water.

Researchers have also identified *Monothea buxifolia* as an

economically important wild fruit species, particularly for communities living in mountainous regions.

The tree therefore represents more than a component of Oman's

natural landscape.

Its fruit has traditionally contributed to local livelihoods, while the species itself forms part of the ecological fabric of the Hajar Mountains.

Nature's resilience in Oman's mountains

The survival of the Gum Bully tree in Oman's rugged highlands reflects the remarkable adaptability of native vegetation.

Wild plants such as the Gum Bully have evolved to withstand demanding environmental conditions and play an important role in maintaining mountain ecosystems.

Preserving these species can help protect biodiversity while safeguarding plants that have cultural and economic value for local communities.

The Environment Authority's awareness campaign seeks to strengthen public knowledge of native Omani plants and encourage their protection as part of the Sultanate's natural heritage.

For mountain communities, the B  t remains a familiar seasonal gift from the landscape — a small, dark berry that connects Oman's biodiversity, traditional knowledge and local livelihoods.

Oman-Saudi Arabia aim to develop partnerships and boost economic ties

Oman-KSA

Coordination

Council meeting

also discussed

progress achieved in

implementing joint

initiatives between

the two sides



SALALAH: The seventh meeting of the heads of the coordination committee in the fields of economy, trade, and industry, stemming from the Oman-KSA Coordination Council, was held in the Wilayat of Salalah on Wednesday.

The meeting saw the participation of a number of officials and representatives of concerned entities from both sides, aiming to enhance economic, commercial, and industrial integration and develop partnerships and joint initiatives.

Eng. Ghalib Said Al Maamari, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, affirmed that the historical relations connecting the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia represent a firm foundation for elevating cooperation toward broader horizons, pointing out that the meeting aims to evaluate initiatives, assess achievements, and identify priorities to transition from the stage of ideas to actual implementation of projects and programmes according to a clear methodology that



achieves tangible added value.

Eng. Rakan Trabzoni, Saudi Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy and Planning for International Economic Affairs and Head of the Coordination Committee from the Saudi side, explained that the meeting comes as

an extension of continuous efforts under the umbrella of the Joint Coordination Council. These efforts, he added, contributed to developing initiatives and supporting integration, praising the rapid growth, qualitative partnership, facilitation of customs procedures, and

development of joint logistics infrastructure that contributed to increasing trade exchange volume and sustainable development.

The meeting also included the signing of the executive programme to activate the memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Economy in the Sultanate of Oman and the Ministry of Economy and Planning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the field of economy and planning for the years 2026-2028, in a step aimed at enhancing institutional cooperation and joint coordination in economic and planning fields between the two sides.

During the meeting, progress achieved in implementing joint initiatives between the two sides was discussed, alongside examining recommendations and future steps aimed at accelerating the pace of implementation and reducing challenges, serving mutual interests and enhancing the signing of agreements, memorandums of understanding, and proposals that enable expanding aspects of cooperation and deepening economic relations. — ONA



Printed and published by:
Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112



Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zedjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 22009004, E-mail: amcoman@choueirgroup.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

FEDERATION OF ARAB SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH COUNCILS



Need to support researchers and innovators reviewed

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman on Wednesday chaired the semi-annual meeting of the board of the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils (FASRC) for the year 2026.

Represented by the Research and Innovation Authority (RIA), Oman headed the meeting in its capacity as chair of the 47th session of the FASRC. The meeting, held via videoconferencing, reviewed the Secretariat-General's report that included the launch of research awards, the expansion of research and innovation networks (comprising 8,000 Arab researchers) and a review of financial indicators, which saw the allocation of more than one million US dollars to support scientific activities and programmes.

The meeting looked into joint strategic initiatives and projects that focused on Arab alliances for scholarly research and inno-

vation, in addition to the Federation's initiative codenamed "Solidarity for the Future".

The meeting also discussed mechanisms for activating the Arab Programme of Scientific Exchange and the Arab Green Innovation Programme, as well as means of enhancing scientific associations' role in supporting researchers and innovators in the region, among other issues.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the member states stressed the need to maintain joint Arab efforts in the fields of research and innovation with the prime aim of achieving sustainable development and building a knowledge-based economy in the Arab world.

The RIA was represented at the meeting by Dr. Saif bin Abdullah Al Haddabi, Chairman of the Research and Innovation Authority. — ONA

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 15, 2026



Thailand updates visa-free duration and entry rules for Omani travellers

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Bangkok has informed Omani citizens that Thailand will amend its visa-exemption regulations for tourism purposes, reducing the permitted visa-free stay from 60 days to 30 days, effective September 15, 2026.

Under the revised regulations, Omani passport holders will continue to benefit from visa-free entry to Thailand for tourism, but the maximum permitted stay will be 30 days. The change is part of Thailand's wider revision of its visa-exemption measures.

Omani Embassy

The Omani Embassy clarified that the amendment will not apply retroactively. Omani citizens who enter Thailand before September 15 will retain the period of stay granted to them upon entry.

For travellers entering Thailand through land border checkpoints, visa exemption will be limited to two entries per calendar year, according to the embassy's advisory.

The embassy also stressed that registration through the Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC) system remains a mandatory

requirement for entry. Travellers are required to complete the registration and obtain the necessary approval before travelling through the official platform.

Visa-free regime

Thailand started the visa-free regime in 2024 to boost tourism and invite more travellers to the country.

However, it is reviewing its 60-day visa-free policy after authorities noticed an increase in travellers using long tourist stays for purposes beyond tourism, such as remote work and extended living.

The government also wants tighter immigration checks and a more uniform visa system across countries to reduce the confusion about the visa schemes.

The officials stated that the new changes are being made to ensure they are better suited to the economy and national security, following an increase in the number of foreigners arrested in Thailand.

Thailand's updated visa policy changes are not limited to India. Several countries that earlier enjoyed relaxed entry rules may also see shorter visa-free stays, stricter immigration checks or changes in Thailand Visa on Arrival access.

GROUND WATER SYSTEMS

Agreements worth over OMR1mn signed for restoration of aflaj in North Al Batinah

SOHAR: Forty-nine agreements worth OMR1.19 million were signed in North Al Batinah Governorate for the restoration and maintenance of 64 aflaj (ground water systems) damaged during the recent "Al Masarrat" low-pressure on Wednesday.

The signing ceremony was held under the auspices of Mohammed bin Suleiman Al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah, and attended by Eng. Nasser bin Ali Al Marshoodi, Director General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in the Governorate, among other officials.

Eng. Nasser Al Marshoodi said that the signing of the agreements was in pursuance of efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources to maintain the smooth function of aflaj, being a vital resource of water that is directly linked to the sustainability of agricultural activity and the well-being of local communities.

Al Marshoodi explained that the



maintenance programme includes 76 aflaj, of which 12 are scheduled to be repaired in the first phase and 64 others in the second phase.

The project is deemed a significant investment in water infrastructure.

It also reflects the attention accorded to economic, social and environmental role of aflaj in the governorate's wilayats.

— ONA

11TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON FATWA

Major challenges facing Muslim family amid current rapid social development highlighted

CAIRO: Represented by the Office of the Grand Mufti, the Sultanate of Oman on Wednesday participated in the 11th World Conference on Fatwa, held in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt.

The conference brought together an elite group of thinkers, academics, researchers and experts, along with muftis from different parts of the world.

Oman's delegation was led by Ahmed bin Saud Al Siyabi, Secretary-General of the Office of Ifta in the Sultanate of Oman.

This year's conference was titled "Family challenges amid major transformations: A Fatwa approach to protecting the family and preserving its Islamic identity."

In a speech at the conference, Al



Siyabi spoke about key challenges facing the Muslim family amid the current rapid social, economic and technological developments.

He stressed the importance of raising awareness about the rulings of jurisprudence and the

consolidation of Islamic values in a manner that contributes to protecting the family, preserving its identity and ensuring its stability.

The Sultanate of Oman's participation in the conference reflects its commitment to engaging



in events that deal with religious and intellectual issues, seek to promote dialogue and exchange experiences and perspectives on matters related to the stability of Arab and Islamic societies and families.

— ONA

Iran condemns US attacks on civilian sites, responds with ‘crushing defensive strikes’

Tehran accused Washington of violating its national sovereignty and targeting non-military infrastructure, including telecommunication towers and civilian sites

TEHRAN: Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned recent US military strikes across several Iranian provinces, confirming that Iranian armed forces responded by launching “crushing defensive strikes” against American bases across the region.

In an official statement released on Wednesday, Tehran accused Washington of violating its national sovereignty and targeting non-military infrastructure, including telecommunication towers and civilian sites in Khuzestan, Sistan

and Baluchestan, Hormozgan, and Kerman provinces.

The ministry highlighted a devastating strike in Sirik County, Hormozgan Province, where a wedding celebration was hit.

“In the attack by the American enemy on a wedding celebration in Kohastak, located in Sirik County, Hormozgan Province, more than 70 fellow countrymen were martyred and injured, most of whom were women and children,” the statement declared.

Describing the attacks as war



crimes and a gross violation of international law, the ministry affirmed that Tehran exercised its inherent right to self-defence under international law by targeting the staging grounds of the US assault.

“In response to the US military aggression, the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran,

pursuant to the inherent right of legitimate self-defence, targeted US military bases, which were the origin, support, and staging points of the military aggression against Iran, with crushing defensive strikes,” the ministry stated.

Iran further urged neighbouring countries in the region to prevent the US military from utilising their

airspace and facilities for operations against Iranian territory.

Closing with a direct appeal to the international community, Tehran criticised the United Nations for failing to prevent foreign military intervention.

“The silence and inaction of UN organs in the face of continuous violations of fundamental principles

and rules of the Charter--especially Article 2, Paragraph 4--by a permanent member of the Security Council will further lead to the discredit of the organisation’s standing and threaten growing international peace and security,” the foreign ministry warned.

Earlier, Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei warned on Wednesday that Tehran would adopt a “new strategy” in its ongoing conflict with the United States following the latest escalation between the two sides.

Writing on X, Rezaei stated, “You will soon see that Iran’s new strategy on the battlefield, in diplomacy and in confronting the economic blockade will shatter your foundations.”

The warning followed a fresh wave of Iranian attacks against US positions across the Middle East, marking the heaviest exchange between the two nations in weeks.

— ANI

BILATERAL RELATIONS



India, Bangladesh discuss deepening people-to-people ties

DHAKA: Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Dinesh Trivedi, called on the Speaker of the Bangladesh National Parliament, Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Bir Bikram, MP and Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament, Barrister Kaiser Kamal, MP. The meetings took place on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The meeting with the Speaker was held on Wednesday at the Speaker’s office. The Speaker of the Bangladesh National Parliament, Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Bir Bikram, MP, stated that Bangladesh-India relations have always progressed through various ups and downs. He noted that the historical relationship between Bangladesh and India has evolved under different circumstances over time, said a press release from the Bangladesh Parliament secretariat.

The Speaker stated that through the staged elections of 2008, 2014, 2018, and 2024, the Awami League government undermined the democratic rights of the people. He added that the 2024 mass uprising led by students and the general public paved the way for the restoration of democracy. He further mentioned that during Sheikh Hasina’s regime, the relationship between India and Bangladesh was strictly government-centric.

The Speaker emphasised that people-to-people relations should be the foundation of India-Bangladesh ties. He added that this relationship will move forward based on mutual respect and independent sovereignty.

Indian High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi stated that the Government of India is keen on building a people-centric relationship between the two nations. He mentioned that the current government is working to fulfil the aspirations of the people by establishing strong people-to-people connections. During the meeting, they exchanged views on reciprocal parliamentary delegation visits to expand bilateral ties, the Rohingya crisis and rehabilitation, as well as sports and cultural exchanges. The High Commissioner extended an invitation to the Speaker on behalf of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha to visit India. He emphasised the importance of exchanging parliamentary delegation visits between India and Bangladesh.

Representatives of the Indian High Commission, the Secretary of the National Parliament Secretariat, and other relevant officials were present at the event.

Dinesh Trivedi, High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh, also paid a courtesy call on the Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament, Barrister Kaiser Kamal, MP.

The courtesy meeting took place on Tuesday at the Deputy Speaker’s office in the National Parliament Building.

During the meeting, cordial discussions were held on various issues, including bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India, parliamentary diplomacy, modernising parliamentary activities through the use of information technology, and further strengthening cooperation.

At the beginning of the meeting, Dinesh Trivedi praised the magnificent architectural design of the National Parliament Building, created by Louis I Kahn. Referring to the historical and friendly relations between Bangladesh and India, he stated that the two nations are bound by a shared history, culture, tradition, and mutual interest. To further advance existing relations, he emphasised increasing parliamentary engagement and cooperation. He noted that enhancing interaction among parliamentarians, conducting regular exchanges of views, and arranging bilateral parliamentary visits would play a crucial role in strengthening ties. Describing the Indian Parliament as a modern legislative body, Barrister Kaiser Kamal shared that Bangladesh has already initiated steps to implement an e-Parliament system and expressed hope for India’s cooperation in its successful realisation.

He highlighted that having an experienced parliamentarian like Dinesh Trivedi as India’s High Commissioner to Bangladesh presents a great opportunity in this regard. The Deputy Speaker expressed optimism that the High Commissioner would act as a bridge to foster parliamentary communication and help modernise Bangladesh’s parliamentary system.

The Deputy Speaker added that creating avenues for parliamentary diplomatic cooperation could serve as an excellent platform for exchanging knowledge and best practices between the two countries.

Both sides expressed hope for further strengthening bilateral relations, expanding areas of cooperation, and deepening mutual trust, stability, and confidence, prioritising the welfare of the people above all. — ANI

Honouring Excellence in Social Impact

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

■ 30th September, 2026
● JW Marriott Hotel Muscat

AWARD CATEGORIES

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

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

SCAN TO NOMINATE

For partnerships, table bookings or award nominations, contact:

Syed Amir Saleem: syed.amir@tevents.om | +968 78471944
Sanjeev Rana: sanjeev@tevents.om | +968 97221630
Shamik Rao: shamik.rao@tevents.om | +968 79333149

ORGANIZED BY: MEDIA PARTNERS: MANAGED BY:

SPORTS

Sonavale, Mirza star in Oman win

Sulakshan Kulkarni's men defeated Qatar by five wickets for their second successive win at the ongoing ACC Premier Cup in Malaysia

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Karan Sonavale and Hammad Mirza struck commanding half-centuries as Oman produced another authoritative performance in the ACC Men's Premier Cup, chasing down Qatar's 272 with five wickets to spare at the YSD-UKM Cricket Oval in Bangi, Malaysia, on Wednesday.

The emphatic victory, Oman's second successive win in Group B, further strengthened their push for a place in the semi-finals and underlined the growing confidence in Sulakshan Kulkarni's side.

Set 273 for victory, Oman raced to 276 for five in just 40.3 overs, with Mirza remaining unbeaten

on a composed 84 off 96 balls and captain Vinayak Shukla finishing unbeaten on run-a-ball 46.

Sonavale provided the explosive impetus with a superb 83 from 55 balls, including five fours and seven sixes, with a strike rate of 150.

The chase was not without early setbacks, Oman slipped to 54 for two inside 10 overs, but Sonavale and Mirza responded with a decisive 100-run third-wicket stand off 69 balls that changed the complexion of the contest.

Sonavale attacked with freedom, while Mirza provided stability at the other end as the pair rapidly took Oman towards the target. Sonavale eventually fell at 166.

Mirza then took complete con-

trol of the chase. After reaching his half-century, he continued to bat with authority and composure, ensuring Qatar were never able to fight back into the contest.

Following the dismissal of Jiten Ramanandi at 182, Mirza and Shukla added an unbeaten 92-run partnership to take Oman comfortably over the line. Shukla's assured 46 complemented Mirza's innings that included six boundaries and two sixes as Oman completed the chase with 9.3 overs remaining.

Mirza was later named the player of the match.

Earlier, Oman's bowlers did an excellent job of restricting Qatar to 272 despite useful contributions throughout the innings.

Qatar's opener Zubair Ali top-scored with 77 off 101 balls, while Imal Liyanage made 45 and captain Mirza Mohammed Baig provided late acceleration with 59 from just 38 balls. Daniel Louis also struck a brisk 34 off 25 balls as Qatar moved beyond 250.



The key to Oman's effort, however, was Hassnain Shah, who claimed an impressive four wickets for 58 runs. Jiten Ramanandi supported him with two wickets, while Jay Odedra had one for 32.

Shah struck repeatedly when Qatar threatened to build momentum, dismissing Zubair, Muhammad Asim, Baig and Shahzeb Afridi to ensure Qatar could not turn several promising starts into a match-defining total.

With two wins from two Group B matches, Oman have made an ideal start to their campaign and will carry significant momentum ahead. Oman next take on Kuwait on September 5 before concluding their group fixtures with the UAE on September 8.

Brief scores: Qatar 272 all out in 50 overs (Zubair 77, Baig 59, Liyanage 45; Hassnain Shah 4/58) lost to Oman 276/5in 40.3 overs (Sonavale 83, Mirza 84*, Shukla 46*, Baig 2/45).

From 28 Aug to 16 Sept. 2026

Live The Vibe

لولو تسوق واربز

SHOP & WIN

10,000

Worth of Prizes | قيمة النقديّة

WITH EVERY PURCHASE OF 10, GET A CHANCE TO WIN

WEEKLY CASH PRIZE

1,000

OTHER WEEKLY PRIZES

Apple -13inch MacBook Air
Apple -13inch iPad Air
Apple Iphone 17 Pro Max
LuLu Shoppingift 50/-

Where the world comes to shop

سعادة
HAPPINESS
LOYALTY REWARDED
كسب النقاط • خصومات فورية • مزايا للأعضاء
EARN POINTS • INSTANT DISCOUNTS • MEMBER BENEFITS

LORD'S FALLOUT

Aaqib Javed warns of Imam 'inquiry'

LAHORE: Aaqib Javed, the Pakistan Cricket Board's director of high performance, has launched a remarkable attack on opening batter Imam-ul-Haq, criticising him for not batting in either innings of the Lord's Test and promising to "take action" against him.

In an interview with Pakistan broadcast network Geo, Aaqib said he is "deeply disappointed" in the player, and that Imam would have to face an inquiry for his decision, which was down to a low-grade calf tear.

"The Imam injury is a big question mark, and a deep disappointment," Aaqib said. "Players in the past used to get injuries, but they used to put on casts and still tried [to play]."

"We'll take action against this. How is it possible that a pulled muscle ruled you out of batting in both innings? He should have tried and fought. He'll have to face an inquiry; I can't say he faked it, but a muscle pull like that cannot stop you from batting altogether."

Imam, who was one of seven players the PCB called back home after Pakistan's humbling defeat in the second Test against England at Lord's, was widely critiqued for not batting in the Test.

Minutes before the start of the second day's play, the PCB put out a statement saying he had suffered a tear in his left calf, and that his involvement in the remainder of the Test would be subject to medical opinion.

After no involvement in the Test for the next two days, Imam emerged to warm-up with the rest of the side on the fourth morning. Stuart Broad, on broadcast at the time, was heavily criti-



cal, calling it "all for show", with David Warner also pouring scorn in a social media post.

But Imam was not the only player sent packing. Six others accompanied him, as did Pakistan's head coach Sarfaraz Ahmed and bowling coach Umar Gul, in a sweeping overhaul.

Aaqib explained why such drastic action had been taken, saying the PCB wanted to send a message to the recalled players, while blaming the team management for what he viewed as flawed team selection.

"Two Test matches have come and gone and the team has not competed in any way," Aaqib said.

"There's one Test still to go. They [the management] had a pace allrounder available, a second wicketkeeper, a fast bowler in Ubaid Shah. But those decisions were not being made. I spoke to the captain [Babar Azam] and coach and asked them to put Ubaid in because the other bowlers [Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Ali and Khurram Shahzad] are all similarly paced.

"The message we're sending to the recalled players is that you have to raise your game on important tours and compete, and we should be able to see some effort" - Agencies

SRI LANKA SQUAD FOR ENGLAND TOUR

Asalanka appointed SL vice-captain

COLOMBO: Charith Asalanka has been made part of Sri Lanka's leadership group once more, three months after being deposed as ODI captain and six months on after being sidelined from the T20 unit. He will be vice-captain of the ODI and T20I sides for Sri Lanka's tour of England in September.

Former vice-captain Kamindu Mendis has been retained in both squads, while Kusal Mendis will continue to captain both white-ball sides. Dasun Shanaka returns to the ODI side for the first time since January 2024, while the selectors have called up legspinner Sachindu Colombage for the first time as well.

Asalanka's inclusion is one of four changes to Sri Lanka's T20I side, with Lahiru Udara, Janith Liyanage and Tharindu Rathnayake being drafted in. Pavan Rathnayake, Lasith Croospulle, Milan Rathnayake and Dilshan Madushanka have been left out of the T20I side. Sri Lanka will play three T20Is and three ODIs in England, starting with the first T20I in Southampton on September 15.



Sri Lanka ODI squad: Pathum Nissanka, Kamil Mishara, Kamindu Mendis, Charith Asalanka (vc), Kusal Mendis (c), Janith Liyanage, Pavan Rathnayake, Dasun Shanaka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dunith Wellalage, Maheesh Theekshana, Sachindu Colombage, Dushmantha Chameera, Eshan Malinga, Asitha Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka.
T20I squad: Nissanka, Mishara, Lahiru Udara, Kusal Mendis (c), Kamindu Mendis, Asalanka (vc), Liyanage, Shanaka, Wellalage, Hasaranga, Theekshana, Tharindu Rathnayake, Chameera, Malinga, Nuwan Thushara, Binura Fernando. - Agencies

OMAN OIL PRICE RISES
The price of Oman crude oil has increased, with prices for delivery by November 2026 reaching \$101.56. The price of Oman crude oil rose by \$1.75 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$99.81. -**ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 7,607.04 points, down by -0.05% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.28% at 613.20 points. National Aluminium, up 3.96%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 4.71%, was the top loser.

Muscat Stock Exchange Index jumps by 4.5% in August 2026



The monthly growth increased the year-to-date (YTD) 2026 performance to 29.6% the highest among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The MSX 30 Index bounced back to growth during August 2026 with 4.5% increase to close the month at 7,604.01 points, according to a new report.

“The monthly growth increased the year-to-date (YTD) 2026 performance to 29.6% the highest among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets,” the Kuwait-based Kamco Invest said in its ‘GCC Markets Monthly Report August 2026’.

In terms of sectoral performance, the overall gain was comprehensive as all three indices recorded increases during August-2026. The Services Index registered the biggest growth at (+5.9%) to close the month at 3,060.38 points, followed by the Financial Index with (+3.6%) and the Industrial Index with (+1.6%).

The report further said that in terms of company performance,



Al Batinah Development & Investment Holding Company topped the gainers list with a share price jump of 23.3%. Abraj Energy Services and Oman Chromite Co. were next on the gainers chart with monthly gains of 16.5% and 15.2%, respectively.

On the decliners’ side, National Aluminium Products Co led the chart with a 50% share price decline, followed by Salalah Mills and Salalah Port Services Co. which witnessed share price drops of 10.6% and 9.8%, respectively, Kamco Invest said in its report.

Abraj Energy Services recently reported an expansion in its Ku-

wait operations with stable first half of 2026 net income, utilisation rate with record backlog record.

Trading activity on the exchange increased during August-2026 as compared to the previous month. “The total volume of shares traded increased by 3.5% to 3.5 billion shares in August-2026, compared to 3.3 billion shares in July-2026. The total value traded on the exchange also increased by 6.1% to OMR0.98 billion, up from OMR0.92 billion in the previous month,” the report added.

Sohar International Bank topped the monthly value traded chart with transactions total-

ling OMR173.8 million, followed by OQ Base Industries and Bank Muscat, with total values traded of OMR167.4 million and OMR 164.3 million, respectively. In terms of monthly volume traded, Sohar International Bank again led the list with 951 million shares, followed by OQ Base Industries and OQ Gas Networks with volumes of 663.9 million shares and 482.6 million shares, respectively.

Economy

In economic news, the Oman’s public revenues increased by 13% to approximately OMR6.602 billion by the end of second quar-

ter (Q2) 2026, up from roughly OMR5.8 billion during the same period last year, mainly driven by higher oil revenues.

Moreover, Oman’s total public expenditure reached approximately OMR6.6 billion, an increase of 9% as compared with OMR6.1 billion in the corresponding period of 2025, according to data published by the Omani government.

Meanwhile, net oil revenues increased by 10% by the end of Q2 to reach roughly OMR3.3 billion, as compared with OMR3 billion during the same period in 2025. On the other hand, the Sultanate’s total public debt witnessed slight growth, reaching OMR14.16 billion by the end of Q2-2026 as compared to OMR14.12 billion during Q2-2025.

The report further said that in terms of governmental spending, Oman’s subsidies allocated to the social protection system reached OMR323 million by the end of Q2 2026, while electricity and petroleum product subsidies reached OMR288 and OMR162 million, respectively. The Sultanate’s GDP in real terms increased by 2.6% year-on-year (y-o-y) during Q1- 2026 to OMR9.7 billion, mainly due to expansion in oil activities, according to governmental data. Oil activities represented OMR3.04 billion after improving 4.6% y-o-y, while non-oil activities accounted for OMR7.04 billion, registering 2.4% y-o-y growth during the same period.

GCC markets

Meanwhile, GCC equity markets also witnessed steady recovery during August-2026 led by stabilising geopolitical situation in the Middle East region. The rally was

also supported by a broad-based gain in global equity markets after posting a healthy earnings season.

The MSCI GCC index broke a three-month losing streak and gained 3.9% during August-2026, the biggest monthly gain in seven months backed by gains recorded by most of the exchanges in the region. Saudi Arabia was the best performing market in the region during the month with a gain of 5.1%, also the biggest monthly gain since January-2026, followed by Kuwait with gains of 1.6%. On the other hand, Qatar and Bahrain benchmarks witnessed declines of 1.1% and 1.0%, respectively, during the month.

The monthly sector performance chart also reflected the broad-based gains with almost all the GCC sectors registering gains during the month. The Hotels & Leisure sector gained almost 10% followed by Materials and Insurance sectors with gains of 8.2% and 7.5%, respectively. Large-cap sectors like Telecom and Banks showed gains of 5.0% and 4.7%, respectively while the Energy sector showed relatively smaller gain of 1.2%.

Global equities also finished August-2026 with gains across most major equity markets resulting in a 2.6% gain in the MSCI World Index. After two consecutive months of declines, the S&P 500 index touched a record high by mid-month but receded partially month end on profit booking and closed with a gain of 2.6%. However, the latest comments from the Fed Chair on a possible rate hike by September-2026 sent global bond yields to the highest since 2008 by month end while equity markets declined.

ECONOMY REMAINS RESILIENT

India’s 7.8% GDP growth backed by buoyant high-frequency indicators

MUMBAI: India’s 7.8% real GDP growth in the first quarter of FY27 was supported by buoyant high-frequency economic indicators, including strong industrial activity and electricity consumption, according to Rumki Majumdar, Director and Chief Economist, Deloitte India.

Speaking exclusively to ANI, Majumdar said the stronger-than-expected GDP growth suggests that the economy has remained resilient despite the uncertainties during the April-June period.

Extremely positive

“The numbers that have come up are extremely positive. I don’t think the market had bet on a 7.8 per cent growth,” Majumdar said, adding that Deloitte is likely to significantly revise its growth projection for the full financial year. #Majumdar said the signifi-

cance of the 7.8 per cent growth was greater because the April-June quarter was expected to be one of the more uncertain periods of the year, amid the impact of the war, higher petrol prices, rising fertiliser prices and the building impact of El Nino.

She also said several high-frequency indicators were already pointing towards underlying buoyancy in the economy.

“If you look at some of the high frequency indicators also it had been pointing out. Say CAPEX or IIP has been one of the highest gains, and then electricity consumption has been pretty good. That kind of tells you that industrial production has been quite strong,” she said.

Majumdar also pointed to strong urban demand, saying indicators from sectors such as travel and hospitality reflected continued spending by consumers. -**ANI**

GULF GREEN MOBILITY SYSTEM LAB

Policies and technical solutions for developing sustainable mobility system in GCC reviewed

SALALAH: The “Gulf Green Mobility System Lab” organised in Salalah on Wednesday by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology as part of the Gulf Green Mobility Forum 2026 – discussed a number of policies, regulations, and technical solutions related to developing the sustainable mobility system in the countries of the GCC, with a focus on electric charging infrastructure and the role of green hydrogen in the heavy transport sector and logistics system.

The lab, held at Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah, addressed in its first theme the regulatory frameworks and legislation governing electric vehicle charging stations, as well as operation and management models for charging station operators, alongside ways to integrate charging infrastructure with smart grids and load management.

Participants also discussed in-



vestment and licensing challenges, the provision of supporting infrastructure for electric mobility, and the role of governments in creating a conducive regulatory environment and encouraging the private sector to participate in developing and expanding the electric charging market.

The second theme focused on the role of green hydrogen in reducing emissions in the heavy transport

sector, including trucks and buses, and the readiness of logistics infrastructure to accommodate hydrogen technologies and their applications in the transport sector.

The lab reviewed green hydrogen supply chain models in ports and industrial zones, along with policies and incentives that could contribute to growing the demand for hydrogen in the transport sector, supporting the transition toward

low-emission transport solutions.

The lab is expected to contribute to producing a roadmap for regulatory and technical gaps associated with electric mobility infrastructure, alongside establishing recommendations that contribute to developing emerging markets in green mobility and drafting an initial framework for integration between electric charging systems and hydrogen solutions in the heavy transport sector.

The lab aims to enhance regional cooperation among GCC countries in sustainable mobility projects and exchange expertise and experiences in developing policies, infrastructure, and technologies supporting transition in the transport sector.

The lab represents a platform for dialogue among concerned entities to identify priorities and challenges and lay out practical tracks that can support the development of an integrated green mobility system at the GCC level. -**ONA**

MAJOR INVESTMENT PLAN

Chevron to invest over \$7bn in Venezuela, double oil production

HOUSTON: Chevron Corporation will invest more than \$7 billion in its Venezuelan joint ventures over the next five years and more than double production to around 600,000 barrels per day, after securing updated terms and additional acreage from Venezuela to support future investment and production growth, as per an official statement by the company.

The agreements provide Chevron’s joint ventures with enhanced fiscal, commercial and legal terms aimed at supporting long-term investment and project development, the US energy major said on Wednesday.

The development comes as US Energy Secretary Chris Wright is set to travel to Venezuela for an expected announcement on Chev-



ron’s plans to expand its operations. Wright’s visit comes after a recent oil agreement between the US and Venezuela, under which Washington finalised terms for a direct ownership stake in Venezuelan oil fields previously

influenced by Chinese and Russian corporations, according to a US official.

The official had said the arrangement was aimed at securing long-term US energy supplies and bringing Venezuela’s oil resources further into the Western Hemisphere’s economic orbit.

Against this backdrop, Chevron said its expanded position in Venezuela would strengthen its portfolio and support future oil growth.

“With improved terms and additional acreage, we are strengthening a portfolio that we believe can deliver attractive low-cost oil growth, support energy supply and create differentiated long-term value,” Chevron Chairman and CEO Mike Wirth said. -**ANI**

SOHAR: A programme codenamed Ruwaj, organised by the Youth Centre in partnership with Sohar Port and Free Zone, concluded in the Wilayat of Sohar yesterday. The programme included a training course on empowering owners of small business projects and youth products and enhancing the projects and products’ readiness to compete and grow in the market.

The closing ceremony was held under the auspices of Mohammed bin Suleiman Al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah.

Ruwaj programme benefited 100 young men and women, aged between 20 and 34 years, from North Al Batinah Governorate. It focused on helping participants convert their ideas and products into tangible projects that are capable of



growing in a sustainable manner and competing in the market.

The programme dealt with key topics related to the needs of business owners, including initiating and developing products, market analysis, marketing, pricing strategies, skills of persuasion and negotiation. It also included designing brand identity, visual marketing,

managing stores through social media platforms and the fundamentals of financial management of small businesses.

The programme concluded with an exhibition at Sohar Bazaar featuring top 30 participating projects, as well as a presentation on selling in a market-simulating environment. -**ONA**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

National Aluminium, up 3.96%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 4.71%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 7,607.04 points, down by -0.05% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.28% at 613.20 points. National Aluminium, up 3.96%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 4.71%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 8410 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 49.98 million, with more than 201.54 million shares changing hands. Out of 71 traded securities, 22 advanced, 18 declined, and 31 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for RO 1255K while foreign investors were net sellers for RO 1182K, followed by domestic investors for RO 73K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 13,401.67 points, down -0.12%. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Sohar International Bank, Global

Financial Investments, DIDIC were up by 2.16%, 1.60%, 1.48%, 0.35% respectively. Prices of Bank Dhofar, Takaful Oman, Muscat Finance, Ahli Bank, Oman Arab Bank were down by 3.18%, 1.64%, 1.49%, 0.99%, 0.77% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 9,725.02 points, up 0.73%. Prices of National Aluminium, Al Anwar Ceramics, Oman Chlorine, Jazeera Steel Products, Voltamp Energy were up by 3.96%, 2.90%, 2.56%, 1.67%, 1.14% respectively. Prices of Raysut Cement, Oman Refreshment, Gulf International Chemicals were down by 4.71%, 3.46%, 1.41% respectively. Services Index was down by -0.02% before closing at 3,064.24 points. Prices of Sohar Power, Sembcorp Salalah, National Gas, National Gas, OQ Exploration & Production were up by 3.67%, 1.55%, 0.90%, 0.90%, 0.86% respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Oman Telecom, Abraj Energy, Phoenix Power, Ooredoo were down by 1.12%, 0.58%, 0.49%, 0.35%, 0.31% respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %	
MSX 30 INDEX	7628.16	7590.07	7607.04	7611.00	-3.96	-0.05 %	
FINANCIAL INDEX	13451.61	13348.94	13401.67	13417.72	-16.04	-0.12 %	
Industry Index	9757.06	9650.49	9725.02	9654.42	70.60	0.73 %	
Services Index	3082.65	3060.98	3064.24	3064.95	-0.71	-0.02 %	
MSX Shariah Index	614.43	611.19	613.20	611.45	1.74	0.28 %	
MSX TR INDEX	11826.54	11767.48	11793.79	11799.93	-6.14	-0.05 %	
FINANCIAL TR IDX	16538.06	16411.83	16476.66	16496.38	-19.72	-0.12 %	
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	12496.31	12359.82	12455.28	12364.86	90.42	0.73 %	
SERVICES TR IDX	4139.05	4109.96	4114.34	4115.29	-0.95	-0.02 %	
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1291.27	1291.27	1291.27	1291.27	0.00	0.00 %	

Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
201,549,985	49,978,322	8,410	38,886,782,004	22	18	31	71

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2																
SIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	21,323	4,024	10	0.188	0.190	0.188	0.189	0.185	0.004	2.162	0.189	0.189	0.195	0.100	58,119,299
OM0000000178	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	20,000	18,280	40	0.910	0.915	0.910	0.915	0.900	-0.015	1.667	0.915	0.905	0.910	0.100	114,281,633
OM0000003386	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	82,881,747	15,553,711	1,624	0.187	0.190	0.186	0.190	0.187	0.003	1.804	0.190	0.191	0.190	0.100	1,458,441,078
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	161,354	42,585	36	0.257	0.270	0.257	0.262	0.258	0.004	1.550	0.262	0.260	0.263	0.100	250,097,551
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	1,218,372	414,795	27	0.339	0.345	0.339	0.344	0.339	0.005	1.475	0.344	0.341	0.344	0.100	68,800,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,493,770	267,688	170	0.178	0.182	0.177	0.178	0.178	0.000	1.136	0.178	0.178	0.185	0.010	178,000,000
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	3,859,981	1,786,467	301	0.466	0.467	0.460	0.467	0.463	0.004	0.864	0.467	0.460	0.467	-0.010	3,736,000,000
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	2,992	1,287	4	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.427	-0.003	0.703	0.430	0.427	0.469	0.100	21,647,222
OM0000009808	QO BASE INDUSTRIES (SPZ)	55,246,144	14,324,801	1,545	0.259	0.261	0.258	0.260	0.259	-0.001	0.386	0.260	0.259	0.260	0.040	899,467,621
OM0000001509	DHOFAI INTL DEVELOPMENT & INVEST	48,956	13,887	15	0.280	0.288	0.280	0.285	0.284	-0.001	0.352	0.285	0.285	0.300	0.100	141,370,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	11,519	39,618	31	3.425	3.440	3.425	3.440	3.435	0.005	0.146	3.440	3.440	3.440	0.100	308,568,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	33,205	24,904	4	0.750	0.750	0.750	0.750	0.749	-0.001	0.134	0.750	0.731	0.752	0.100	90,000,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	136,102	42,874	15	0.315	0.320	0.315	0.315	0.315	0.000	0.000	0.315	0.315	0.317	0.100	93,075,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGG & INVESTMENT	4,000	603	2	0.150	0.151	0.150	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.150	0.166	0.100	22,650,000
OM00000001881	OMAN EMIRATES HO	32,900	4,244	3	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.000	0.000	0.129	0.127	0.138	0.100	16,507,969
OM00000001749	OMAN CEMENT	420	249	1	0.594	0.594	0.594	0.594	0.594	0.000	0.000	0.594	0.580	0.650	0.100	196,538,390
OM0000002226	AL JAZEERA SERVICES	2,880	745	3	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.250	0.249	0.250	0.100	10,710,748
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	73,105	6,433	7	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.100	31,339,202
OM0000002440	AL SHARIQA INVESTMENT HO	6,100	598	5	0.099	0.100	0.096	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.098	0.102	0.100	9,000,000
OM0000003000	AI MAHIA PETROLEUM PRODTS MKRTNG	691	755	2	1.215	1.215	1.215	1.215	1.215	0.000	0.000	1.215	1.200	1.215	0.100	83,855,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	5,500	864	3	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.157	0.000	0.000	0.157	0.155	0.158	0.100	25,120,000
OM0000003234	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	94,023	26,044	9	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.000	0.000	0.277	0.257	0.277	0.100	56,485,570
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	26,287	14,362	13	0.146	0.147	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.000	0.000	0.146	0.132	0.160	0.100	326,593,143
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	109,290	12,042	19	0.111	0.111	0.110	0.111	0.111	0.000	0.000	0.111	0.110	0.111	0.100	19,425,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	341,588	67,274	46	0.200	0.200	0.196	0.197	0.197	0.000	0.000	0.197	0.197	0.202	0.100	132,952,824
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	114,927	22,704	22	0.199	0.199	0.197	0.197	0.197	0.000	0.000	0.197	0.197	0.197	0.100	140,738,049
OM0000009710	BARKA DESALINATION	52,532	8,072	11	0.157	0.160	0.144	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.148	0.170	0.100	12,083,520
OM0000009072	QO GAS NETWORKS	29,404,029	6,597,293	1,353	0.224	0.226	0.224	0.225	0.225	0.000	0.000	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.100	974,390,382
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	5,186,397	2,132,253	524	0.412	0.413	0.409	0.412	0.413	-0.001	-0.245	0.410	0.410	0.372	0.100	3,092,635,590
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	19,647	6,304	5	0.321	0.321	0.320	0.320	0.321	-0.001	-0.312	0.320	0.319	0.325	0.100	208,302,154
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	633,900	180,845	30	0.286	0.288	0.285	0.285	0.286	-0.001	-0.350	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.100	416,841,416
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,048,933	431,582	234	0.411	0.413	0.410	0.410	0.412	-0.002	-0.485	0.410	0.412	0.410	0.100	315,782,940
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	3,317,145	4,541,287	145	1.374	1.374	1.363	1.365	1.373	-0.008	-0.583	1.363	1.363	1.363	0.100	1,023,750,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	49,006	20,887	4	0.420	0.421	0.420	0.420	0.423	-0.003	-0.709	0.420	0.403	0.430	0.100	471,586,644
OM00000010120	ASDAD SHIPPING	4,198,124	1,039,125	1,174	0.248	0.251	0.245	0.245	0.248	-0.003	-1.210	0.245	0.245	0.272	0.000	1,276,142,349
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAI	1,074,624	231,154	240	0.220	0.220	0.211	0.213	0.220	-0.007	-3.182	0.213	0.213	0.215	0.100	64,747,087
Total	36	191,003,513	47,880,319	7,697												
Parallel Market																
OM0000003711	SOHAR POWER	479	108	2	0.225	0.226	0.225	0.226	0.218	0.008	3.670	0.226	0.225	0.235	0.100	4,500,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	733,423	103,427	71	0.138	0.144	0.138	0.142	0.138	0.004	2.899	0.142	0.141	0.142	0.100	31,240,000
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	45,727	7,211	12	0.156	0.171	0.156	0.160	0.156	0.004	2.564	0.160	0.149	0.160	0.100	11,441,415
OM0000002580	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INVEST	1,125	2,250	4	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	1.980	0.020	1.010	2.000	1.980	2.000	0.100	140,000,000
OM00000001160	NATIONAL GAS	173,101	19,412	17	0.113	0.113	0.111	0.112	0.111	-0.001	0.901	0.112	0.111	0.112	0.100	9,520,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	135,258	20,046	19	0.148	0.149	0.148	0.149	0.148	0.001	0.676	0.149	0.149	0.150	0.100	30,244,980
OM00000011151	OMIFCO	8,347,124	1,737,205	434	0.206	0.210	0.206	0.208	0.207	-0.001	0.483	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.000	1,391,390,000
OM00000010200	OMAN CHROMITE	220	869	1	3.950	3.950	3.950	3.950	3.950	0.000	0.000	3.950	3.700	4.345	1.000	14,338,500
OM00000001178	MUSCAT GASES	6,542	909	1	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.139	0.139	0.140	0.100	4,170,000
OM00000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	6,447	3,771	3	0.585	0.585	0.585	0.585	0.585	0.000	0.000	0.585	0.582	0.585	0.100	101,581,594
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	778	72	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.102	0.100	0.000	0.082	0.092	0.091	0.100	714,036
OM0000007407	DHOFAI GENERATING	18,997	1,520	4	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.100	17,778,200
OM0000007910	OMAN REAL ESTATE	3,900	273	5	0.070	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.100	14,000,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	57,000	6,056	15	0.106	0.107	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.000	0.000	0.106	0.105	0.106	0.100	89,222,313
OM0000000868	THE PEARL REEF	20,430	3,730	7	0.183	0.183	0.182	0.183	0.183	0.000	0.000	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.100	108,322,949
OM0000005699	JABAL REIF	380	40	2	0.106	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.100	18,618,000
OM00000002560	OMAN ARAB BANK	575,000	148,285	78	0.259	0.259	0.256	0.257	0.259	-0.002	-0.772	0.257	0.256	0.257	0.100	514,570,037
OM0000002200	ABU BANK	6,855	1,972	2	0.091	0.091	0.090	0.090	0.092	-0.002	-0.569	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	555,658,000
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	24,405	2,159	4	0.089	0.089	0.088	0.088	0.089	-0.001	-1.124	0.088	0.088	0.094	0.100	19,688,435
OM0000002623	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	68,975	4,828	7	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.071	-0.001	-1.408	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.100	147,000
OM00000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	7,145	993	5	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.141	-0.002	-1.418	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.100	13,761,000
OM00000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	4,365	275	2	0.063	0.066	0.063	0.066	0.067	-0.001	-1.493	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.100	20,271,657
OM0000000476	TAKAFUL OMAN	34,900	2,099	7	0.060	0.061	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.100	15,000,000
OM0000001428	OMAN REFRESHMENT	2,200	2,344	3	1.100	1.100	1.062	1.062	1.100	-0.038	-3.455	1.062	1.061	1.062	0.100	53,100,000
Total	24	10,274,796	2,069,256	706												



ADVERTISE WITH US,
FIND THE RIGHT **CANDIDATES**
FOR YOUR COMPANY

CONNECT

PRINT EDITION



WWW.TIMESOFOMAN.COM
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 03, 2026

PLACE YOUR
ADVT HERE

Email to : amcoman@choueirigroup.com



RENT

CARGO

VACANCY



RENT OR SALE?

PLACE YOUR
ADVT HERE

Email: amcoman@choueirigroup.com



CARGO MADE
SIMPLE

Advertise with us

Send your advertisement to:
amcoman@choueirigroup.com

PLACE
YOUR
ADVT HERE

Send your ad to: amcoman@choueirigroup.com



WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Muscat 9679 0594
9679 0684

Sohar 9731 6218
Salalah 9429 9325

www.orbit-oman.com



JOB VACANCY

URGENTLY REQUIRED

An excellent grade and reputed contracting company requires the following:

- MEP PROJECT MANAGERS (Minimum 15 years Gulf experience)
- MEP PROJECT ENGINEER (Minimum 3 years Gulf experience)

Kindly forward their CV to
omanjobvacancies2026@gmail.com

URGENTLY REQUIRED

QUANTITY SURVEYOR

5 years Oman/GCC experienced Quantity Surveyor required for a reputed construction company in Oman, for their industrial building project in Khasab, to be stationed at Khasab.

Interested candidates may send their CV to
E-mail: civilengjobs2025@gmail.com

JOB WANTED

FINANCE

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

FINANCE

Experienced ICWA/CMA (India), M.Com & OACPA certified professional with 15+ years in Costing, Manufacturing Finance, Corporate Planning & Strategy, MIS and Budgeting.

Email: harindranath.7891@gmail.com

Contact : +968 96098863

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

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

VIDEO EDITOR

An Indian video editor with 6 months experience and proficiency in ADOBE PREMIERE PRO and ADOBE AFTER EFFECTS is looking for suitable job.

Contact: +968 97411676

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

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

PROCUREMENT

PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY CHAIN PROFESSIONAL

18+ years' GCC experience in Procurement, Supply Chain, Warehousing & Logistics. Available for suitable positions in Oman.

Contact : 91257663

PROCUREMENT

Procurement, postgraduate 15+ yrs experience in Oman oil & gas, EPC, PEB & structural steel projects also has sound knowledge in import, customs clearance and freight & logistics.

Contact : 75123132

ADVERTISE WITH US

Send your advt. to: amcoman@choueirigroup.com

JOB WANTED

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

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

48 yrs male Manager in Accounts (23 yrs exp).
Contact : 91410602

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.
Ph: 99680529, Email: evapraisya@gmail.com

DRIVER

Bangladeshi with 10 yrs experience looking job.
Contact: 78096017

ENGINEER

Civil Engineer, 5 yrs experience, seeking civil, planning, sustainability engineer opportunities. Contact : +96891864596. Email : arun.sustainable@gmail.com

Indian male, 35yrs old Mechanical engineer, PMV fleet engineer with 10 yrs of experience in Oman & valid D/L.
Contact : +96894002909

ENGINEER

Industrial & Quality Engineer, Masters in industrial engineering with 6+ yrs experience in manufacturing with a valid USA D/L.
Contact: +96871753405
Email: abhinavchalla95@gmail.com

Mechanical engineer 11+ yrs experience in Oman HVAC, MEP, projects, facility management. Ready to join immediately. Contact: 91690765

IT

Indian male, MCA qualified, 9+ yrs of experience as IT Head (Networking, IT support & Odoo ERP) with hands-on experience working in Oman. Seeking a suitable position.
Contact: 79701775

MANAGER

Project Manager with 24 yrs Gulf experience, including 12 years in Oman extensive expertise in MEP project management, project execution, electrical and mechanical installation, testing & commissioning, team leadership, and project coordination.
Contact: 76925100

MANAGER

Construction Manager, B.Tech-Civil, exp-18 yrs. (residential and commercial Bldg, infra and refinery projects) D/L Oman & UAE. Contact : +91 9894020709, Email: bala.palaniyappa@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

Male looking job for electrician & building maintenance with D/L.
Contact : 97315461

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Indian male (36), MBA, 13+ yrs exp in procurement & logistics, valid Oman D/L ready to join immediately.
Contact: 92536194

SALES/MARKETING

Sales executive with 6 yrs of experience with Oman DL. , is looking for a suitable vacancy. Contact: 78766246

Indian Male, BBA, 20 years experience in Sales & Marketing in Oman. Holding valid Oman driving license seeks suitable placement. Contact No : 93011232. Email: jitinjoshua920@gmail.com

ADVERTISE WITH US

Send your advt. to:
amcoman@choueirigroup.com

CARGO AND LOGISTICS

PROMOTE YOUR SERVICES WITH US



Send your advertisement to amcoman@choueirigroup.com

DRC’s Ebola caseload tops 6,000 as concerns grow

The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo strain of the Ebola virus, has spread to around 60 zones in six provinces in Democratic Republic of Congo, raising fears that the virus is outpacing efforts to contain it

BUNIA: The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to escalate, with confirmed infections now topping 6,000 and the death toll reaching 2,911, according to government figures.

The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo strain of the Ebola virus, has spread to around 60 zones in six provinces, raising fears that the virus is outpacing efforts to contain it.

“Around 60 health zones are now affected, every week more are added to the list. And the same pattern is repeated everywhere: initially, there is resistance and denial, followed by gradual acceptance,” DW correspondent Jonas Gerding reported from Bunia, the capital of the Ituri province, the epicentre of the latest Ebola outbreak in Congo.

“Unfortunately, a lot more people will die until this Ebola outbreak gets under control,” he added.

Health experts have said the situation is particularly worrying in



eastern Congo, where conflict and insecurity are making it harder for response teams to reach affected communities.

“This outbreak is the fastest-growing Ebola epidemic on record. It is growing faster and wider than the response to contain it, but it can be stopped,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told journalists last week.

The United Nations has appealed for more funding as humanitarian agencies struggle to keep pace with the increasing number of cases.

“International attention, political focus and resources are still lagging behind the reality unfolding on the ground,” Guterres said, warning that the world “must also overcome another virus — the virus of indifference.”

Vaccination campaign gathers momentum

As researchers continue trials aimed at developing a licensed vaccine for the Bundibugyo strain, Congolese authorities have rolled out a vaccination campaign focused on front-line health workers.

The vaccine was originally developed for a different Ebola variant, but officials hope it will provide some protection against the current outbreak.

Health Minister Samuel Roger Kamba said more than 50,000 doses had already arrived in the country.

“We will cover all the provinces that are around Ituri, moving in a ring towards the center of the outbreak, that is to say towards Ituri. But we have enough doses for all healthcare providers,” he said on August 28.

Some health workers remain confident despite uncertainty over how effective the vaccine will be against the Bundibugyo strain.

“It is a vaccine that has already proven itself. We are talking about Ebola Bundibugyo, of Ugandan origin. But the vaccine that they want to administer to us was the vaccine that had succeeded for the Zaire type,” said health worker Arnaud Batumbi.

“Since both cases involve a viral disease, I hope the vaccine will work for us now as well,” he added.

Communities seek protection

Residents in hard-hit areas say they are ready to take the vaccine if it is properly explained to them.

“I will be ready to get vaccinated if only someone explains to me the

importance of this vaccination,” Clemency, a student in Tshopo province, told DW.

Others are calling for wider access. “Children need to be vaccinated too. They go back to school; there are many of them in class,” said local resident Carine Lobwadji.

Some community members also fear vaccine supplies may not be enough.

“I have learned that this is an insufficient quantity. I ask the authorities to add other doses for Tshopo and that we vaccinate everyone, especially those who will voluntarily agree, since some are afraid,” said Onyeka Treasure, a photographer.

Violence hampers response

The latest outbreak is unfolding against a backdrop of violence and mass displacement in eastern DRC, complicating efforts to stop transmission.

Ebola response teams have reported attacks while carrying out their work, including during operations to safely handle Ebola-related deaths.

“We demand greater security so we can operate in the field and do our work without endangering our lives,” Floribert Magene, a member of an Ebola response team, told

The Associated Press on Monday after an attack in Ituri province.

Magene said his team was assaulted near Mambasa while responding to a call to secure a body.

Economic toll grows

Beyond the health emergency, the outbreak is worsening economic hardship for many families.

Schools have reopened in towns such as Bukavu and Bunia, but many parents are struggling to afford basic school supplies.

Stationery shop owner Furaha Mpangu Esperance told DW that demand has collapsed as families prioritize food and other essentials.

“In any case, it doesn’t work. The situation is serious because there are no customers. We have even lowered the prices but there is no one to buy. Before, we even sold 10 boxes, 20 boxes a day. Today not even three boxes, not even two! The situation is critical,” he said.

To reduce disruption to education, the government has proposed radio-based learning for children unable to attend school.

“For us, it’s a double objective: to ensure that children continue to go to school, despite the epidemic, and to ensure that distance learning is the device that will help them,” Education Minister Raissa Malu told DW.

Teachers, however, say many areas lack the infrastructure needed for effective distance learning.

“We, the teachers, are ready, but we don’t have the tools. In sensitive areas, even picking up frequencies is quite a problem,” said Patrick Girinegi, president of the Ituri teachers’ inter-union alliance. “The first-grade children can’t read, nor do the parents. Several schools don’t have printers or computers. How will it go?”

Many students and parents would rather see classrooms remain open with stronger health measures in place. — DW

Full story at timesofoman.com/world

BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS



India’s Jaishankar to visit Ukraine, Poland

NEW DELHI: Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will undertake an official visit to Ukraine and Poland from September 3 to 5, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Wednesday.

During his visit, Jaishankar will hold bilateral consultations with Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and Poland’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski, according to an MEA press release.

The visit will focus on “enhancing bilateral relations” and provide an opportunity for the two sides to exchange views on “regional developments and issues of mutual interest,” the MEA said.

The visit comes as Ukraine’s First Deputy Head of the Office of the President, Sergiy Kyslytsya, held a “substantive meeting” with India’s Ambassador to Ukraine, Anjani Kumar and discussed prospects for India-Ukraine relations, including New Delhi’s role in efforts to end Russia’s war against Ukraine.

In a post on X on Tuesday, Kyslytsya said the meeting was held along with Deputy Head of the Office of the President Oleksii Sobolev.

“Had a substantive meeting with India’s Ambassador to Ukraine Anjani Kumar @sahayanjani, together with my colleague, Deputy Head of the Office of the President @OleksiiSobolev. We discussed prospects for Ukraine-India relations, including India’s role in efforts to end Russia’s war against

Ukraine,” he said.

Kyslytsya said they also exchanged views on Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent message to Russian President Vladimir Putin that “the time has come to move from an endless war to an end of war.” “We look forward to continued dialogue with India and to translating this shared interest in peace into concrete steps,” he said.

Earlier, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had said that an Indian citizen was among 12 people killed after Russia launched a massive aerial assault across Ukraine overnight.

“Overall, 12 people were killed, among them an Indian citizen, and dozens more were injured in the attack. My condolences to everyone who has lost family and loved ones,” he said in a post on X.

The Indian embassy in Kyiv, following Zelenskyy’s post, said that it is in touch with the family of the Indian national killed in the attack in Ukraine and is providing all possible assistance for early repatriation of the mortal remains.

The visit of Jaishankar to Poland also comes at a time of an expected visit of Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk to India.

Earlier, on August 20, Poland’s Ambassador to India Piotr Antoni Switalski said that the Polish PM’s expected visit to India will send a strong signal to business partners and stakeholders that cooperation between the two countries has the “green light.” — ANI

ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT

Nepal Prime Minister links Bhotekoshi flood to climate change, urges global responsibility

KATHMANDU: Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah told Parliament on Wednesday that the catastrophic Bhotekoshi River flood of August 26, which has left nearly 4,000 people missing, stands as a stark warning of escalating climate risks in the Himalayan region and called on the international community to share responsibility for mitigating its impacts.

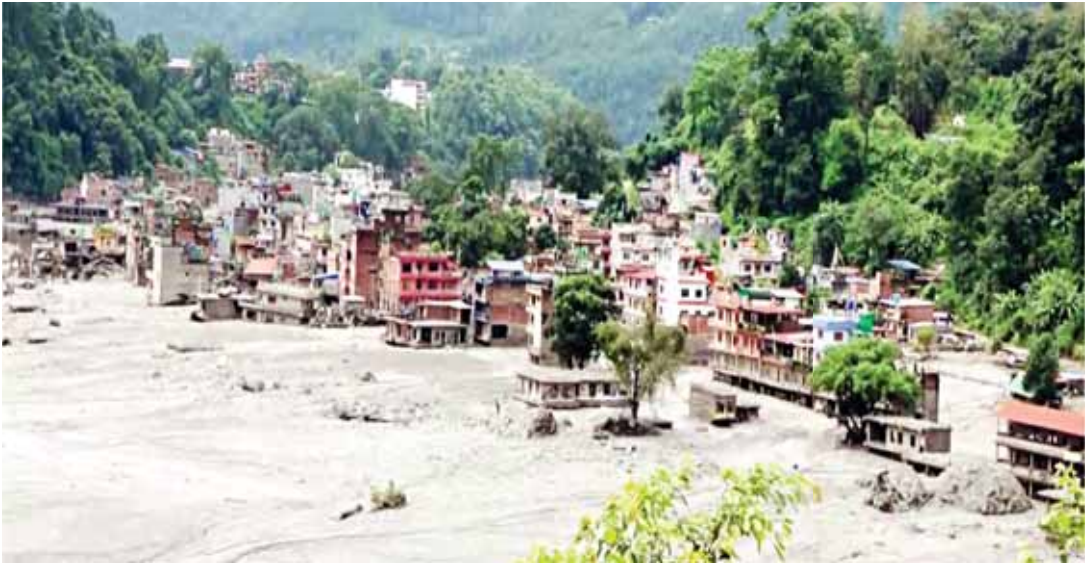
In a detailed address to the House, the prime minister said experts have identified the disaster- one of the largest in the region- as resulting from an avalanche of snow and rock in the high Himalayas.

“This is a serious signal that, alongside climate change, the risks we must bear in the Himalayan region are increasing. We must be aware of this, and the time has also come for us to present, forcefully, before the international community, the disasters we are suffering because of climate change. Climate change is a product of the whole world’s contribution; mitigating and managing its effects is the shared responsibility of the global community,” Prime Minister Shah said.

The flood struck riverside settlements in Rasuwa district on the morning of August 26 (Bhadra 10, 2083), rapidly affecting neighbouring areas including Nuwakot and Dhading.

As of the latest figures presented to Parliament, 11,993 people have been rescued, 3,916 remain out of contact, and 1,114 bodies have been recovered, of which 95 have been identified and handed over to families. Of 292 injured people admitted to hospitals, 182 have been discharged.

Government forces mounted an intensive response from the first hours of the disaster. Security personnel from the Nepal Army, Nepal Police and Armed Police Force were mobilised in large numbers, peaking at more than 13,000. Helicopter sorties prioritised the critically injured, pregnant women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Temporary shel-



ters now house 2,653 people at 19 sites in Nuwakot. Infrastructure losses underscore the scale of the event. Eight operating hydropower projects (281 MW) and four under construction (388 MW) were damaged, disrupting 431.1 MW of generation capacity. Major sections of the Galchhi-Betrawati-Rasuwegadhi road and the Prithvi Highway were destroyed or heavily damaged, along with 48 suspension bridges and 31 motorable bridges. Telecommunications have been restored to 95 per cent of the affected area, while electricity restoration varies by district.

The Prime Minister noted that Nepal has already received messages of goodwill and material assistance from multiple countries and multilateral partners, including India, China, the United States, Japan, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations.

Death toll from Nepal flash floods rises to 1,127: Police

KATHMANDU: The death toll from floods in Nepal has risen to 1,127, according to the Nepal Police, on Wednesday.

As per the Nepal Police, a total of 45 bodies have been recovered from Rasuwa, 155 from Nuwakot, 59 from Dhading, 348 from Chitwan, 66 from Gorkha, 38 from Tanahun, 217 from Nawalparasi East and 190 from Nawalparasi West.

Nepal Police

The Nepal Police also reported that nine bodies have been recovered in India.

Of the bodies recovered, only 95 have so far been handed over to their families after identification.

A day earlier, Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah said in a Facebook post that the bodies of people who lost their lives in the floods and those who remain unidenti-

fied are being managed in accordance with the law and through scientific procedures.

“The government is managing only those bodies that are found in an unidentifiable condition, while preserving DNA samples and other evidence that could assist in their identification,” he said.

“The bodies are being managed with the assistance of the Nepali Army, Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force, Nepal. Identified bodies are being handed over to their families.”

Further, Nepal’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that a specialised international tunnel rescue team from India and China have been mobilised alongside the Nepal Army at critical hydropower sites following the catastrophic Bhotekoshi River flash floods.

USS Abraham Lincoln arrives in Thailand

PATTAYA: The US Navy’s aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln arrived in Thailand on Wednesday for its first port call in more than eight months, ending a prolonged deployment in West Asia amid concerns over the welfare and morale of its crew, according to media report.

The 100,000-tonne carrier docked at Laem Chabang port near Pattaya after months at sea. Its hull showed signs of rust following the lengthy deployment. The Lincoln departed San Diego in November last year and is expected to return to Southern California later this year, completing one of the longest deployments in US Navy history.

Relieving the San Diego-based vessel at that time was the Japan-based USS George Washington, which had arrived in the region to assume operational duties, bringing an end to an extraordinarily long assignment for the aircraft carrier and its approximately 5,000-strong crew. According to CNN, the carrier set a modern-era record for consecutive days at sea while conducting combat and blockade operations during the war with Iran, US Senator Richard Blumenthal of the Democratic Party said. The extended deployment reportedly affected crew morale amid supply shortages, with at least one possible suicide attempt, CNN reported.

Having departed San Diego on November 21, 2025, the vessel was later redirected to West Asia after hostilities with Iran erupted in February. Functioning as a primary launchpad, the carrier carried out thousands of air sorties in support of US military operations, greatly escalating the operational burden on its complement. The issues attracted scrutiny from Democratic legislators in Washington, who requested answers regarding the welfare of personnel on board. The aircraft carrier had reportedly spent over 200 consecutive days at sea without a port call, a duration lawmakers characterised as a modern-day record. — ANI



What really helps Europe



Fix leaks, or ban pools? As European countries prepare for hotter, drier years to come, here's what the data says about how to really save water

EUROPE is in drought. As the burning of fossil fuels pushes up temperatures that are making summers hotter and drier, the continent's soils, lakes and rivers are struggling to recover. Southern and Western European countries are particularly affected. But they're not the only ones.

"We've seen drought risks expanding northward during the last decade", says Gisela Elsner, Climate and Sustainability Policy Officer at the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation, who has followed EU water management efforts for years.

"Central and Western Europe, but also southeastern European countries, are increasingly vulnerable due to climate change."

For the month of August this year, satellite data shows areas as far north as Denmark and Sweden experiencing extremely dry con-

ditions more often seen in regions such as the Sub-Saharan Sahel.

The impact is palpable. Some of the continent's longest rivers like the Rhine or the Danube have reached historic lows, disrupting inland shipping routes. Farmers from Germany to Ukraine are reporting below-average harvests, and areas from the United Kingdom to Switzerland to Germany have announced restrictions on household water use.

To make matters worse, this year's El Niño event — a climate cycle that weakens trade winds and warms tropical Pacific surface temperatures — is set to be one of the strongest on record. Experts predict that 2027 will be even hotter and drier as a result.

Europe will have to adapt to this reality, says Gisela Elsner. "It is not yet a matter of not having water in our taps anymore. But we need to prioritise and use our water resources efficiently."

So, how can countries across the continent set about doing this? DW analysed water usage in European nations and reviewed the evidence to find out which measures have the most impact.

Which European countries use the most water?

Private households in Europe account for a relatively small share of water usage. Depending on the country, they consume a daily per capita average of between 50 and 300 litres, which equates to less

than 20% of all use.

Two thirds of water withdrawn continent-wide is for agriculture — mostly for irrigation — as well as electricity cooling for nuclear and fossil fuel power plants.

In already drought-prone countries like Greece, Turkey and Spain, agriculture accounts for most of the near 2000 litres of water withdrawn per person each day.

Electricity cooling is the biggest factor in Eastern European countries like Bulgaria or Hungary, but also in the Netherlands or Estonia, which use between 1000 and 2000 liters per capita daily in total.

Where Europe can save the most water

"There is no single solution that is sufficient to solve this challenge," says Gisela Elsner. "It has to be a combined bundle of measures."

And they exist. A recent report published by the European Environmental Agency (EEA) found that EU countries could save between 10 and 40% of water annually by implementing targeted strategies.

For states in Western and Eastern Europe, shifting to clean energy would make a big difference. While nuclear, and planet-heating oil, gas and coal need huge amounts of water for cooling, wind and solar do not.

Electricity cooling: renewables to the rescue

So besides becoming the cheapest forms of energy, the renewables

deal with

that are increasingly replacing fossil fuels are also helping countries to save water. Over the past two decades, Europe has reduced its water usage by around a quarter — mostly because of more efficient electrical cooling.

Even with nuclear plants still requiring water in countries like France, Spain or Sweden, the potential savings are massive. The EEA estimates that EU countries could make significant further savings of between 45 and 95% — equal to hundreds of liters per person each day — by expanding renewables and improving cooling systems.

Better irrigation can help in agriculture

In Southern Europe, agriculture is the big-ticket item. The EEA report recommends, for instance, replacing open water transport channels with closed pipes to avoid evaporation during heatwaves, switching from surface irrigation to sprinklers or drip irrigation, and opting for less water-intensive crops wherever possible.

Public water supply: leaky pipes lose lots of water

In EU countries, around one in four liters of drinkable water from

the public supply is lost to leaky pipes and evaporation before it ever reaches its destination — according to estimates by the European association of water providers EurEau.

In Romania and Italy, the share is more than 40%. According to the EEA report, avoiding these losses would account for most of the potential savings in the EU's public water supply.

Once drinking water reaches households and businesses, individual behavior has an impact as well. The EEA report lists extensive recommendations for savings in daily life, from low-flow toilets and efficient washing machines and dishwashers, to harvesting rainwater. Yet even if every citizen in Europe did all they could, it would only reduce the daily per person household water use by between 10 and 40%.

Citizens could also contribute through more responsible consumer decisions, such as considering the water footprint of the products they buy or support, says Alexander Psomas, water resources expert at the Greek consultancy Brilliant Solutions, who co-authored the EEA report.

"Citizens can also push our governments to be more accountable

on their energy policy and the impact it has on water."

What Europe can learn

Drought and heat waves are not just a European problem. Many parts in the world are even more severely affected by the climate crisis. And data from the United Nations shows regions in Northern Africa, the Middle East and Asia have been dealing with much higher levels of water stress for a long time.

This also means that Europe can collaborate with, and learn from, the rest of the world on how to adapt to water scarcity. "The UN World Food Program and the FAO are all working on similar questions in the Global South," said Giriraj Armanath, Research Group Leader at the International Water Management Institute.

Gisela Elsner recounts, for instance, chip manufacturers in the German state of Saxony recently looking to expertise from Singapore on how to reuse wastewater to cool their factories.

"We can definitely learn from those countries which already have all the knowledge and the technologies that can be used in our context as well," she said.

Public and politics are paying more attention to water use

Both Gisela Elsner and Alexander Psomas say they have noticed both politics and the public becoming more aware in recent years.

"The water scarcity and droughts topic did not have a relevant EU working group until 2022", Psomas told DW. "Today, it's one of the working groups with the highest participation. There is a growing interest and concern on this issue." What he would like to see more of, he says, is public debates about water strategies, especially during election periods.

"If a country runs low on water, it affects everyone," he says. "I would like to see politicians discuss what kind of solutions they're offering for making their countries more water resilient in 10, 20 years from now." -dw

drought

SPORTS



English clubs spend a staggering \$4.7 billion in transfer window

Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez became one of the most expensive players in football history by completing a marquee move to City from Premier League rivals Chelsea for \$169 million

LONDON: English football flexed its unrivaled spending power by embarking on an unprecedented \$4.7 billion outlay on players in the summer transfer window—and Manchester City saved the biggest signing of the lot right to the very end.

Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez became one of the most expensive players in soccer history by completing a marquee move to City from Premier League rival Chelsea for 125 million pounds (\$169 million) in the final hours of

the window that closed across Europe on Tuesday.

City's spending alone on new players this summer—their first in the post-Pep Guardiola era—soared past \$600 million, a record splurge by a club in a single transfer window.

With the expenditure of Chelsea and Tottenham also well over \$400 million, England's top-flight clubs showed they're in a league of their own when it comes to financial might.

That's mainly down to the com-

petition's huge domestic and international broadcasting deals, which dwarf those of its less-watched European rivals, but also because of a recent tweak to the Premier League's financial rules that now allows clubs with the biggest revenues and turnover—like City and others who regularly benefit from Champions League largesse—to have greater spending power in the transfer market.

Deadline day passed with the combined spending of top-flight clubs in Spain, Italy, Germany and France—Europe's other so-called "Big Five" leagues—coming to \$3.8 billion, according to figures on soccer industry website Transfermarkt.

That's far less than that of the Premier League's 20 teams.

The previous highest spend by English teams in one window was 3.14 billion pounds (\$4.25 billion) in 2025.

Fernandez arrival

Fernandez, who hasn't started a game since being sent off against Spain in the World Cup final in

July, became the latest big-money signing as part of City's \$440-million midfield rebuild under Guardiola's successor, Enzo Maresca, that also includes the arrivals of England's Elliot Anderson (\$155 million) and Morocco's Ayyoub Bouaddi (\$117 million).

Also joining City on deadline day was Senegal winger Iliman Ndiaye from Everton for an initial \$81 million.

Abu Dhabi-controlled City recouped almost \$400 million in sales this window—among the departures were Spain's World Cup-winning captain Rodri and midfield stalwart Bernardo Silva—and the club let Jack Grealish leave on another season-long loan to Everton on Tuesday.

The fee for Fernandez is a joint British record, the same as Liverpool paid last year for Alexander Isak.

They are tied in fourth place in the all-time list of most expensive football players, after Neymar (Barcelona to PSG for 222 million euros), Kylian Mbappé (Monaco to PSG for 180 million euros) and Ousmane Dembele (Borussia Dortmund to Barcelona for 148 million euros), according to Transfermarkt.

"He is a complete midfielder: technically gifted, hardworking, tenacious and a goalscorer," City director of football Hugo Viana said of Fernandez, who joined Chelsea for a then-British record 106.7 million pounds (\$131.4 million) in early 2023.

Tottenham's summer recruitment has been almost as remarkable as City's and the London club was active right up to the deadline on Tuesday, signing two players from Chelsea. Ukraine winger Mykhailo Mudryk joined on a season-long loan, a month after he was cleared to play again following a doping case, and defender Tosin Adarabioyo moved on a permanent deal.

Liverpool signed 18-year-old goalkeeper Lucca Brughmans from Belgian team Genk in a deal that reportedly could be worth up to 30 million pounds (\$35 million).

Brughmans has gone back to Genk on loan for the rest of the season.

Newcastle signed Belgium forward Matias Fernandez-Pardo from Lille for a reported 51 million pounds (\$59 million) and sent Nick Woltemade on loan to Juventus, with the Germany striker having spent just one season in the Premier League after a 69 million pounds (\$93 million) move.

It has been a summer of heavy change at Aston Villa, with a number of star players—Ollie Watkins, Morgan Rogers, Ezri Konsa and Emi Martinez, among them—leaving and a slew of new arrivals. The business continued on Tuesday with the signing of Ibrahim Mbaye, a two-time Champions League-winning winger from Paris Saint-Germain.

The deadline passed with Everton not concluding the signing of US striker Folarin Balogun from Monaco, and neither club made an official comment about the proposed deal. British broadcaster Sky Sports reported there were some last-minute hitches. - Agencies

REAL MADRID DEFENDER

Rüdiger announces retirement from German national team

BERLIN: Real Madrid defender Antonio Rüdiger retired from the German national team on Tuesday.

The 33-year-old from Neukölln in Berlin said in an Instagram post on Tuesday that it was time for him to end his career after more than 12 years with the senior German men's team to clear the way for "the young generation."

Rüdiger's announcement comes two months after Germany's World Cup exit in a penalty shootout to Paraguay, and a day after Argentina great Lionel Messi announced his international retirement. Rüdiger played 110 minutes of the loss to Paraguay.

"When I first wore the German jersey in 2014, I could never have imagined in my wildest dreams that it would eventually lead to 86 international appearances," Rüdiger wrote.

"Even though the major titles



eluded us in recent tournaments and we had to endure some painful defeats, this time was an incredibly special period for me, one that will shape me forever."

Rüdiger thanked his teammates "for every shared challenge

on the field" and their camaraderie and friendships, while he also mentioned former Germany coaches Joachim Löw, Hansi Flick and Julian Nagelsmann, as well as Germany youth coach Horst Hrubesch. He also thanked fans for their support and said he would concentrate on his career with Madrid.

Rüdiger joined the Spanish powerhouse from Chelsea in 2022, after stints with Roma and Stuttgart. He won a league and Champions League double with Madrid in 2024, while he also won the Champions League with Chelsea in 2021.

New Germany coach Jürgen Klopp will need to find two new central defensive options on September 17 when he names his first squad for upcoming Nations League games as Nico Schlotterbeck is still out with an ankle injury. - Agencies

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Cremonese fire coach despite shock victory over Parma

MILAN: A victory for Serie B club Cremonese at Serie A side Parma wasn't enough to save Marco Giampaolo's job.

The coach was fired immediately after guiding Cremonese to a 2-0 win in the second round of the Italian Cup on Tuesday.

The move comes after Cremonese lost their opening two matches in the second division without scoring a goal and conceding four.

But they had also won their Italian Cup opener, beating Sampdoria 2-0 in the first round.

Giampaolo was hired in March but couldn't prevent Cremonese from being relegated from Serie A last season as the Lombardy team finished third from bottom.

Former Leicester and England striker Jamie Vardy left Cremonese in June after one season.



Cremonese said in a statement that they thanked Giampaolo and his staff for their "professionalism, effort and dedication since their arrival in Cremona."

A new coach was not immediately named. Parma coach Carlos Cuesta could also be at risk, with his team having also lost their opening two matches in Serie A. - Agencies

REPLACED BROOS

Mosimane confirmed as South Africa coach

JOHANNESBURG: Pitso Mosimane was confirmed as South Africa coach on Tuesday, 24 days after the national football association approved his appointment.

On August 8, association president Danny Jordaan said, "we need to tie up some loose ends," but the delay was unexpectedly long.

Mosimane succeeds Belgian Hugo Broos, 74, who retired after leading South Africa to the knockout stages of a World Cup for the first time in North America this year. Mosimane has just 23 days to prepare the national team for its first 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifier, at home to Guinea. While Guinea failed to reach the 2025 AFCON tournament in Morocco, they boast one of the top Europe-based African strikers in Serhou Guirassy of Borussia Dortmund.

Former South Africa striker Mosimane, 62, will be taking charge of Bafana Bafana (The Boys) a second time after an unsuccessful two-year



stint from 2010. Under his leadership, South Africa failed to qualify for the 2012 AFCON, and he was fired after a home draw against Ethiopia in a 2014 World Cup qualifier.

The AFCON failure was embarrassing as the team celebrated after a draw with Sierra Leone, believing it had qualified, only to discover later it misunderstood the head-to-head rule. Mosimane was much more successful at club level, winning the CAF Champions League once with Pretoria-based Mamelodi Sundowns, then twice with Cairo outfit Al Ahly. - Agencies

FIFA CRISIS

Josh Kushner regrets involvement with FIFA's World Cup sell-off plan

NEW YORK: FIFA's intended investment partner Josh Kushner has said he regrets getting involved in Gianni Infantino's failed World Cup sell-off plan that provoked a huge rift in global football and has pulled him into legal action.

In his first comments about the ongoing crisis for FIFA, Kushner acknowledged that "we failed to appreciate the political dynamics of global football."

"Had we known what this would devolve into, we would not have gotten involved," Kushner said in comments made on Monday to Axios.

Kushner and his investment firm Thrive Capital were targeted last week by European football body UEFA by a court filing in Manhattan seeking evidence for a potential criminal complaint against Infantino in Switzerland for financial mismanagement. However, the UEFA filing states



that "neither Thrive nor Kushner is an anticipated defendant" in a potential legal case.

Under Infantino's plan revealed in late July, Thrive and Kushner were to be the anchor investors intending to pay FIFA \$4.2 billion

for a 20% stake in a subsidiary that would run the football body's commercial events, including the World Cup.

The project provoked a furious reaction from global football officials and a third deep rift with

UEFA during Infantino's 10-year presidency.

European football officials previously blocked Infantino's divisive plans for a \$25 billion project for new competitions with Japan's SoftBank in 2018, and his failed push in 2021 to play the men's World Cup every two years instead of four.

"The idea behind (the project) was to direct more capital and equity equally amongst all 211 member countries, providing significantly more investment to underdeveloped nations to nurture local talent, support grassroots football, enhance the fan experience, and ultimately grow the global game everywhere," Kushner said in the statement to Axios.

"Thrive has a long track record of being a partner to all constituents," said the New York-based investor, who is now part of a \$12.5 billion takeover of the Los Angeles Lakers. - Agencies

Top seed Zverev avoids upset; Gauff makes a winning start

The French Open champion overcame Italian Sonogo in a first-round match that lasted four hours

NEW YORK: Germany's Alexander Zverev has the No. 1 seed in a Grand Slam tournament for the first time and the belief that comes from finally winning a major title. Then he nearly had a quick exit from the US Open.

The French Open champion rallied just in time to edge Italian Lorenzo Sonogo 6-4, 3-6, 6-7 (7), 7-5, 6-4 in a match that lasted 4 hours, 52 minutes and ended early Wednesday morning.

Two nights after No. 4 seed and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic was eliminated with a five-set loss, Zverev nearly became another top player ousted from an event that top-ranked Jannik Sinner had to miss because of a right knee injury.

That moved the No. 2-ranked Zverev up to the No.1 seed in the US Open, and if he had lost he would have been the first man on the top line to fall in the first round of a major since Lleyton Hewitt lost to Ivo Karlovic at Wimbledon in 2003.

"I'm happy that I won this kind of battle," Zverev said. "This is exactly the match that I needed."

Coco Gauff had an easier time, opening her quest for a second US Open title by beating Zeynep Sonmez 6-3, 6-4, regaining control midway through the second set after her opponent from Turkiye picked up her play.

"I know that I can raise my level if I need to do and I like to challenge my opponent to let them keep up the level the whole match," Gauff said. "And if they do, I clap my hands and I walk off court with my head held high."

Instead, she's walking into a second-round match against either



Paula Badosa or Daria Kasatkina.

On a rainy day in New York, nothing could dampen the spirits inside Louis Armstrong Stadium.

Gauff returned this year with the confidence and momentum of a serious contender, winning the title in Cincinnati after semi-final runs at Wimbledon and Toronto.

She also won the hard-court tournament in Cincinnati in 2023 before going on to become the first American teenager to win the US Open title since Serena Williams in 1999, topping Aryna Sabalenka in the final.

Afternoon comebacks
Flavio Cobolli rallied from two sets

down to avoid an early upset on the men's side, and his wasn't even the most dramatic comeback Tuesday.

Maria Sakkari fell behind 6-2, 4-0 once she was finally able to get on the court after the rain stopped, then the No. 32 seed rallied to edge Robin Montgomery 2-6, 7-5, 6-2.

"Just kept telling myself that everything is possible and just try to get myself in a good place mentally and just try to be a little bit more positive, try to make more balls, get myself into the match," said Sakkari, who reached the US Open and Wimbledon semifinals in 2021.

"Because, I mean, everyone's very good in tennis nowadays, but

specifically that girl I played today doesn't have the experience that I do. So I just told myself, let's try and hang in there, try and make more balls, and it worked."

Cobolli, the No. 5 seed and French Open runner-up, beat Francisco Comesana 3-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4, finishing his match that lasted 4 hours, 12 minutes not long after some sun had broken through the clouds and allowed play to start on all the outside courts.

Cobolli made his first career two-set comeback to avoid joining No.4 seed Novak Djokovic and No.10 Arthur Fils among early losers in a men's draw that was already missing top-ranked Jannik

Sinner, Cobolli's fellow Italian who was unable to play in the tournament because of a right knee injury.

He said he took a bathroom break French Open champion Mirra Andreeva and 2024 U.S. Open runner-up Taylor Fritz had smooth sailing. Fritz, the No. 9 seed, rolled to a 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 victory over 18-year-old fellow American Darwin Blanch. Andreev beat Janice Tjen 6-2, 6-2.

Rain delays
Showers that began Monday night and would possibly be on and off through the middle of the week delayed play on all the outer courts, allowing for action only in Ashe

and Armstrong, which have retractable roofs.

Rain returned Tuesday night, again restricting play to two courts and meaning some first-round matches won't be completed before Wednesday.

Madison Keys, the No. 22 seed, beat 19-year-old Alina Korneeva 7-5, 6-4 in the leadoff match in Ashe. The 2017 US Open runner-up was knocked off in the first round last year in Flushing Meadows.

"It's always tough playing someone young and up and coming, and they're going after their shots," Keys said. "And it's so hard to play a first round of a Grand Slam, so nervous and just wanting to do so well. So, really happy I was able to kind of fight through that and win today."

Play finally began outdoors in the middle of the afternoon, when No.2 seed Elena Rybakina beat Thea Frodin 6-3, 6-2.

Frodin, a 17-year-old from California, was the body double for actor Demi Singleton, who played Serena Williams, in the 2021 film "King Richard."

No.12 seed Belinda Bencic, who teamed with Cobolli to reach the mixed doubles final, lost to Yulia Putintseva in three sets. - Agencies

FIRST-ROUND WINNER

Eala's fans descend on New York, bearing Filipino flags and love

NEW YORK: The Alex Eala fans came bearing Filipino flags, and wearing hats telling her to fight on ("Laban Alex"). They cheered her sizzling groundstrokes, documented her volleys and serves in photos and video, and in some cases FaceTimed with friends or family. And this was only at the practice courts.

It was about four hours before Eala was to take the court for her first-round US Open match Monday night, and every seat at the practice court was filled.

Many of Eala's fans didn't have tickets for the evening session. But they'd come to see their idol hit some tennis balls.

It was hardly surprising, given the enormous, ardent, ever-growing fan base that now surrounds the charismatic 21-year-old. This summer has seen Eala beat Iga Swiatek at Wimbledon and win her first tour singles title. She's at a career-best 18th in the world, and she breezed into the second round of the US Open with a 6-1, 6-2 victory over Mary Stoiana — closing it out with a confident smile.



One of the fans watching practice on a rainy afternoon was Andrea Belen, at 21 the same age as Eala. Belen, a premed student at New York University, explained that she hadn't been a big tennis fan until Eala came along — someone who looked just like her.

Belen's father back home in Cleveland (the family's originally from Laguna in the Philippines) also became a tennis fan out of pure admiration for Eala. "It's his new obsession," Belen said. "It's become the family hobby."

She and her friend, Sarah Frederick, had arrived at the practice court long before Eala was to appear, surmising correctly that the seats would fill quickly.

Belen explained that in the Philippines, basketball and boxing reign supreme, and the sports heroes are men. "It's just really nice to see a woman out there," Belen said. "Also, she speaks in our native language, Tagalog."

Belen, who FaceTimed with her father during the practice session so he could see Eala, spoke of a special Filipino pride in the achievements of countrymen. Like gymnast Carlos Yulo, who won two gold medals at the Paris Olympics in 2024. "Everyone went crazy," she said. "We're not that big of a country so those golds meant so much." - Agencies

US OPEN

Monfils wins on his 40th birthday to extend his Grand Slam career

NEW YORK: Gael Monfils stood in the middle of the court and bowed to the crowd that was treating the Frenchman to a roaring ovation on his 40th birthday.

The match was still a ways from ending. But after leaping in the air to smash a forehand winner — a daredevil shot that few outside one of tennis' ultimate showmen might even attempt — there was no reason to wait.

Monfils turned back the clock and pushed back the end of his Grand Slam career, beating Adolfo Daniel Vallejo 2-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-0 on Tuesday night at the US Open.

Monfils became the oldest man to win a US Open match since Jimmy Connors — another guy who loved to put on a show in New York — defeated Jaime Oncins on Sept. 2, 1992, when he turned 40.

"That was definitely very special. To play the day of my 40th birthday is special. You guys made it, like, incredible," Monfils said to the fans at Louis Armstrong Stadium, who then sang happy birthday to him.



Monfils is planning to retire after this year and is making a few more memories along the way at the tournament where he reached the 2016 semifinals. He began the event by teaming up with his wife, Elina Svitolina, to reach the mixed doubles semifinals in their first time competing together.

Then, before the singles play began, he looked ahead toward his looming birthday.

"I hit my 40th birthday the day I play, so this is a big milestone for me, able to play at 40," Monfils

said. "I want to do, not good but really good, for where I am now."

He did amazing. He quickly began to outplay Vallejo after dropping the first set, then really poured it on to begin the fourth. It was 1-0 when he hit his leaping forehand winner, then raised his hand toward his ear and spun it to encourage cheers that were already well underway.

Monfils acknowledged the obvious: Jumping to hit the shot is more difficult than just hitting a regular forehand. But with a comfortable lead at the time, he thought it would provide "more happiness, more joy for me."

"You know, I tried it. Lucky I put it in, but somehow, I'm here to also enjoy myself. There's not many, many times (left), and, you know, it was the right moment, so why not try it?"

Monfils, in his 18th US Open appearance, earned his first Grand Slam win since the first round of Wimbledon in 2025. He advanced to face American Learner Tien, the No. 14 seed. - Agencies

GOLF SUPERSTAR

Tiger Woods gets five-year driving ban after reckless driving plea

STUART: Tiger Woods has agreed not to contest a reckless driving charge as part of a deal with prosecutors, reducing the original charge of driving under the influence from a rollover crash in Florida.

The golfer accepted a five-year suspension of his driving licence and a \$1,000 (£742) fine, as part of a plea agreement with prosecutors in Martin County, Florida.

Woods was arrested after the March crash, and had passed a breathalyser test but declined further testing for other drugs.

He pleaded not guilty the same

month to misdemeanor charges of driving under the influence and refusal to submit to testing. Woods, 50, said he was seeking treatment after the incident.

"I'm completely confident and comfortable with the resolution of this case," Florida State Attorney Thomas Bakkedahl said at a press conference after the hearing. He said he strove to treat Woods like any other defendant. "Today I resolved case involving a man who drives a golf ball for a living," Bakkedahl said. "Tomorrow, I'll resolve a case in the same matter for a man who drives a nail for a living."



No one was injured in the crash, though Woods had to crawl out through the passenger door to free himself. Police released body camera footage in April that captured the aftermath of the incident, showing the golfing legend after his vehicle clipped a truck and rolled over.

In the video, Woods appears calm, kneeling on one knee as he tells officers: "I looked down at my phone, and all of a sudden, boom".

He passed a breathalyser test but declined to take a urinalysis screening for other drugs, Martin County Sheriff John Budensiek

said at the time. Woods told officers he had not consumed alcohol that day. When asked about any prescription medication, he responded, "I take a few", adding he had done so earlier that morning.

He then listed the medication, though that portion of the footage was redacted. Officers told Woods they suspected his "normal faculties" were impaired by an "unknown substance".

Authorities later reported finding two white pills in his pocket, identified as hydrocodone, an opioid commonly prescribed to treat pain. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Experience the modern sedan excellence with Kia K4 this season and enjoy bonus of up to OMR800

The K4 features a forward-looking design with sharp, sculpted surfaces and a confident stance from every angle. Its fastback-inspired silhouette lends the cabin a spacious, airy feel, well suited to both daily commutes and longer family drives

MUSCAT: As part of the ongoing “New Identity, New Savings” campaign, Kia Oman is turning the spotlight on the K4 sedan, giving customers even more reasons to make the switch this season. The campaign brings a reduced interest rate of 2.22% on financing deals from two to four years and 3.33% for five-year agreements, with the first two EMIs covered by Kia. Customers who choose the K4 this season can also take advantage of a welcome bonus of up to OMR 800, adjusted directly against the vehicle price. The K4 further comes with a service package of 30,000 km or three years, whichever comes first, along with one year of complimentary registration, giving customers continued value well after purchase. (Terms & Conditions apply).



ing design with sharp, sculpted surfaces and a confident stance from every angle. Its fastback-inspired silhouette lends the cabin a spacious, airy feel, well suited to both daily commutes and longer family drives. Power comes from a 2.0-litre, 4-cylinder MPI engine producing 150 HP. Exterior highlights include LED head and tail lamps, 17-inch

alloy wheels, a power sunroof, and electrically folding mirrors. Inside, the K4 offers an artificial leather-wrapped cabin, push-button smart entry, a power-adjustable driver's seat with lumbar support, and a centre armrest for added comfort. A 4-inch digital instrument cluster works alongside a 12.3-inch touchscreen with wireless Android Auto and Ap-

ple CarPlay support. Drive Mode Select, Cruise Control, automatic headlight control, and Remote Engine Start round out the everyday convenience features. On the road, the K4 delivers smooth power distribution and agile, responsive handling, making it equally comfortable in city traffic or on longer drives beyond town. Safety is well covered too, with

Forward & Reverse Parking Assist System, Hill Assist Control (HAC), Multi Collision Brake (MCB) offering added protection for occupants and those around the vehicle. Kia Oman invites customers to visit their nearest showroom to experience the K4 first-hand and discover what “New Identity, New Savings” means for their next sedan. Reliable International Auto-

motive (RIA), the official distributor of Kia in Oman, continues to deliver a rewarding ownership experience for customers. The company was ranked #1 by Kia in 2024 for Sales Customer Satisfaction in the Middle East and Africa, reflecting its commitment to providing exceptional products, facilities, and customer service across the Sultanate.

ENHANCING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Bank Muscat relocates Saham branch to new premise



MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the relocation of its Saham Souq branch in North Al Batinah Governorate to a new premise in Saham Heights, while its corniche branch in the wilayat will continue to provide customers with a full range of banking products and services. The relocation forms part of the bank's ongoing strategy to strengthen its branch network and provide a modern banking environment that meets customers' evolving expectations, enhances accessibility to banking services in line with the highest standards of quality and efficiency, and delivers a more convenient and seamless banking experience with an expanded range of services. Commenting on the occasion, Taya Eid Bait Sabaea, Deputy General Manager Interior Regionst, Bank Muscat, said: “The new Saham Heights branch reflects Bank Muscat's strategy to continuously enhance its network and elevate the customer experience by offering modern banking facilities and integrated services that meet the growing needs of our customers. We remain committed to investing in the development of our branches in line with the bank's digital transformation journey, providing

customers with greater flexibility and convenience in conducting their banking transactions, while also offering financial advice and tailored banking solutions that support different segments of society. We are proud to further strengthen our presence across the Sultanate's governorates as part of our commitment to delivering the best banking experience to our valued customers.” The new branch enjoys a strategic location close to major commercial centres and features a contemporary design that offers customers a comprehensive banking experience. It provides a wide range of banking services, including an Asalah Priority Banking Centre, Saed services, insurance services, and a Hisabi Centre, enabling customers from different segments to benefit from a complete portfolio of financial solutions. In addition, the branch is equipped with ATMs and cash deposit machines that are available 24 hours a day, ensuring faster transaction processing while offering greater flexibility and convenience. In line with the bank's commitment to financial inclusion, the new branch has been designed to ensure accessibility for customers with disabilities. It features wheelchair-accessible entrances, dedicated pathways and parking

spaces, while trained staff proficient in sign language are available to support customers with hearing impairments and ensure they receive a convenient and inclusive banking experience. Bank Muscat continues to strengthen its presence across North Al Batinah Governorate through an extensive network of branches and service centres serving the governorate's various wilayats, currently numbering 16. The bank operates a network of 176 branches and 25 service centres across the Sultanate, ensuring that individuals and businesses have convenient access to a comprehensive range of banking products and financial solutions. This is further supported by an extensive network of more than 900 ATMs, cash deposit machines, self-service and multi-functional devices located throughout Oman. Bank Muscat continues to invest in enhancing its banking infrastructure and delivery channels, including its branch network, self-service devices and digital banking platforms, as part of its vision to provide innovative banking solutions that meet customers' evolving needs while improving service efficiency and accessibility, reinforcing its position as the leading financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman.

ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO



Muscat University Expands Postgraduate Portfolio with the Launch of a PhD in Management

MUSCAT: Muscat University has announced the launch of its Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Management programme, reflecting the continued development of its academic portfolio and its commitment to strengthening research aligned with societal and economic needs. The programme forms part of the University's efforts to expand postgraduate opportunities and attract researchers and professionals seeking to advance their knowledge and research contributions in management and related fields. The programme was developed following extensive studies and growing interest observed by the University among researchers and professionals seeking advanced academic programmes that combine scholarly depth with relevance to practical issues and challenges. It reinforces the University's role in transforming academic and professional needs into research opportunities with sustainable impact. The programme offers a flexible study structure, allowing candidates to choose either three years of full-time study or five years of part-time study. It offers three specialised tracks: General Management, Sustainable Energy, and Sustainable Logistics. These tracks enable researchers to direct their studies and research towards fields that align with their experience, research interests, and

Three-track research programme connects academic knowledge with the needs of the economy and vital sectors

professional aspirations, while addressing areas of importance to the economy and sustainable development. A key feature of the programme is that graduates will receive a Doctor of Philosophy in Management and will be eligible to pursue a professional certification from the Project Management Institute (PMI). The PhD in Management is research-based and aims to equip researchers to apply appropriate methodologies and analytical tools, conduct applied research, and generate original knowledge that makes a new contribution to the fields of management, energy, or logistics, while adhering to the highest standards of research integrity and ethics. Professor Khamis bin Hamad Al-Yahyaee, Vice-Chancellor of Muscat University, affirmed that the launch of the programme represents an important milestone in the University's journey to expand its academic portfolio and

offer advanced programmes that respond to learners' aspirations and the needs of economic sectors. He highlighted the University's commitment to providing a high-quality academic experience that connects research with practice and develops capable professionals who can support the Sultanate of Oman's priorities and future competitiveness. The programme will also strengthen the University's postgraduate and research environment, broaden opportunities to attract researchers and talented professionals, and open new avenues for research and consultancy collaboration with public- and private-sector organisations. Admission to the PhD programme requires a master's degree, postgraduate qualification, or recognised equivalent, together with successful completion of an oral interview. Applicants must also provide a valid English-language proficiency certificate with a minimum score of 6.0 in Academic IELTS, obtained within the previous two years, or a minimum score of 78 in the TOEFL iBT. Muscat University invites researchers and professionals seeking to advance their academic and research careers to learn more about the programme, admission requirements, and application dates through the University's official channels.



TO CONTINUE
READING THE
FULL EDITION,
PLEASE
FOLLOW
OUR OFFICIAL
WHATSAPP
CHANNEL

