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His Majesty the Sultan issues 10 Royal decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Thursday issued 10 Royal decrees.

Royal Decree No. (67/2026) promulgates the Law on Combating Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, after presenting the same before the Council of Oman.

Article (1) states that the provisions of the attached Law on Combating Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances shall be enforced.

Article (2) stipulates that the Minister of Health shall issue the executive regulations for the law attached to this decree, as well as decisions necessary for the implementation of its provisions. Until such time, the existing regulations and decisions shall continue to be in effect, without prejudice to the provisions of the attached law.

Article Three (3) annuls the Law on Combating Drugs and Psychotropic Substances issued by Royal Decree No. 17/99, as well as all that contradicts the attached law or contravenes its provisions.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall take effect on the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. (68/2026) amends some provisions of the Law on Protecting Personal Data, after presenting the same before the Council of Oman.

Article (1) states that amend-

ments attached to this decree shall be applied to the aforementioned Law on Protecting Personal Data.

Article (2) cancels all that contradicts the attached amendments or contravenes their provisions.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall take effect on the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. (69/2026) amends some provisions of the Law on Minerals Wealth, after presenting the same before the Council of Oman.

Article (1) stipulates that the amendments attached to this decree shall be applied to the aforementioned Law on Minerals Wealth.

Article (2) states that the licenses issued before the implementation of the amendments attached to this decree shall remain valid until their expiry. The renewal of these licenses, as well as decisions on license applications submitted prior to the implementation of the attached amendments, shall be governed by the procedures and regulations stipulated therein.

Article (3) cancels all that contradicts the attached amendments or contravenes their provisions.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall take effect on the day following its date of publishing. **>A4**

PRESIDENT OF RWANDA TO VISIT OMAN ON MONDAY

The visit will address issues of mutual interest for the benefit of both countries



MUSCAT: President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda will pay an official two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman this Monday. This was announced in a statement issued yesterday by the Diwan of Royal Court, the text of which is as follows:

"In pursuit of strengthening the bonds of friendship and co-operation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Rwanda in all that serves to advance their shared interests across various fields, President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda will pay an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman on 7-8 September 2026. The visit stems from the mutual commitment to

develop and expand joint ties in a manner that brings goodness and benefit to peoples of the two friendly countries.

"The visit will address a set of topics of mutual concern to both countries and means of promoting them in a manner that serves their interests and meets their aspirations." — **ONA**

Oman, Rwanda to boost relations

MUSCAT: Bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Rwanda continue to evolve across multiple sectors, reflecting the shared commitment of both countries to strengthen cooperation and expand the scope of partnership, building upon diplomatic ties, which were established in 1982.

The upcoming official visit of President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda to the Sultanate of Oman comes within the framework of mutual interest in advancing bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation in the political, economic, and investment spheres, thereby opening new horizons for partnership between Oman and Rwanda.

● **Full story >A4**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

London to host 'Live Oman' initiative

1 London, will host the 'Live Oman' initiative on September 21. **>A3**

WORLD

Russia to pause strikes against Kyiv

2 Russia will pause strikes against Kyiv for three days, the Kremlin said. **>A7**

MARKET

MoU signed to use green hydrogen

3 OQ Alternative Energy and Asyad Group have inked a pact for green hydrogen. **>B1**

Oman performs 4th heart transplant, saves four lives

MUSCAT: Oman has successfully performed its fourth heart transplant, marking a significant milestone in the country's growing national organ-transplant programme.

The Omani Centre for Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation also successfully transplanted four organs from a patient declared brain dead, helping save the lives of four patients.

The achievement reflects the growing coordination between Oman's government, military and security health institutions and the increasing capabilities of national medical teams in handling complex transplant procedures.

Dr Noreen bint Yousef Al Balushi, Director of the Omani Centre for Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation, said the repeated success within a short period demonstrated that Oman's organ-do-



nation and transplantation system had moved into a more mature and organised phase.

She said the achievement was the result of integrated institutional work, beginning with the early

identification of potential donors and accurate diagnosis of brain death, followed by donor assessment, organ preservation and rapid coordination between retrieval and transplant teams.

The process involves intensive-care units, laboratories, blood banks, logistics teams and specialists in heart, liver and kidney transplantation, ensuring that the maximum possible benefit is obtained from each donation.

Dr Qasim bin Saleh Al-Abri, consultant cardiac surgeon at the National Centre for Heart Medicine and Surgery, said heart transplantation was among the most complex specialised procedures and required a high level of readiness throughout the entire process.

He said the fourth successful heart transplant showed that Oman's national programme was moving beyond its establishment phase towards continuity and the accumulation of experience.

Dr Amna bint Al-Busaidi, cardiology consultant at the National Heart Centre at the Royal Hospi-

tal, said every successful transplant adds to national expertise and strengthens confidence in the country's ability to provide advanced transplant services.

She noted that Oman had made progress in brain-death reporting, intensive-care readiness, donor assessment, organ preservation, laboratory testing, waiting-list management and the training of specialised transplant teams.

Dr Walid bin Amer Al-Badi, consultant cardiac surgeon at the Royal Hospital, said repeated operations had improved coordination, decision-making and the ability of medical teams to anticipate and manage challenges.

He stressed that sustaining progress would require continued investment in specialised personnel, training, infrastructure and public awareness, particularly to increase organ donation. **>A6**

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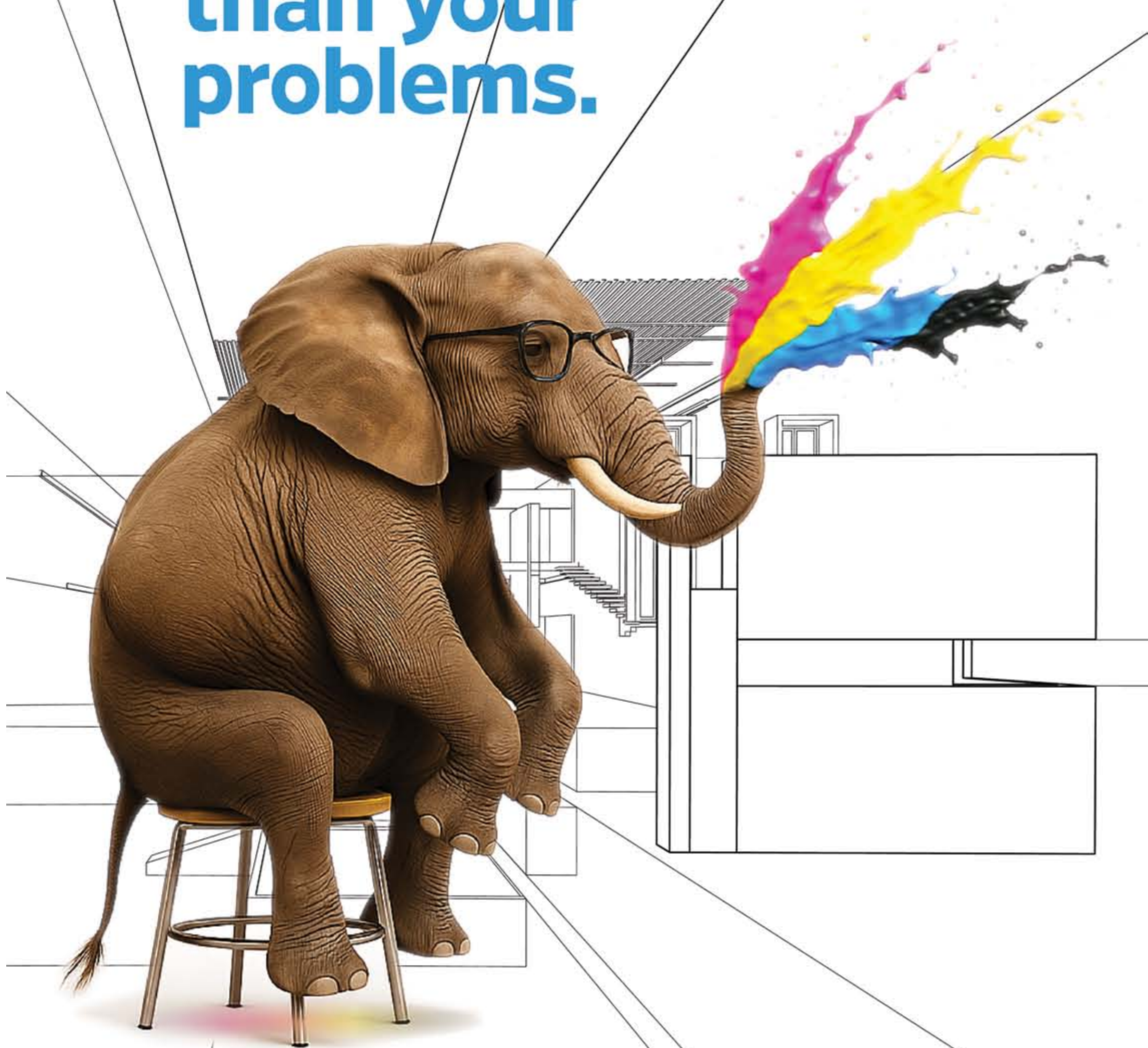
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COMMENTARY

Key Legal Rules for making a Bequest in Oman Explained

Under the Personal Status Law issued by Royal Decree No. 32/97, a bequest, or wasiya, is a disposal in the form of a donation that takes effect only after the testator's death. The law establishes clear rules on how it can be made, accepted and enforced in the Sultanate.

Speaking to Times of Oman, Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Zad-jali, Chairman of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm, stated that “a bequest cannot exceed one-third of the estate of the testator, calculated after funeral expenses and debts, and anything beyond needs the competent heirs' consent, enforced only against their shares. A bequest may be oral, written, or an understandable

gesture if the testator cannot speak or write.

“Anyone with capacity to make a donation may draft a bequest, even during terminal illness, and may amend or revoke it in whole or in part before death.”

“An heir cannot receive a bequest without permission from the remaining competent heirs. It may go to a specific person, an unborn child, a specified or un-

specified group, or a charitable or scientific institution and other public bodies existing when the bequest is made. A specified legatee must accept the bequest after the testator's death; if accepted during his lifetime, that acceptance must be maintained after his death; silence for 30 days after learning of the bequest counts as acceptance. A Bequest to an unspecified legatee needs no acceptance,” he said.

He stated that “the law also makes a bequest obligatory for the nearest of kin. If the bequest is by way of donation and is overlooked in favour of others, two-thirds of it must be returned to the nearest of kin.”

“A bequest ceases to have effect if the testator revokes it; the legatee predeceases the testator; the legatee becomes his heir; the legatee rejects the bequest after the testator's death; the legatee kills the testator, whether as perpetrator, accomplice, or instigator and whether intentionally or by mistake, provided the legatee was of sound mind and of criminal responsibility age; the specific bequeathed property is destroyed or third parties are entitle to it; or either testator or legatee apostatises from Islam unless he reverts,” he said.

The estate settles in order: funeral expenses, debts, the bequest, then the remainder to the heirs. To avoid disputes, the testator should put the bequest in writing, as courts require evidence before hearing a claim concerning a bequest, he concluded.

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

Oman to showcase investment, tourism opportunities in London

The event aims to present Oman to the world as an integrated destination offering opportunities for investment, tourism and business growth

Times News Service

LONDON: The British capital, London, will host the “Live Oman” initiative on September 21, aimed at showcasing Oman's urban development projects and invest-



ment opportunities to a broad international audience. The initiative will run for several days.

The initiative seeks to establish a direct platform for attracting investors and buyers from global markets, in line with the strategic direction of Oman's unified promotional identity.

It aims to present Oman to the world as an integrated destination offering opportunities for living, investment, tourism and business growth.

Oman enters the event with a range of competitive advantages. It ranks third globally in the Quality of Life Index and is considered

among the world's safest and most stable countries. The Sultanate also boasts more than 2,000 kilometres of coastline and is party to more than 105 international trade agreements connecting it with markets across Asia, Africa and Europe.

The “Live Oman” pavilion will

showcase a variety of ownership and investment opportunities, with the participation of leading Omani real estate developers seeking to expand their international buyer base. Featured projects include Sultan Haitham City, Al Thuraya City and Muscat Bay, in addition to promising investment opportunities in free zones.

The initiative adopts an innovative international marketing model focused on directly reaching target markets through business meetings and closed-door sessions bringing developers together with decision-makers in the British market.

More than 55 key locations are being targeted, including private members' clubs, luxury hotels and wealth management offices in prominent London districts such as Mayfair, Marylebone and Belgravia.

The London edition of the initia-

tive is being held under the theme “Reimagine Your Future”, an innovative concept reflecting life in Oman and its balance between tranquillity, nature, quality of life and growth.

The initiative particularly seeks to attract discerning groups looking for stability and secure property ownership while respecting their cultural privacy.

The efforts are being carried out in coordination with the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in London, which will support protocol arrangements and engagement with British investment stakeholders.

Overall, the initiative represents an urban-focused approach that goes beyond traditional real estate promotion, presenting Oman as a comprehensive global destination that combines security, economic opportunities and sustainable future-oriented development.

NCSI

Hotel revenues top OMR138.3 million by end of July in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information showed a decline in the number of guests in 3- to 5-star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman by 11.9 percent until the end of July 2026, reaching 1,154,436 guests, compared to 1,309,792 guests during the same period in 2025, a decrease of 155,356 guests.

Revenues of classified hotels up to the end of July 2026 amounted to approximately OMR138.306 million, compared to OMR156.36 million during the same period of 2025, registering a decline of 11.4 percent. The average occupancy rate in classified hotels reached 45.8 percent by the end of July 2026, compared to 52.9 percent during the same period in 2025, a decrease of 7.1 percentage points.

The data showed an increase in the number of Omani guests by 2.8 percent, reaching 482,031 guests by the end of July 2026, compared to 468,854 guests during the same period in 2025, constituting about 41.8 percent of the total guests of classified hotels.

The number of Asian guests also increased by 1.3 percent, reaching 189,579 guests, compared to 187,143 guests during the same period in 2025.

Conversely, European guests saw a 30.4 percent decrease,



reaching 257,921 guests, compared to 370,590 guests by the end of July 2025. Despite this decline, Europeans remained the largest category of non-Omani guests in classified hotels.

The number of guests coming from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries also declined by 19.1 percent, reaching 89,345 guests, compared to 110,501 guests during the same period in 2025.

The number of guests from other Arab nationalities decreased by 11.3 percent, reaching 50,093 guests, compared to 56,474 guests, while the number of American guests recorded a decline of 22.8 percent, reaching 33,524 guests, compared to 43,413 guests during the same period last year.

Guests from Oceania experienced the largest decline among all categories, with a 57 percent drop, from 27,050 guests at the end of July 2025 to 11,626 guests at the end of July 2026. African guests also decreased by 5.8 per-

cent, reaching 8,289 guests, compared to 8,803 guests during the same period in 2025.

On a monthly basis, data for July 2026 showed a remarkable improvement in the activity of classified hotels compared to June 2026. The number of guests during July reached 162,427, an increase of 20.2 percent compared to 135,080 guests in June, while the number of guests in May reached 154,380 guests.

Hotel revenues rose during July 2026 to OMR14.13 million, compared to OMR10.773 million in June 2026, recording a monthly growth of 31.2 percent. Revenues for May 2026 amounted to OMR13.927 million.

Occupancy rates also increased during July 2026 to 42.6 percent, compared to 35.9 percent in June and 38.7 percent in May, an increase of 6.7 percentage points compared to June, reflecting an improvement in occupancy rates and hotel activity during the past month of July.

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NEW APPOINTMENTS

Royal Decree on transfers, appointments in diplomatic corps

< FROM Royal Decree No. (70/2026) on applying the unified law (system) for managing plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in the GCC countries.

After the same was presented before the Council of Oman.

Article (1) stipulates that the provisions of the unified law (system) for managing plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in the GCC countries, attached to this decree, shall be enforced.

Article (2) cancels all that contradicts the attached law (system) or contravenes its provisions.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. (71/2026) on conducting transfers and appointments in the diplomatic corps.

Article (1) states that the following shall be transferred to the General Diwan of the Foreign Ministry:

1- Sheikh Al Abbas bin Ibrahim bin Hamad Al Harthy, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to Malaysia.

2- Yousef bin Ahmed bin Hamad Al Jabri, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of Austria.

3- Dr. Mohammed bin Said bin Khalifa Al Busaidi, the Sultanate of

Oman's Ambassador to Japan.

4- Dr. Saleh bin Amer bin Harith Al Kharousi, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the State of Kuwait.

5- Sayyid Turki bin Mahmoud bin Ali Al Busaidi, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Syrian Arab Republic.

Article (2) transfers Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Saleh Al Bahrani, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan and appoints him as Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq.

Article (3) appoints the following:

1- Sheikh Nasser bin Sulaiman bin Hamad Al Harthy as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus.

2- Faisal bin Omar bin Said Al Marhoon as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Syrian Arab Republic.

Article (4) grants the following the position of an ambassador:

1- Minister Plenipotentiary Ali bin Ahmed bin Salim Al Shanfari shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the State of Kuwait.

2- Minister Plenipotentiary An-

war bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Muqaibal shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

3- Minister Plenipotentiary Yaqoub bin Badr bin Ali Al Ruqaishi shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Republic of Sudan.

4- Minister Plenipotentiary Salim bin Habib bin Salam Al Omairi shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Republic of Somalia.

5- Minister Plenipotentiary Salim bin Saud bin Salim Al Habsi shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Republic of Austria.

6- Minister Plenipotentiary Rashid bin Ali bin Humaid Al Badi shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal.

7- Counselor Eng. Hatim bin Hilal bin Ali Al Yaqoubi shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to Malaysia.

8- Counselor Aseela bint Nasser bin Zaid Al Kayoumi shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to Japan.

9- Counselor Dr. Sheikh Salah bin Salim bin Ali Jaaboub shall be granted the position of an ambassador and appointed as the Sultanate of Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Article (5) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. (72/2026) on appointing non-resident Ambassadors.

Article (1) states that Talal bin Sulaiman bin Habib Al Rahbi, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the United States of America, shall be appointed as Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary non-resident Ambassador to the United Mexican States, Canada, the Republic of Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. (73/2026) on appointing non-resident Ambassadors.

Article (1) states that Abdullah bin Nasser bin Mussallam Al Rahbi, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt, shall be appointed as Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Angola.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. (74/2026) on appointing non-resident Ambassadors.

Article (1) states that Khalid bin Salim bin Ahmed Ba'makhalif, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco, shall be appointed as Oman's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Benin and the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. (75/2026) ratifies the agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the United Arab Emirates pertaining to the development of railway linkage.

Article (1) ratifies the agreement signed on 21 June 2026 between

the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the United Arab Emirates pertaining to the development of railway linkage, in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall take effect from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. (76/2026) ascribes the public utility status to the project of constructing stormwater drainage for the areas adjacent to Al Barakah Palace.

Article (1) stipulates that the project of constructing stormwater drainage for the areas adjacent to Al Barakah Palace, as specified in the memorandum and overall masterplan drawing attached to this decree, shall be deemed a public utility project.

Article (2) states that the authorities concerned may take over, by direct implementation, the properties and lands necessary for the aforementioned project, along with any structures therein, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Utility Expropriation Law issued by Royal Decree No. 71/2023.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall take effect from its date of issue. -ONA

Oman, Rwanda to boost relations

The two countries share a historical legacy rooted in Oman's longstanding connections with East Africa



MUSCAT: Bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Rwanda continue to evolve across multiple sectors, reflecting the shared commitment of both countries to strengthen cooperation and expand the scope of partnership, building upon diplomatic ties, which were established in 1982.

The upcoming official visit of President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda to the Sultanate of Oman comes within the framework of mutual interest in advancing bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation in the political, economic, and investment spheres, thereby opening new horizons for partnership between Oman and Rwanda.

The two countries share a historical legacy rooted in Oman's longstanding connections with East Africa, which over the centuries have contributed to building bridges of commercial, humanitarian, and cultural exchange. This heritage constitutes a positive foundation for contemporary relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Rwanda, grounded in mutual respect, cooperation and openness to forging future partnerships.

Both countries have worked to strengthen their bilateral ties

through official delegation visits. Olivier Nduhungirehe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda, visited the Sultanate of Oman during 10-11 January 2026, leading a delegation that comprised four other Rwandan ministers, namely the Minister of Information and Communication Technology and Innovation, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, the Minister of State for Infrastructure, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda Development Board.

The visit facilitated meetings with a number of Omani ministers to exchange views and ideas on enhancing bilateral relations in service of shared interests. It also witnessed the signing of several agreements and cooperation programs in the fields of transport, communications, and information technology, including a Memorandum of Understanding between the Rwanda Development Board and Oman Airports Management Company, aimed at enhancing cooperation in airport development

and management, expertise exchange, and exploring investment opportunities in the aviation sector and related infrastructure.

A cooperation program was also signed in the field of logistics services and the development and operation of inland ports (dry ports) and supply chain-related services, alongside a cooperation program in data centers, cloud computing, infrastructure, and artificial intelligence projects and services.

In April 2025, the Sultanate of Oman signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Rwanda concerning the enhancement of cooperation in telecommunications and digital economy development, on the sidelines of Oman's participation in the Global Summit on Artificial Intelligence in Africa, held in Kigali.

With a view to strengthening air connectivity between the two countries, the visit also saw the announcement of the launch of direct flights between Muscat and Kigali. SalamAir commenced its inaugural direct flights between

Muscat and Kigali, Rwanda, on 21 July 2026, with two weekly flights, thereby enhancing direct connectivity between the two countries and supporting the development of economic, tourism, and investment relations.

At the political level, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister met with his Rwandan counterpart in New York in September 2025, on the sidelines of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, as part of ongoing communication between the two countries and the exchange of views on various matters of mutual concern.

Rwanda pursues a policy of openness and partnership-building, focusing on promoting stability and sustainable development. Its international relations are anchored in economic diplomacy, investment attraction, and active participation in peacekeeping efforts. Rwanda is a member of several international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, the African Union, and the East African Community, in addition to its membership in the Commonwealth.

Diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Rwanda date back to 1982 and were established at the level of non-resident ambassadors. Oman's diplomatic representation to Rwanda is currently conducted through the Sultanate of Oman's Embassy in Nairobi, while Rwanda's diplomatic representation to Oman is conducted through its Embassy in Cairo.

President Kagame's visit to the Sultanate of Oman is expected to further strengthen economic relations and increase the volume of bilateral trade, as current indicators open the door for its development and expansion, particularly in light of enhanced air connectivity and the signing of several agreements and cooperation programs in logistics and supply chain integration.

Numerous opportunities for cooperation and investment exist between the two countries, encompassing trade, energy, renewable energy, mining, inland ports, airports, hospitality, healthcare, and education.

Economic and trade relations between the two countries have witnessed several milestones, including the participation of over 80 Omani companies from various industrial sectors in the Omani Products Exhibition (OPEX 2020), held in Kigali in March 2020, to promote trade exchange and target the Rwandan market. Exhibited products included food items, plastics, building materials, and others.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, two trade agreements were signed, the first between Tatronk Middle East Technical Services and Al Rashidi General Trading Company, concerning the export of the "Oman Tak" product for hot and cold pipes; and the second between the National Pharmaceutical Industries Company and Sun Enterprises Rwanda, concerning product registration, marketing, and distribution in the Rwandan market through various pharmacies and hospitals.

Within the framework of agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two countries, an Air Services Agreement was signed in 2023 and entered into force on 12 January 2026, in addition to the Memorandum of Understanding on telecommunications, information technology, and digital economy development signed in April 2025, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Rwanda Development Board and Oman Airports Management Company, and the two cooperation programs in logistics services and inland ports, and in data centers, cloud computing, infrastructure, and artificial intelligence projects and services, all of which were concluded in January 2026.

Rwanda, located in East Africa,

is a country that has undergone rapid transformation and achieved relative stability after decades of turmoil. It is a landlocked nation covering an area of 26,338 square kilometers, with its capital in Kigali. It is bordered by Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rwanda is known for its mountainous terrain, which has earned it the sobriquet "Land of a Thousand Hills." The tourism sector, particularly nature-based tourism, constitutes a cornerstone of its economy, with national parks that are home to rare mountain gorillas.

Rwanda's economy is among the fastest-growing in Africa.

Traditionally reliant on agriculture—with key crops including coffee, tea, maize, and potatoes—the country is increasingly focusing on the services sector, particularly information technology, tourism, and financial services, as part of the implementation of "Rwanda Vision 2050", which aims to transform Rwanda into a knowledge-based and innovation-driven economy, achieve high-income country status, and strengthen its position as a regional hub for business, investment, and conferences in East Africa.

Rwanda offers investment opportunities across a number of sectors, including agriculture, livestock, tourism, hospitality, mining, information and communications technology, industry, energy, and pharmaceuticals, in addition to the development of special economic zones and infrastructure.

The accelerating developments in Omani-Rwandan relations provide a favorable foundation for enhancing bilateral cooperation in the coming period and leveraging available opportunities in the trade, investment, energy, logistics, aviation, technology, and tourism sectors, thereby supporting shared interests and opening broader horizons for partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Rwanda. -ONA

NCSI

Omanis top the list of passengers at Muscat airport in July

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The total number of passengers travelling through the airports of the Sultanate of Oman, including arrivals, departures, and transit passengers, reached approximately 7,689,967 by the end of July 2026, a decrease of 8.1 percent compared to the same period in 2025, which amounted to 8,366,273 passengers, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

During July 2026, Omani nationals topped the list of nationalities with the most movement through incoming and outgoing flights at Muscat International Airport, with a total of 204,591 passengers, including 95,111 arrivals and 109,480 departures.

Indian nationals came in second place with a total of 169,751 travelers, including 99,958 arrivals and

69,793 departures, while Bangladeshi nationals came in third place with a total of 46,665 travelers, including 23,171 arrivals and 23,494 departures.

The data showed that the total number of international flights arriving and departing through Muscat, Salalah and Sohar airports reached 45,904 flights until the end of July 2026, a decrease of 9.5 percent compared to 50,747 flights during the same period in 2025.

Muscat International Airport recorded 49,315 international and domestic flights until the end of July 2026, a decrease of 7.3 percent compared to 53,170 flights during the same period in 2025. The number of passengers through the airport reached 6,855,942, a decrease of 8 percent compared to 7,453,204 passengers.

As for international flights at Muscat International Airport, the



number reached 43,970 flights, a decrease of 8.4 percent compared to 47,986 flights during the same period last year, while the number of passengers on international flights reached 6,164,584 passengers, a decrease of 9 percent.

In contrast, the number of domestic flights through Muscat International Airport recorded a growth of 3.1 percent, reaching

5,345 flights compared to 5,184 flights. The number of passengers on domestic flights also increased by 2 percent to reach 691,358 passengers, compared to 677,837 passengers during the same period in 2025. As for Salalah Airport, the total number of international and domestic flights reached 5,569 flights until the end of July 2026, a decrease of 5.3 percent compared to

5,881 flights during the same period last year, while the total number of passengers reached 797,620 passengers, a decrease of 8.4 percent compared to 870,616 passengers.

International flights through Salalah Airport witnessed a decline of 30.8 percent, reaching 1,864 flights compared to 2,693 flights. The number of passengers on international flights also decreased by 32.9 percent to reach 246,257 passengers, compared to 367,168 passengers.

In contrast, the number of domestic flights through Salalah Airport increased by 16.2 percent to reach 3,705 flights, and the number of passengers through it increased by 9.5 percent to reach 551,363 passengers, compared to 503,448 passengers during the same period last year.

As for Sohar Airport, it recorded 122 international and domestic flights until the end of July 2026, a

decrease of 6.2 percent compared to 130 flights during the same period in 2025, while the number of passengers reached 5,150 passengers, a decrease of 24.6 percent compared to 6,831 passengers.

The number of international flights through Sohar Airport reached 70, a 2.9 percent increase compared to 68 flights previously, while the number of passengers on international flights decreased by 33.2 percent to 199. Domestic flights also declined by 16.1 percent to 52, with the number of passengers reaching 4,951, a decrease of 24.2 percent.

Duqm Airport recorded 326 domestic flights until the end of July 2026, a decrease of 9.4 percent compared to 360 flights during the same period last year, while the number of passengers decreased by 12.3 percent to reach 31,255 passengers compared to 35,622 passengers.

IPHE

Oman joins global partnership for hydrogen and fuel cells

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, has joined the International Partnership for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in the Economy (IPHE), an international collaboration aimed at advancing the hydrogen economy and fuel-cell technologies and accelerating their adoption across sectors including transport, industry, power generation and energy storage.

The move strengthens Oman's position within the global hydrogen ecosystem and supports international cooperation in green hydrogen and the development of a sustainable energy system. It also reinforces the Sultanate's ambitions in the hydrogen and hydrogen derivatives sector and supports its broader economic and development objectives.

Oman's membership represents a strategic step towards achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040, particularly in economic diversification based on knowledge, innovation and sustainability, by



strengthening the country's role in the global hydrogen economy.

Membership will enable Oman to expand cooperation with IPHE member countries and benefit from international best practices in developing policies, regulatory frameworks and technical standards.

It will also support the growth of the hydrogen sector and help connect domestic projects with international markets.

The partnership will provide a platform for cooperation in developing green hydrogen value chains, harmonising standards, specifications and safety requirements, and supporting international trade in hydrogen and its derivatives.

Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, underscored the importance of Oman's membership, saying the Sultanate is keen to play an active role in strengthening international

alignment and accelerate the safe and economically viable deployment of hydrogen and fuel-cell technologies.

Oman will also be able to participate actively in research, development and innovation programmes and joint pilot projects, while benefiting from international initiatives focused on capacity building and developing specialised national skills.

This will contribute to preparing the expertise required for the growth of the hydrogen economy and attracting high-quality investments.

The move builds on Oman's ongoing efforts to develop its green hydrogen sector by leveraging its solar and wind energy resources and establishing an integrated ecosystem that supports sustainable development and net-zero targets while increasing the sector's contribution to the national economy.

Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, underscored the importance of Oman's membership, saying the Sultanate is keen to play an active role in strengthening international

cooperation in hydrogen.

He described the move as an important milestone in Oman's efforts to build a hydrogen economy, noting that the Sultanate seeks to establish a globally competitive green hydrogen economy.

Al Aufi said Oman looks forward to contributing to international efforts to drive innovation, strengthen cooperation, enhance national capabilities and develop the policies and standards required to build a resilient and sustainable global hydrogen market.

Paolo Emilio Valladao de Miranda, Chair of the International Partnership for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in the Economy, welcomed Oman's membership, noting that the partnership is continuing to grow and attract an increasing number of countries committed to developing the global hydrogen economy.

He said Oman's ambitious vision for low-emission hydrogen, exceptional renewable energy potential and focus on developing large-scale production and export opportunities make it a valuable addition to the interna-

tional partnership.

Valladao de Miranda added that Oman brings important expertise and perspectives in infrastructure, international markets, policy development and standards, contributing to efforts to build a resilient and sustainable global hydrogen economy.

Dr. Laurent Antoni, Executive Director of the International Partnership for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in the Economy, said Oman's membership represents an important addition to the partnership's international community, combining significant renewable energy potential with an ambitious hydrogen development programme and a clear focus on building the capabilities and frameworks needed to support the emergence of a new industry.

He said the partnership looks forward to working with Oman and facilitating the exchange of expertise with other members, particularly as countries address shared challenges related to infrastructure, standards, skills development and the creation of international hydrogen markets.

DRAWS CROWD

High turnout at Omani pavilion in Moscow International Book Fair

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani pavilion at the Moscow International Book Fair continued to attract visitors for the third consecutive day, drawing members of the Russian public, researchers, students and tourists interested in learning about Oman's publications, culture, history and national identity.

Dmitry Budrov, a visitor to the fair, said he was particularly keen to visit the Omani pavilion after studying Arabic at the Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers in Manah and travelling to several parts of Oman.

Budrov, who has a strong interest in Omani history, said he had purchased several Arabic-language books on Oman during his first visit to the Sultanate and headed directly to the Omani pavilion to discover new publications about the country.

The pavilion also attracted



two researchers from Moscow University, Nikita Berzikov and Yaroslav Laput, who specialise in Oriental studies.

They said they visited specifically after learning through their university about Oman's participation in the fair.

The researchers expressed particular interest in Oman's maritime history, its historical presence in Zanzibar and Africa, and

ancient trade relations between Oman and Asian countries.

Another visitor, Fatima bint Salman, a Russian national who speaks Arabic fluently, also visited the pavilion.

She is a graduate of the Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers in Manah and praised Oman for its natural beauty, hospitable people and sense of security.



THE ROYAL GUARD OF OMAN
Tender Advertisement

The Royal Guard of Oman, invites tender for the following:-

Tender Reference	Subject	Grade	Tender Document Fee (Non-refundable)	Submission Date
07/2026	Consulting Services for Studying and Implementing Digital Transformation Projects	I & above	SME R.O 10/- L.O R.O. 65/-	12 th October 2026
08/2026	Refurbishment of some facilities at Al Husn Mess, Seeb	III & above	SME R.O 10/- L.O R.O. 60/-	12 th October 2026
09/2026	Provision for Insurance Policy Covers for year 2027	I & above	R.O. 25/-	12 th October 2026

Specialized companies registered in the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the above-mentioned Grade and the Procurement and Contracts Directorate of the General Directorate of Finance, Royal Guard of Oman, can collect the tender document from the Tender Committee Secretariat, Royal Guard of Oman, Seeb during working hours from **Sunday 06th September to Thursday 10th September 2026**.

Wax-sealed Tenders addressed to the Chairman - Tender Committee should be submitted to RGO before 1200 hours on the submission date along with a Tender Bond the name of the Royal Guard of Oman equivalent to 1% (One Percent) of the value of the Tender from any registered Bank in the Sultanate of Oman. The tenderer shall not reveal his identity other than the tender title and the address mentioned below.

No Tender will be accepted after the submission date. The Royal Guard of Oman reserves the right to accept or reject any Tender without giving reasons.

Tender Committee
P.O Box 381 C.P.O, Postal Code 111



وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية
Ministry of Social Development



Tender Announcement

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

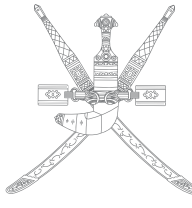
Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
420/2026	Supplying and installing (2) new external marine engines with all necessary accessories, and carrying out installation, testing, operation and delivery work for the safety boat at Musandam Governorate	Companies specialized in the field of Hygiene, washing and pest control registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with excellent or first or second or third or fourth class.	Sunday 20-09-2026 02:00 PM	Munday 05-10-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
424/2026	Implementig the Advanced Professional Diploma Program in Early Childhood	Companies specialized in the field of education, training, and human resources development services and registered with the Projects, Tenders, and Local Content Authority with an excellent, first, second, third, or fourth grade.	Friday 25-09-2026 02:00 PM	Thursday 15-10-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at theTender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Sunday 06/09/2026

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

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

www.mosd.gov.om



وزارة التراث والسياحة
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

Internal Tender Announcement

Tender No.	127/2026/MHT/HQ-24 (International)	Tender Name	Consultancy Services for the Preparation of the Nomination Dossier and Management Plan for the Inscription of Salut An Iron Age Settlement on the World Heritage List
Fees of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)			300 
Tender Document Sales End Date			20/9/2026
Last Date for Bid Submission			13/10/2026
Grade			Excellent, First
E-Tendering Portal			https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om

Specialized and qualified local and international companies, institutions, and consultancy firms wishing to participate in the Tender shall obtain the Tender Documents electronically through the Esnad eTendering System, operated by the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority, in accordance with the applicable registration procedures and requirements of the system, via the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>

Companies, institutions, and consultancy firms registered in the Sultanate of Oman shall complete, sign, and submit the Bid Commitment Declaration in accordance with the form and requirements specified in the Tender Documents. International companies, institutions, and consultancy firms that are not registered in the Sultanate of Oman as of the Tender submission date shall submit an electronic Tender Bond issued by a bank licensed and registered in the Sultanate of Oman, in an amount of not less than one per cent (1%) of the total Tender value. The Tender Bond shall be issued, authenticated, and submitted electronically through the Esnad eTendering System, in accordance with the procedures, conditions, and requirements set out in the Tender Documents. Any Tender Bond submitted outside the Esnad eTendering System, whether in hard copy or as a scanned copy, shall not be accepted and shall not be deemed to satisfy the Tender Bond requirements.

The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids

The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).

Support and inquiries	For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om For inquiries related to the technical support for the e-tendering system, kindly communicate through etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om or 24402244
For further information	Email : sotic@mht.gov.om Phones : 22088348 - 22088085

Road infrastructure in Dhofar gets a boost as new roads inaugurated

The two projects, Harweeb-Mitan Road in the Wilayat of Al Mazyunah and the asphalt road network in the Wilayat of Muqshin represent a qualitative addition to Dhofar Governorate

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology on Saturday inaugurated the Harweeb-Mitan Road in the Wilayat of Al Mazyunah and the asphalt road network in the Wilayat of Muqshin, Dhofar Governorate, with the two projects spanning a combined length of approximately 380 kilometres.

Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar and patron of the inauguration, said the governorate is witnessing significant momentum in infrastructure development, with road projects representing a key pillar of comprehensive development efforts.

He affirmed that work will continue to strengthen and develop the road network across the governorate's wilayats.

The two projects represent a



qualitative addition to Dhofar's road network and are aligned with the governorate's comprehensive strategy to accelerate development by improving infrastructure and transport efficiency and supporting sustainable economic and social development.

Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, said the ministry is continuing its plans to strengthen and develop Oman's road infrastructure in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Improved connectivity

He said the ministry is working to establish and develop a modern road network in accordance with best practices and standards, contributing to improved connectivity between wilayats and governorates, enhancing traffic efficiency and supporting economic, social and tourism development.

Al Maawali noted that the Harweeb-Mitan Road project represents an important link in Dhofar's transport and connectivity network. It connects the centre of Al Mazyunah with its wilayats and enhances its connection to

the Al Mazyunah land port and Free Zone, extending to the land border crossing with the Republic of Yemen.

The project is expected to strengthen Al Mazyunah's role as a commercial and logistics hub, facilitate the movement of goods, stimulate economic and commercial activity, and enhance investment, tourism and related services.

The minister added that the project will support urban expansion and development across the wilayat, improve road-related services, facilitate the movement of residents and economic activities, enhance traffic safety and improve connectivity between population centres and service and economic hubs.

Meanwhile, the asphalt road network project in Muqshin aims to strengthen connectivity between the wilayat centre and its affiliated wilayats and areas, improving the movement of people and goods and access to services and facilities.

The project will also support administrative and development integration and strengthen the government's institutional presence and the delivery of services

and development opportunities to various areas, contributing to national cohesion.

Al Maawali said the Muqshin project would enhance the wilayat's urban and economic development potential by improving transport links and connecting population centres with production areas. This will support the utilisation of the wilayat's tourism and economic resources and contribute to balanced and sustainable development.

The Harweeb-Mitan Road project comprises the construction and paving of 210 kilometres of roads, including the Harweeb-Andat section (45 kilometres), Andat-Tawsanat (26 kilometres), Tawsanat-Al Mazyunah (39 kilometres), Al Mazyunah-Mitan (90 kilometres), in addition to paving the Andat-Habروت Road over 10 kilometres.

The Muqshin asphalt road network covers a total of 170 kilometres, extending from the wilayat centre through Mandar Al Dhubyayn, Al Mishash, Marsudud, Al Manader and Shijaj, reaching Marsudud, thereby strengthening connectivity between the wilayat centre and its affiliated areas.



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END OF THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2026

Oman's Standards and Specifications Index grows 33.8%

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's Standards and Specifications Index grew by 33.8% by the end of the second quarter of 2026, exceeding the target set for the period by 65%, as the Sultanate accelerates efforts to strengthen product quality, safety and competitiveness.

The development of national standards and technical specifications is being positioned as an important component of Oman's economic infrastructure, providing technical references for products and services while helping industrial, commercial and technology sectors meet market requirements.

The Directorate General of Standards and Metrology at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion is working under its 2026 plan to prepare and study around 1,567 unified Gulf standard specifications projects, of which approximately 325 are being prepared by Oman.

The programme also includes 16 national standard specifications projects, while overall completion of projects under the plan exceeded 80% by the end of Q2 2026.

The specifications cover a wide range of sectors, including food products, building materi-

als, petroleum products, energy efficiency, electricity and electronics.

They also increasingly address emerging fields such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, electric vehicles, logistics and tourism.

Emad bin Khamis Al-Shukaili, Director General of the Directorate General of Standards and Metrology, said the expansion of the standards system was strengthening Oman's technical infrastructure and providing clear requirements related to quality, safety and efficiency.

He noted that standardisation is closely linked to the requirements of industry, trade and other economic sectors, helping Omani products meet technical requirements in domestic and international markets.

It also contributes to reducing technical barriers to trade and creating a clearer regulatory environment for producers and investors. The growing focus on emerging sectors reflects the rapid transformation taking place across the economy. Standards are being developed for artificial intelligence, renewable energy and electric vehicles, alongside specifications covering logistics and tourism services.

Full story @timesofoman.com/oman

Arabian Car Marketing Wins Excellence in Developing Women Talent & Job Creation Award



Arabian Car Marketing was felicitated with the 'The Origin Excellence in Developing Women Talent & Job Creation Award' at The Origin - Women Forum & Awards 2026. The awards presentation was held at JW Marriott Hotel Muscat, bringing together women leaders, professionals, entrepreneurs and changemakers from across Oman and the region.

As the authorised distributor of Lincoln and Ford vehicles in Oman, Arabian Car Marketing places strong emphasis on developing its people, building professional capabilities and maintaining high standards of customer service and industry expertise. Its people-focused approach reflects the importance of creating an environment where talent can grow



and contribute meaningfully to the organisation's continued progress.

The recognition reflects Arabian Car Marketing's contribution to creating opportunities for women to participate, develop their skills and build meaningful careers within the automotive sector. By supporting talent development and employment opportunities, the company contributes to a more inclusive and diverse workforce. The Origin Awards 2026 are instituted by Times of Oman, in collaboration with Muscat Media Group, Gulf Leaders Circle and TEvents. The awards recognise exceptional women, organisations and initiatives making a meaningful impact across industries and communities, while advancing leadership, empowerment, inclusion and progress.

2026/2027 ACADEMIC YEAR

UTAS welcomes admission of over 10,000 students

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) has welcomed more than 10,000 students across its branches and academic programmes for the 2026/2027 academic year, with the number of admitted and registered students reaching 10,563.

Data on registered students showed that all admitted students are Omani nationals, with female students accounting for 5,868, compared with 4,695 male students.

The newly registered students are distributed among the university's branches across the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. Ibri branch recorded the highest number with 1,935 students, followed by Muscat with 1,581 students, Shinas with 1,337 students and Salalah with 1,313 students. The remaining students are distributed among the university's branches in Nizwa, Ibra, Al Musannah, Sohar, Sur, Al Rustaq and Musandam.

At the academic programme level, Business Administration and Commercial Studies programmes attracted the largest number of new students, with 3,372 students, followed by Engineering programmes with 3,077 students and Computer and Information Science programmes with 2,947



students. Creative Industries programmes recorded 530 students, followed by Education programmes with 358 students, and Applied Sciences and Pharmacy programmes with 279 students.

The university also recorded demand for a number of specialised programmes, including Applied Sciences, Applied Biotechnology, Media and Mass Communication, Design and Teacher Preparation programmes, reflecting the range of academic options offered by the university.

The registration process took place from 20 to 25 August 2026, during which the university registered more than 10,000 students, with 10 withdrawals recorded.

UTAS continues to develop its learning environments, infrastructure and modern educational technologies, while expanding partnerships with the government and private sectors. These efforts support the provision of applied education, as well as training and

qualification opportunities aimed at enhancing graduates' readiness for the labour market.

The university also supports initiatives adopted in line with national directions, including the Omani Programme for Cultural and Scientific Cooperation with brotherly and friendly countries, supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination with the Ministry of Education. The programme enables students from brotherly and friendly countries residing in the Sultanate of Oman, who have completed Grade 12 at an Omani or international school in the Sultanate, to apply for tuition-fee-exempt scholarships at the university through the Unified Admission Centre.

During the 2026/2027 academic year, the university seeks to provide a conducive educational environment and support the advancement of education in the Sultanate of Oman through the development of infrastructure and educational and service facilities.

Through its various branches and diverse academic programmes, UTAS continues to fulfil its mission of preparing qualified national cadres equipped with the technical, professional and digital skills needed to compete and innovate, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 in education, national capacity development and future skills.

NATIONAL TRANSPLANT PROGRAMME

Demand for organs greater than availability

< FROM A1 According to the centre, 35 organ transplants were performed in Oman between January 1 and July 28, 2026.

These included 23 kidney transplants, nine liver transplants and three heart transplants.

In addition, 50 corneal transplants were performed during the same period.

Of the kidney transplants, 15

were from living donors and eight from brain-dead donors. Six of the liver transplants involved living donors and three involved brain-dead donors, while all three heart transplants were from brain-dead donors.

Donation coordinators

Officials said the demand for organs remains greater than availability and called for stronger

reporting of brain-death cases, trained donation coordinators, enhanced intensive-care capacity and greater community awareness. The centre said every registered donor and every family that consents to donation can potentially help save several lives, making organ donation an important pillar of Oman's efforts to develop a sustainable national transplant programme.

Russian President to pause strikes against Kyiv amid Ukraine talks

The US envoys Kushner and Witkoff arrived in Moscow on Saturday. They were met at the airport by Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev



MOSCOW: Russia will pause strikes against Kyiv for three days, the Kremlin said on Saturday, coinciding with peace negotiations led by US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Russian President Vladimir Putin “has ordered that no strikes be carried out against Kyiv for three days, starting at midnight today,” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told state media.

It comes after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy already

committed to pausing airstrikes for the talks.

“As with previous diplomatic visits by the American side, we will ensure the normal functioning of Russian airspace so that the negotiators can arrive safely. We are

concerned about their safety, not about Russia,” Zelenskyy said.

Kushner, Witkoff arrive in Moscow
The US envoys Kushner and Witkoff arrived in Moscow on Satur-

day. They were met at the airport by Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev.

Hours earlier, US President Donald Trump said he was sending his son-in-law Kushner and businessman Witkoff to Moscow and Kyiv with a proposal to end the conflict.

“They’re bringing with them a proposal to end the war,” Trump told reporters Friday when asked about the pair’s trip. Kushner and Witkoff have served as Trump’s envoys to lead peace efforts in the Middle East as well as Ukraine.

The US president did not provide any details on the potential plan, including whether it involved Ukraine giving territory to Russia as he has previously suggested. Instead, he said, “We have an idea for peace.”

Meanwhile, a Russian drone hit the headquarters of Ukraine’s domestic security service (SBU) in Kyiv on Friday. Ukrainian Foreign

Minister Andrii Sybiha called the strike “a major escalation” of the war. “Moscow launched this strike during a renewed push for peace — laying bare its true rejection of diplomacy,” he wrote on X. Zelenskyy said he ordered “an appropriate, tangible response and, where possible, one that mirrors this strike.” Ukraine has also launched repeated drone strikes on Russian oil infrastructure and the retail giant Wildberries.

The Ukrainian President said Kyiv’s objective was to make the discussions with the US delegation as “constructive and substantive as possible” and to identify practical options for ending the war.

“Our goal is to make the visit and the talks with the U.S. side as constructive and substantive as possible. We need to look for real options for how to move this war toward an end,” he added.

— Agencies

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



UNGA votes to adopt new world map to reflect Africa’s true size

NEW YORK: The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Friday adopted an African Union-backed resolution titled “Correct the Map”, calling for more accurate and equitable cartographic representation of the world’s regions, particularly Africa.

The resolution, championed by Togo on behalf of the African Group, was adopted with overwhelming support. A total of 164 countries voted in favour, while one voted against and six abstained.

Welcoming the adoption, the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the UN congratulated Togo and the African Group, describing the resolution as an important step towards ensuring that global maps better reflect Africa’s actual geographical scale.

“Congratulations to the delegation of Togo on the adoption this morning by the #UNGA of resolution A/80/L.104, ‘Correct the Map’, an @AfricanUnion initiative promoting more accurate and equitable global cartographic representation, particularly of Africa,” the mission said in a post on X.

Decision welcomed

The African Union Commission also welcomed the decision, with AU Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf commending Togo’s leadership and the unity of African countries in advancing the initiative.

In a communiqué, Youssouf congratulated the Republic of Togo and President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé for championing the initiative on behalf of the African Group and helping mobilise broad international support.

“The adoption of this resolution marks an important step forward,” the A African Union U Chairperson said.

The initiative focuses on the long-standing use of the Mercator projection, a map projection developed in the 16th century primarily for navigation.

According to the African Union Commission, the Mercator projection does not accurately represent the relative surface areas of different regions and significantly understates the actual size of Africa.

The AU said the initiative goes beyond cartography and is intended to promote representa-

tions of Africa based on “objective and scientifically established realities”.

The African Union Commission called on international institutions, educational systems, publishers and digital platforms to progressively adopt cartographic representations that more accurately reflect actual land areas.

In a separate post on X, the African Union Commission described the adoption as a “historic step toward accurate and equitable global cartographic representation”.

“For centuries, the Mercator projection distorted global geography, shrinking Africa to the size of Greenland when our continent is actually 14 times larger,” the commission said.

Equal-area maps

The AU said the resolution promotes the use of equal-area maps, including the Equal Earth projection, in classrooms, media and international institutions so that maps better convey the relative size of countries and continents.

The AU Commission said it would continue working with Togo, its member states and other relevant partners to support efforts to implement the initiative.

Youssouf said the issue was not merely about how maps are drawn but also about ensuring that Africa is represented in accordance with its actual geographical dimensions.

“Africa must be represented as it truly is: in its true dimensions and in its rightful place in the world,” the AU Chairperson said.

International backing

The adoption gives broad international backing to an initiative that seeks to address longstanding distortions in commonly used world maps. While the Mercator projection remains widely used because of its usefulness for navigation, its visual representation can make areas closer to the poles appear disproportionately large compared with regions near the equator.

The African Union’s campaign therefore seeks greater use of equal-area projections that preserve the relative size of land masses, particularly in educational and public-facing representations of the world.

— ANI

Honouring Excellence in Social Impact

Shabiba 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
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- 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:

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SPORTS

ICC chief Jay Shah backs Oman Cricket's infrastructure growth



The world cricket's governing body supremo lauded the progress of cricket in the Sultanate during a brief visit to Oman Cricket headquarters in Al Amerat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: ICC Chairman Jay Shah has praised Oman Cricket's progress and backed further investment in infrastructure, saying the Sultanate has the potential to host more international cricket. Shah, during his private visit to Oman, made time to visit the Oman Cricket (OC) headquarters on Thursday, where he was briefed by OC President Pankaj Khimji, Vice-President Paul Sheridan,

Treasurer Alkesh Joshi, Secretary Madhu Jesrani, board officials including Syed Anwar, Chaitanya Khimji, Damodar Katti, and chief development officer Duleep Mendis, on the organisation's development plans. He toured the facilities and met the all-Omani national squad preparing for the Asian Games, as well as the under-19 boys, women's and under-19 girls' teams. He later held discussions with the OC board on the development of cricket in

Oman and opportunities to host international and regional cricket. Shah recalled Oman Cricket's contribution during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Oman and the UAE stepped in to host matches in 2021 after the ICC Men's T20 World Cup was moved from India. "Oman did a fantastic job," Shah said, praising the country's infrastructure and its ability to stage international cricket at short notice. He said the next step was to strengthen Oman's permanent infrastructure, particularly if the country is to host more major international fixtures. "Right now, the infrastructure is very good, but if you want to host international games, you need some permanent infrastructure also," he said. Shah indicated that the ICC could explore ways to support Oman's infrastructure plans and expressed confidence that permanent facilities, including spectator

stands, would be developed. The possibility of Oman hosting more bilateral cricket was also discussed. Shah pointed to an upcoming Future Tours Programme (FTP) bilateral workshop in Dubai later this month, where member boards can explore potential fixtures. While bilateral series remain primarily a matter between individual boards, Shah said the ICC could assist where required. He also identified opportunities for Oman to host training camps for teams from the Gulf, noting that the country has developed strong infrastructure and can provide a suitable environment for both senior and junior players. Shah was encouraged by Oman Cricket's financial position after Khimji informed him that the board is debt-free. "For Oman today, funding is not a problem," Shah said, stressing that commitment and hard work on the field remain crucial to the game's development.

The ICC chairman also highlighted the progress of women's cricket in Oman and noted the significant improvement in the national team's ranking. "Women's cricket is very close to my heart," Shah said, reiterating his support for greater opportunities for women players. He also recalled initiatives during his tenure at the BCCI to strengthen recognition and financial support for women's cricket, including the introduction of pay parity. Shah welcomed cricket's growing presence in multi-sport events, particularly the Asian Games and the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games. With cricket returning to the Olympic programme, Shah said both the ICC and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) were excited about the sport's future on the global multi-sport stage. Senior board official Alkesh Joshi termed the visit of ICC supremo Jay Shah as "historic" and

said that Oman Cricket was honoured by the visit. "The visit of Shah demonstrates the commitment of ICC towards the game's development of Associate nations," said Joshi. He added that the ICC chief was "impressed by the growth of the game among local Omanis" and congratulated the all-Omani team that will make their historic debut at the forthcoming Asian Games in Japan. The senior OC functionary said: "Our development programme with women's cricket and the huge jump in rankings was applauded by Shah and we are determined to make further progress in raising the level of women's cricket." For Oman Cricket, Shah's visit provided a significant endorsement of its progress and future plans, with discussions focusing on strengthening infrastructure, expanding international cricket and creating more pathways for players at senior and junior levels.

ACC PREMIER CUP

Oman go down fighting as Tahir ton powers Kuwait to thrilling win



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman went down fighting in a thrilling finish against Kuwait, suffering their first defeat of the ongoing ACC Men's Premier Cup after Bilal Tahir's unbeaten century guided Kuwait to a four-wicket victory with just two balls to spare in their Group B encounter in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Oman, defending a competitive 252/8, made Kuwait work hard for every run after reducing their opponents to 37/3 inside the opening 10 overs. But Tahir stood firm under pressure, producing a superb unbeaten 103 to steer Kuwait to 256/6 in 49.4 overs. For Oman, it was a frustrating end to a contest in which they had fought their way to a challenging total and then twice put themselves in a strong position with the ball. In the end, Tahir's

composure in the closing stages proved decisive. Oman's innings was built around useful contributions through the middle order, with Jiten Ramanandi providing the biggest individual score. He struck 53 from 55 balls, including four fours and two sixes, after reaching his half-century from 44 deliveries. Oman made a steady start, reaching 47/2 after 10 overs. Karan Sonavale (43) and Hammad Mirza (22) then added 50 to rebuild the innings and take Oman beyond the early setbacks. The hosts passed 100 in the 21st over and moved beyond 150 in the 31st, but Kuwait continued to chip away at the batting order. Mohamed Shafeeq claimed 3/56 from his 10 overs, while Abdullah Zaheer returned 3/54, including a maiden. Oman reached 200 in 42.3 overs before Jay Odedra (39) and Sha-



keel Ahmed (22) added another important 50-run partnership to push the total towards the 250 mark. Oman eventually finished on 252/8 from their 50 overs, leaving Kuwait with a demanding chase.

And Oman appeared to have seized control early in the reply. Kuwait slumped to 37/3 during the powerplay, giving Oman a major opening in the defence. But Tahir and Mohammed Aslam Nawfer



refused to allow the pressure to build further. The pair added 50 from 67 balls, with Aslam reaching his half-century from 62 deliveries. He eventually fell for a valuable 62 from 77 balls, having struck six fours. Tahir, meanwhile, remained the constant presence at the crease. He reached his fifty from 61 balls and continued to anchor the chase as Kuwait moved to 150 in 32.6 overs and 200 in 41.5. With the asking rate beginning to climb, Oman continued to stay in the contest, but Tahir found another crucial partner in Yasin Patel. Their 50-run stand came from just 46 balls and shifted the momentum back towards Kuwait. Tahir completed his century from 103 deliveries, hitting nine fours and three sixes, and his unbeaten innings under mounting pressure ultimately proved the difference.

Kuwait crossed 250 after 49.1 overs before completing the chase at 256/6 in 49.4 overs. Tahir finished unbeaten on 103 from 106 balls as Kuwait secured a dramatic victory. Shah Faisal and Jay Odedra took two wickets each while Shakeel Ahmed and Nadeem Khan had a wicket apiece. Following Kuwait's win, UAE, Oman and Kuwait have all four points with UAE having a game in their hand. Oman conclude their group engagements with a match against the UAE on September 8, Tuesday. **Brief scores:** Oman: 252/8 (Jiten Ramanandi 53, Karan Sonavale 43, Jay Odedra 39 ret'd out; Mohamed Shafeeq 3/56, Abdullah Zaheer 3/54) lost to Kuwait: 256/6 in 49.4 overs (Bilal Tahir 103 not out, Mohammed Aslam Nawfer 62, Yasin Patel 37; Shah Faisal 2/37, Jay Odedra 2/41).

CD RATES SLIDE IN INDIA

Interest rates on three-month certificates of deposit (CDs) have fallen by more than 100 basis points from their peak this year as a surge in FCNR (B) inflows has pushed liquidity higher in the banking system, according to ICICI Bank Research.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX MARKET CAP RISES

The market capitalisation of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose to OMR38.9 billion at the close of trading week on Thursday, registering weekly gains of about OMR600 million.

Green hydrogen moves closer to Oman's logistics, transport sector

The collaboration reflects the integration of roles between the energy and logistics sectors, enhancing the local value of renewable resources in the Sultanate of Oman, and opening new horizons for operational and commercial solutions in emission-intensive activities

Times News Service

SALALAH: Oman's emerging hydrogen economy is moving closer to practical applications in transport and logistics following a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Asyad Group and OQ Alternative Energy.

The two companies have signed



a MoU for the purchase of green hydrogen, within the framework of cooperation between the two sides to develop the uses of green hydrogen in the transport and logistics sector.

The MoU includes a study on how Asyad Group can benefit from the production of the green hydrogen project of OQ Alternative Energy in Duqm, which opens the way for employing green hydrogen in transportation and logistics operations, and supports the gradual expansion of its use within the energy system in the Sultanate of Oman.

This collaboration reflects the integration of roles between the energy and logistics sectors, enhancing the local value of renewable resources in the Sultanate of Oman, and opening new horizons for operational and commercial solutions in emission-

intensive activities.

It also contributes to preparing the market for wider adoption of these solutions, in light of the development of infrastructure and value chains related to green hydrogen in the Sultanate of Oman.

Salem bin Saeed Al-Kamyani, CEO of OQ Alternative Energy, said that the hydrogen journey in the Sultanate of Oman is entering a new phase, moving from building potential to actually employing it. This partnership represents an important step, as it links green hydrogen production with actual use in the logistics sector, and provides an opportunity to build practical expertise across the value chain.

He added that projects of this type are a key pillar for building capacity, developing infrastructure, and preparing the market for the growth of the hydrogen economy, noting that by working with

strategic partners such as Asyad, the company will be able to test technologies and business models within actual operational processes, build local expertise, and identify the requirements necessary to expand the application of these solutions in the future.

He explained that the Sultanate of Oman has resources and capabilities that qualify it to enhance its position in the production and export of renewable energy and green hydrogen. However, the growth of this sector also requires developing local demand and opening the way for the use of hydrogen in various economic sectors. This would enhance the economic feasibility of projects, support the establishment of hydrogen-related industries, and contribute to maximising the local value of the resources and capabilities that the Sultanate of Oman possesses.

Ahmed bin Ali Al Balushi, CEO of Asyad Drydock and Infrastructure Services at Asyad Group, said that reducing emissions in the transport and logistics sector requires practical and scalable solutions, supported by a reliable energy system. This collaboration provides an opportunity to study the use of green hydrogen and translate the emerging capabilities of the Sultanate of Oman in this field into practical applications across the value chain in the logistics and transport sectors.

He added that Asyad is committed to developing more sustainable logistics solutions, which will support the competitiveness of the sector and enhance the Sultanate of Oman's position as a global logistics hub connected to international markets.

Its participation in developing hydrogen-based transport solutions represents a practical step to build operational expertise, expand partnerships, and develop the necessary infrastructure to keep pace with the shift towards low-carbon transport.

OQ Alternative Energy's Green Hydrogen Project is the company's first integrated initiative to deploy green hydrogen solutions; it is designed to build operational capabilities across the hydrogen value chain and lay the groundwork for the future application of these solutions on a wider scale.

The project includes the integration of renewable energy, hydrogen production, operations, certification, handling and commercial marketing. The project is expected

to produce up to 400 kilograms of green hydrogen per day, with the possibility of expansion through a dedicated hydrogen refuelling station in Duqm.

The project benefits from its location in the Duqm Special Economic Zone, which includes industrial and logistical activities that allow for the study of green hydrogen production and its use within an integrated operational environment.

The importance of the project lies in linking the various stages up to the final use, which helps to build practical experience in aspects related to operation, certification, infrastructure, safety and estimating the size of demand.

These experiences form an important foundation to support the growth of the hydrogen sector in the Sultanate of Oman, and enhance its ability to expand in line with the objectives of the "Oman 2040" vision and the national direction to achieve zero carbon neutrality.

The signing of the MoU represents a new phase of cooperation between OQ Alternative Energy and Asyad, as the two parties work to transform it into an actionable framework.

By linking green hydrogen production to transportation and logistics applications, this partnership will contribute to building the technical, operational and commercial expertise needed to support future projects and consolidate the foundations of the emerging hydrogen economy in the Sultanate of Oman.

HIGHER SALES VOLUMES

Raysut Cement Group reports profit of OMR2.71mn in H1

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Raysut Cement Group has achieved a turnaround in its financial and operational performance during the first half of this year. The company has reported a net profit after tax of OMR2.71 million, compared to losses of OMR2.85 million during the same period of 2025.

This turnaround was supported by higher sales volumes and increased operational efficiency, along with improved contributions from a number of key subsidiaries, including Pioneer Cement, Sohar Cement and Raysut Maldives. Oman has a large production base in the cement industry, which is one of the basic industries linked to the construction and infrastructure sectors. This drives companies operating in the sector to enhance the efficiency of their operations, develop their competitive capabilities and expand their presence in local and foreign markets.

The company has also strengthened its contributions to infrastructure, real estate development, and construction projects. The group has a regional distribution and export network with a production capacity of approximately 3.47 million tonnes of clinker and 5.70 million tonnes of cement annually.

Raysut Cement is betting on continuing to improve its operational and financial performance by enhancing the utilisation of existing plants and expanding the role of energy, alternative fuels and mining projects, thereby supporting its competitiveness and contributing to more sustainable long-term growth.

Under the slogan "A New Dawn," the company seeks to establish a phase based on a culture of performance, results, and accountability and to promote teamwork and discipline in cost management, thereby contributing to raising the efficiency of operational processes and maximising the value achieved from its current resources and assets.

The company has entered a new phase of performance and strategic direction, supported by its return to profitability during the first six months of this year, in



parallel with the implementation of an operational transformation programme that focuses on raising production efficiency, re-adjusting the cost structure, and maximising the utilisation of its assets and production capacities.

Engineer Ali bin Abdullah Al-Zadjali, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Raysut Cement Company, said that the group's financial performance reflects the positive impact of the company's efforts to restore profitability and build a more resilient and sustainable business, explaining that the company's return to profitability represents an important milestone in its transformation journey.

He explained that this improvement came as a result of a set of practical and measurable measures, including strengthening cost control, raising operational efficiency, consolidating commercial discipline, developing performance monitoring mechanisms, improving asset utilisation, and promoting a culture of accountability and transparency at various levels of the organisation.

He stressed that the results achieved represent a positive indicator of the effectiveness of the transformation path, enabling the company to achieve sustainable growth that consolidates its position and competitiveness.

He pointed out that the Board of Directors continues to support the efforts of the executive management to enhance the company's core business, improve efficiency, raise cash generation levels, and build a more competitive, flexible and able organisation to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities available in the markets.

He said the next phase will focus on transforming the momen-

tum achieved in the recovery process into sustainable growth, by continuing to consolidate operational discipline, implementing energy efficiency initiatives, improving the utilisation of natural resources, assets and subsidiaries. In addition, the company will take advantage of investment and commercial opportunities that contribute to creating long-term value for shareholders and those dealing with the company.

Salim Abdul Qader, CEO of Raysut Cement Company, confirmed that the company has witnessed a tangible transformation in production processes and operational performance, driven by business reorganisation and a focus on operational efficiency and a competitive advantage based on the human element. He noted that the company succeeded in returning to profitability during the first half of this year for the first time in six years.

He further explained that the company's cement production process has witnessed a comprehensive improvement that has enhanced the company's competitiveness, product diversity, and customer and consumer confidence. He pointed out that the company will continue the same approach in the next phase, by continuing to implement initiatives aimed at enhancing operational and financial performance.

Tariq bin Salem Fadhil, Head of Human Resources at Raysut Cement Company, said that the company is working on developing human capital, promoting Omaniisation, qualifying national talents, and providing a work environment that supports employees and helps them grow and contribute to achieving the company's goals.

FIRST HALF OF 2026

Al Mazunah Free Zone localises four projects worth OMR620,000

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Mazunah Free Zone, managed and operated by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), localised four projects worth over OMR620,000 during the first half of 2026. The projects, spanning industrial and logistics activities as well as export offices, will occupy a total area exceeding 2,415 sqm.

With these new investments, the cumulative investment in the free zone has surpassed OMR141 million, while the total leased area has exceeded 1.4 million square metres out of the zone's overall area of 15,362,305 square metres. Moreover, the number of the workforce at Al Mazunah Free Zone has reached 472.

Eng. Ahmed Al Kasbi, Director General of Al Mazunah Free Zone, stated that the free zone is currently preparing to organise the second edition of Al Mazunah Economic Exhibition and Forum, scheduled for 20 to 22 October 2026. "Building on the success of the first edition, the event aims to strengthen trade and investment ties between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Yemen. The second edition is designed to broaden the participation of local and international companies, showcase investment opportunities, and facilitate strategic partnerships," Al Kasbi said.

He added, "The event is geared towards supporting the presence of local products and services in regional markets and reinforcing Al Mazunah Free Zone's role as a gateway for trade exchange between Oman and Yemen. Additionally, the event aims to attract service companies, manufacturers, brand agents, automotive showrooms, import and export firms, logistics providers, food suppliers, and the SMEs to discuss new prospects for cooperation and joint ventures."

Al Kasbi informed that during the first half of 2026, Al Mazunah Free Zone has completed the readiness of its desalination plant to provide water service and started receiving requests for the service. Design works for the infrastructure of Phase 4, covering an area of 1.5 million square metres, were



also completed. Madayn is also planning several projects at Al Mazunah Free Zone, including the development of the zone's sovereign gateway in coordination with the relevant authorities in addition to an internal irrigation network to expand green areas.

Other planned projects planned under the current Five-Year Plan include an industrial incubator and specialised warehouses covering 50,000 square metres, as well as a study to establish a 1,000-square metres cold storage facility and open a representative office for Al Mazunah Free Zone targeting the Yemeni market, capitalising on the zone's strategic position as an eastern gateway to Yemen.

The free zone is also studying to sign a MoU with the operator of Najd Farms to create added value from agricultural products through manufacturing activities

at the zone. These include producing animal feed from agricultural waste generated by Najd Farms and establishing compound fertiliser manufacturing facilities.

Al Kasbi pointed out that future plans also include a study to develop infrastructure for an automotive complex comprising showrooms and public parking over 50,000 square metres. In addition, the free zone aims to add one megawatt of solar energy capacity through solar-powered lighting, encourage existing companies to shift 10% of their electricity consumption to clean energy, and mandate the installation of renewable energy systems for new companies.

Strategically located near regional markets, Al Mazunah Free Zone plays a key role in supporting economic and commercial development in Dhofar governorate and the Sultanate of Oman in general. The free zone attracts projects across industrial, advanced technology, food manufacturing and logistics sectors, while offering investors a range of incentives.

The incentives include exemption of profits from income tax for 30 years without the need to provide income declaration, flexibility in the transaction process for remittance and dealing of foreign exchange, exemption from the law of commercial agencies and customs duties, possibility of 100% ownership of the invested project's capital, among other investment incentives.

MARKET

MSX market capitalisation rises by OMR600mn to OMR38.9bn

During the week, the MSX listed the 84th issue of government development bonds (GDBs) in the bonds and sukuk market, with a volume of OMR100 million divided into one million bonds with a value of OMR100 per bond and an annual interest rate of 4.5 percent

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The market capitalisation of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose to OMR38.9 billion at the close of trading week on Thursday, registering weekly gains of about OMR600 million, benefiting from the rise in stock prices, increased optimism in the stock market, and higher trading volumes, values, and executed transactions.

During the week, the MSX listed the 84th issue of government development bonds (GDBs) in the bonds and sukuk market, with a volume of OMR100 million divided into one million bonds with a value of OMR100 per bond and an annual interest rate of 4.5 percent. The market value of the bonds and sukuk market rose at the end

of trading week to OMR5.52 billion, recording weekly gains of OMR101.1 million.

The market capitalisation of public shareholding companies recorded gains of OMR242.6 million during the week, rising to OMR22.98 billion at the end of the week's trading. The closed market recorded weekly gains of OMR250 million, concluding the week's trading at OMR11.28 billion.

These gains coincided with a rise in the main stock exchange index and sectoral indices, with trading value increasing by more than 116 percent and the number of transactions executed increasing by 42 percent.

Trading data issued by the Muscat Stock Exchange indicated that the main index rose by 95



points during the week to close at 7628 points.

Adel Walid, brokerage manager at United Securities Company, explained that these gains were supported by a number of technical and fundamental factors. The fundamental factors included the rise in oil prices, which helped the gen-

eral index of the stock exchange rise with the return of Gulf and foreign purchases, in addition to the results of companies that were announced in July, which contributed to the market achieving many gains during the past weeks.

He told the Oman News Agency that technical factors included the

declines recorded by the stock exchange during May, June and July of this year, which brought stocks back to very attractive investment levels, supported by strong announced results, which helped bring back a large number of local and international speculators to the Muscat Stock Exchange.

Adel Waleed predicted that the Muscat Stock Exchange would see further gains at the end of the third quarter of this year, as the exchange is expected to be upgraded in the FTSE index, which will attract some of the foreign investments in the region to the local market.

Last month saw the listing of shares issued by Bank Sohar International as part of its capital increase, which the bank offered to exercise its right of preference, aiming to increase its capital from OMR702.5 million to OMR849.6 million.

In August 2026, the Ordinary General Assembly of OQ Exploration and Production approved the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends to shareholders for the second quarter of this year at 7.23 baiza per share, and to distribute performance-related cash dividends at 4.8 baiza per share, and to authorize the Board of Directors to approve and distribute cash dividends for the third quarter at 7.23 baiza per share.

Pearl Real Estate Investment Fund announced the distribution of interim cash dividends to unit holders registered on August 31 at a rate of 5.5 baiza per unit. Jabal Real Estate Investment Fund also announced that its Board of Directors approved the distribution of interim cash dividends for the second quarter at a rate of 1.825 baiza per unit.

REPORT



FCNR inflows push short-term borrowing costs lower amid rising liquidity

NEW DELHI: Interest rates on three-month certificates of deposit (CDs) have fallen by more than 100 basis points from their peak this year as a surge in FCNR (B) inflows has pushed liquidity higher in the banking system, according to ICICI Bank Research.

The report said the impact of the foreign currency inflows is being felt more strongly in short-term money market rates, which have moved well below the policy repo rate. Rates on six-month and one-year CDs have also declined by around 100 basis points and 90 basis points, respectively, from their peaks earlier this year.

The sharp decline in short-term borrowing costs comes after gross FCNR (B) inflows reached around USD 127 billion, significantly changing the liquidity outlook for the rest of the financial year, ICICI Bank said.

Before the FCNR (B) scheme, average system liquidity stood at around INR 1.6 lakh crore, or 0.6 per cent of net demand and time liabilities (NDTL), in May 2026. This rose to INR 3.7 lakh crore, or 1.3 per cent of NDTL, in August, while current liquidity has reached around INR 10.5 lakh crore, or 3.9 per cent of NDTL.

The bank expects liquidity to remain elevated in the coming months, with the banking system surplus likely to be around 2.5 per cent of NDTL by March, even after accounting for seasonal demand for currency and reserve balances.

The report said the rise in liquidity could have implications beyond short-term borrowing costs, as historical data show a relationship between liquidity and inflation with a lag. The correlation between system liquidity and core consumer price inflation is 0.50 with a 12-month lag, while it rises to 0.62 for core inflation excluding precious metals.

The impact of the foreign currency inflows is being felt more strongly in short-term money market rates, which have moved well below the policy repo rate

"Today's liquidity has an impact on 'future' inflation," ICICI Bank Research said, warning that the current increase in liquidity could push future inflation higher than its present trajectory.

The bank expects headline inflation at 4.5 per cent in FY28, while core inflation excluding precious metals is estimated to settle at around 4 per cent.

Against this backdrop, ICICI Bank said some level of permanent liquidity absorption may be required, along with temporary measures. It said long-term variable rate reverse repo operations (VRRR) could provide flexibility to absorb excess liquidity while allowing funds to be released later when required.

On monetary policy, ICICI Bank expects a shallow rate-hike cycle ahead, with a 50 basis point increase in the policy rate likely to bring real rates towards the lower end of the neutral range. If inflation turns out higher than its current trajectory, the bank said a 75 basis point hike would be sufficient to bring real rates in line with the neutral rate band.

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Oman's stock market advances on strong fundamentals in weekly trading

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market advanced for another week, with the MSX 30 index up 1.27%, closing at 7628 points. Overall market capitalisation rose by 1.71% and the value of shares traded surged by 116.40%, while the number of shares traded increased by 123.08%.

"The market benefited from Saudi-Omani diplomatic efforts that aimed to ease geopolitical tensions, as well as strong local fundamentals," said Ahmed Negm, Head of Market Research MENA at XS.com.

"An 11.3% increase in total oil production, to 233.80 million barrels, signalled stronger daily output despite the regional situation. Solid first half (H1) data on banking credit growth by 12.3% year-on-year and non-oil export resilience of 11.4% also helped underpin the MSX 30's steady advance," he added.

On the geopolitical front, Saudi-Omani talks on recent developments and potential solutions to achieve de-escalation contributed to improving sentiment. Donald Trump also stated that the campaign against Iran won't last long, further easing investor concerns.



Crude oil prices rose sharply throughout the week amid renewed escalations in the region. Oil remains supported by geopolitical risk, though prices eased slightly towards the end of the week and could continue to retreat if diplomatic efforts see progress and shipping conditions improve.

Meanwhile, markets also monitored Friday's US non-farm payrolls data, keeping caution in place. The country's job growth accelerated sharply in August, while the unemployment rate held steady at 4.1%, pointing to a still-stable labour market and keeping a Fed interest rate hike on the table this month, weighing on global sentiment.

At the sector level, the indus-



trial sector finished the week with a strong performance, advancing 3.49% to 9816 points. Voltamp Energy jumped 8.14%, followed by OQ Base Industries (SFZ), Oman Cables Industry, and Jazeera Steel Products, each recording positive performances of 4.40%, 1.32%, and 1.78%, respectively.

The financial index inched higher by 0.38% this week, closing at 13434 points. Omnivest, Madina Takaful, and Sohar International Bank posted solid gains, rising by 4.74%, 3.67%, and 3.26%, respectively. Bank Dhofar declined slightly by 0.91%, and Oman Emirates Holding slipped by 0.77%.

The services index gained modestly by 1.52%, finishing at 3060 points. Al Batinah Power surged

by 7.07%, while Oman Telecom rose slightly by 1.24%, and Phoenix Power edged higher by 1.07%. Meanwhile, OQ Gas Networks retreated by 1.35%, and Abraj Energy Services moved lower by 0.98%.

Looking ahead, Ahmed Negm said, sentiment could be shaped by any clear timeline toward a diplomatic resolution, de-escalation efforts, and improved shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. "Traders will closely monitor oil price movements and upcoming US economic data that may influence Federal Reserve interest-rate expectations. At the same time, strong local fundamentals could continue to underpin markets despite geopolitical uncertainty," he finally added.

NEW SOURCES OF GROWTH

Asia-Pacific SMEs seek new growth through AI and deeper connectivity

GUANGZHOU: On a production line at Seng Fong Holdings Berhad in Malaysia, a robotic arm grips a 35-kilogram block of rubber, with 3D cameras, laser scanners and AI algorithms serving as its "eyes" and "brain."

The setup is designed to tackle a longstanding challenge in the traditionally labour-intensive rubber processing industry. Rubber blocks coming out of drying ovens vary in shape, making them difficult for conventional robotic systems to handle.

Developed by an AI company in China's southern Guangdong Province, the solution has enabled the Malaysian rubber processor to automate more of the handling process, cutting labor costs by 20 to 30 percent while improving management efficiency, according to the company's chairman.

The case points to a broader shift taking place across the Asia-Pacific. AI is creating new opportunities



for SMEs to innovate, while deeper regional connectivity is helping them turn technological advances into new sources of growth.

That trend was reflected at the 32nd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meeting, held on Friday in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong, as officials from APEC economies gathered to explore how technological innovation can empower SMEs and drive their further development.

SMEs are a major pillar of the regional economy. As technologi-

cal and industrial transformation accelerates and global supply chains undergo profound changes, AI and other emerging technologies are creating both new opportunities and new challenges for SMEs across the Asia-Pacific.

AI-powered robotics are opening up new pathways for the digital transformation of SMEs, while open-source technologies are further lowering the barriers to technology access and application, enabling more businesses to participate in technological innovation, said Yang Qian, co-founder and chief operating officer of the Shenzhen-based embodied AI startup X Square Robot, at a parallel forum held alongside the ministerial meeting.

"What once required six months, costly computing power and a professional team can now be done in three days with a workstation and an idea," she said. "This gives SMEs, for the first time, a more level playing field with industry gi-

ants in innovation."

Yet SMEs across the region still face challenges, such as high digital transformation costs and talent shortages, highlighting the need for greater regional cooperation.

Kwon Jong-hyun, vice chairman of the Beijing Chapter of the World-OKTA, cited embodied intelligence as an example, saying China's strengths lie in scale and speed, while those of the Republic of Korea lie in precision and reliability.

Such cooperation, he said, is not simply about adding strengths together, but about multiplying their impact by combining complementary capabilities.

China's experience in supporting SMEs' digital transformation offers one example.

The latest move came on Friday, when the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology released an action plan to support AI entrepreneurship among SMEs for 2026-2028.



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Nepal flash floods death toll rises to 1,344, relief operations continue

The aftermath of the devastating floods has affected several aspects of life in Nepal, with authorities also grappling with concerns over the contamination of drinking water sources and the possible spread of communicable diseases in flood-hit areas

KATHMANDU: As rescue and relief operations continue in Nepal in the wake of the devastating flash floods of August 26, the Nepal Police said on Saturday that the death toll has risen to 1,344.

The Nepal Police shared the latest death toll in a post on X.

The aftermath of the devastating floods has affected several aspects of life in Nepal, with authorities also grappling with concerns over the contamination of drinking water sources and the possible spread of communicable diseases in flood-hit areas.

The Kathmandu Post reported on Friday that five of the 15 drinking water sources in flood-hit Bidur were found to be contaminated with E. coli.

Officials are now considering cholera vaccination for around



1,00,000 vulnerable people and measles vaccination for more than 75,000 children.

Bidur is among the areas worst affected by the Bhote Koshi floods.

Beyond the casualties, the floods swept away entire settlements and damaged or destroyed vital infrastructure, including roads, bridges and drinking water systems.

The Nepalese outlet reported that public health experts have warned that the risk of communicable, non-communicable and vector-borne diseases could increase in the aftermath of the disaster. They have advised authorities to step up preventive and relief measures, with particular attention to young children, elderly people and those living with non-communicable diseases.

As relief and rehabilitation efforts continue, the Government of Nepal has announced immediate cash support for affected areas. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) stated that NPR 10

million each has been allocated to Rasuwa and Nuwakot, NPR 5 million to Dhading, and NPR 135 million has been distributed among 15 affected local governments.

Earlier, a group of US lawmakers on Friday urged US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to step up American relief and search-and-rescue efforts in flood-hit Nepal, including by deploying a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), providing additional humanitarian assistance and planning significant reconstruction support as the death toll from the disaster continues to mount.

Meanwhile, Indian specialised tunnel rescue and medical teams continue their complex search operations in flood-hit Nepal along with the Nepalese Army.

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava on Thursday highlighted India's ongoing humanitarian aid, specialised tunnel rescue contingents, and a 19-member forensic team to aid the relief efforts in the flood-ravaged Nepal

and assured that India would respond positively to its neighbour's request for reconstruction aid.

Highlighting the speed of India's response following the August 26 flash floods, Ambassador Srivastava noted that India has mobilised five relief flights packed with emergency supplies, and direct outreach with top Nepalese leadership began immediately.

The ongoing rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations are being carried out as authorities continue to assess the scale of destruction caused by the floods and address emerging humanitarian and public health concerns.

Two people rescued

Meanwhile, a Chinese national was rescued alive from flood-hit Rasuwa and brought to Kathmandu, while a 64-year-old Chandrika Shrestha was rescued from Betrawati Bazaar in Nuwakot on Saturday, the 11th day since the Bhotekoshi River in Rasuwa was severely flooded, according to the



Nepal Army and Nepal Prime Minister's Office.

The Chinese national rescued by the Nepali Army from flood-affected Rasuwa district was brought to Kathmandu by helicopter.

The Chinese national and the Nepali woman, rescued from flood-affected areas, were airlifted to the hospital to receive treatment.

Meanwhile, the Nepal PMO said that Shrestha, a resident of Nuwakot, was rescued in Betrawati Bazaar.

The PMO said in a Facebook post, "Shrestha of..., Nuwakot, was rescued by a command team led by Inspector Suman BK of the Armed Police Force, Nepal. Shrestha was found unconscious."

It added, "After the rescue, she is being brought to the Nepal Army's Maithilak Barracks in Trishuli by helicopter."

The PMO further said that Shrestha would be taken to Kathmandu for further treatment after receiving initial treatment at the Maithilak Barracks.

"After initial treatment, she will be taken to Kathmandu from Maithil Barracks for further treatment as needed," the PMO said.

The initial details of the rescue missions of the survivors were also shared by the Nepalese Army and the Police on X.

The rescue of the two individuals on Saturday comes after two people were rescued alive from a tunnel at the Trishuli 3A hydropower project on Friday.

Citing Shri Ram Neupane, a lawmaker from the Rastriya Swatantra Party, the Kathmandu Post reported that the two men were identified as Sanjay Sah, a mechanical foreman, and Kabir Maharjan, a mechanical supervisor.

Amid catastrophic flash floods that have claimed at least 1,344 lives, the Nepalese Army and international teams are mounting massive Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations to reach isolated communities in the Himalayan nation.

In Nuwakot district, military engineering units are constructing a rope bridge over the swollen Tadi River to restore ground connectivity to areas cut off from the national road network. Concurrently, air operations are working around the clock under hazardous conditions to deliver aid and rescue stranded residents.

In another post on X, the Nepalese Army, operating alongside other agencies, informed that it has deployed approximately 20 helicopters to lead search, rescue, and relief distribution efforts across the severely impacted Nuwakot and Rasuwa districts.

Despite adverse weather, mountain terrain, and a scarcity of usable helipads due to flood damage, aircrews are continuously executing drops and evacuations. Visuals released by military officials highlight the high-stakes airborne missions navigating tight valleys to reach displaced families.

— ANI

BANGLADESH



Opposition launches anti-govt march

DHAKA: In the largest organised anti-government demonstration since the formation of the new administration following the February 12 general elections, an 11-party opposition coalition in Bangladesh kicked off a 246-kilometre "long march" motor convoy on Saturday.

The procession, comprising nearly 1,000 vehicles, set off from Motijheel's Shapla Chattar in Dhaka around 8:00 AM and is scheduled to culminate in a major rally at Chattogram's historic Laldighi Maidan. The road march was officially inaugurated by Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman alongside key leaders of the 11-party opposition alliance, which includes the National Citizen Party (NCP), a prominent movement born out of recent student-led uprisings and the Amar Bangladesh Party.

Speaking to ANI during the rally, AB Party Chairman Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan Monju clarified that while the movement does not seek to overthrow the government, it demands immediate action on critical domestic issues.

The protesters have laid out a charter of demands that touches almost every aspect of daily life. At the heart of it is the call for a Gono Vote — a referendum to push through long-promised constitutional and political reforms, giving people a direct say in the nation's future.

Closely linked is the demand

to honour the July Resolution, to deliver on the political promises and justice frameworks that emerged from last year's student-led July movement. Beyond politics, people are struggling with a deepening economic and resource crisis, with severe shortages of electricity and natural gas crippling homes and businesses.

They are also raising alarm over the worsening law and order situation across both cities and rural areas, where security concerns have grown.

And underlying it all is a larger call for public rights and good governance, for administrative transparency and judicial fairness that restores trust between the state and its citizens.

"We started our long march, as per 6 points demand... hopeful that the government will consider our very reasonable demand, and we hope that all people are united with us. The implementation of the Gono Vote... and then our July resolution, and then the electricity and gas crisis, and then the law and order situation... our demand is only for justice, and the people's rights will be victory," said Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan Monju, Chairman of AB Party. BDNews24 reported that Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, the alliance's top leader, announced the long march and mass rally programmes from a sit-in at Dhaka's Muktangan on August 6. — ANI

A SIGNIFICANT RULING

Judge blocks Trump-backed USPS mail voting restrictions for 2026 mid-terms

WASHINGTON DC: In a significant ruling ahead of the November midterm elections, US District Judge Indira Talwani on Friday issued a preliminary injunction preventing the US Postal Service from implementing its controversial new mail-in voting rules, according to media report.

The 49-page decision extends an earlier emergency temporary order issued on August 26, effectively freezing the Trump administration's postal mandates for the duration of the 2026 midterm election cycle.

Judge Talwani ruled that the Postal Service exceeded its constitutional authority by trying to impose administrative requirements on state election programs, reported CBS.

The court stressed that the Constitution assigns election administration to Congress and the states, not to federal agencies.

The judge noted that enforcing complex new mandates while ballots are already being sent out would "nearly guarantee significant disenfranchisement" for eligible voters who depend on mail-in voting.

Local election officials are already overwhelmed with voter registration, early voting, and ballot processing, making compliance



with new rules practically impossible on such a short timeline.

"Unauthorised by the Elections Clause, the Final Rule clashes with Congress's statutory scheme, and is unconstitutional where it intrudes not only on Congress's Elections Clause powers but also that power left to the States," said Talwani.

The challenged Postal Service regulations stemmed from a March executive order signed by President Trump. The final rule

called for sweeping changes to how election mail is processed.

The new USPS mandates would have overhauled how mail-in ballots are handled. At the centre of the plan was a mandatory envelope redesign, requiring every mail-in ballot envelope to carry a unique, trackable barcode. The problem is that most states have already printed millions of standard envelopes for the midterms.

The second provision called for a recipient tracking portal, which

would have forced election offices to upload voter names, addresses, and barcode data into a central USPS database to create "Mail-In and Absentee Participation Lists." An internal whistleblower warned Congress that the system is "untested" and "rushed," raising fears of catastrophic delivery failures.

Finally, under the verification and rejection rule, postal workers were instructed to inspect ballot mail and send any non-compliant packages back to election offices. Voting rights groups cautioned that this could lead to entire batches of valid votes being turned away and stranded, reported CBS.

The ruling comes at a critical moment, just as states have begun sending mail-in ballots to voters. North Carolina started mailing ballots to military and overseas voters on Friday, and several municipalities in Wisconsin have already dispatched mail ballots.

Anticipating the preliminary injunction, Justice Department lawyers on Thursday bypassed standard appellate procedures to seek urgent intervention from the Supreme Court to reinstate the mail-ballot restrictions. With the election two months away, the dispute is now set for a rapid showdown at the nation's highest court.

— ANI

ON RUSSIAN OIL IMPORTS

Our national interest guides our energy purchases: MEA

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday reiterated that its energy sourcing and purchases are guided by national interest and the need to meet the energy requirements of its 1.4 billion people, after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the Russia-Ukraine conflict cannot be resolved by countries buying or not buying Russian oil.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India's energy sourcing policy remains firmly guided

by its national interest.

"On energy imports, our sourcing — you are well aware of what guides it. Our national interest guides our energy purchases, and the imperative for us to meet the energy requirements of 1.4 billion people is what guides us, and that will continue to be our policy," Jaiswal said.

This comes after EAM Jaishankar said that conflict could not be resolved through decisions by individual countries on purchas-

ing commodities in response to a question on India's purchase of Russian oil and whether New Delhi would reconsider its imports in the event of further sanctions.

"You know, this conflict... will not be solved because somebody is buying or not buying oil or alumina or minerals or metals or fertiliser," Jaishankar said.

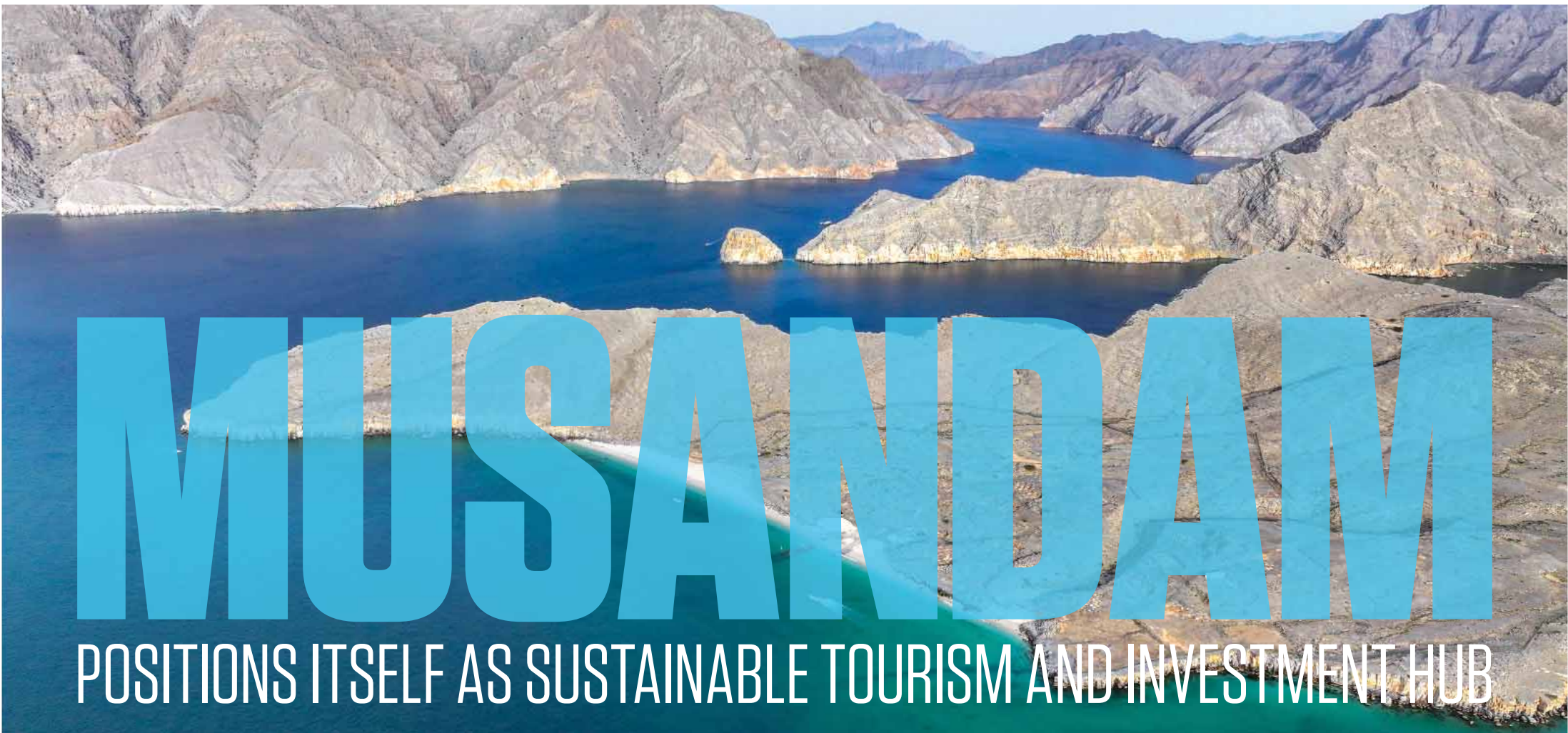
"This conflict will be solved by dialogue, by diplomacy, and by negotiation. And that is why it is something we would en-

courage," he added.

His remarks came during his visit to Kyiv on Thursday, where he met Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and called on President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The External Affairs Minister also highlighted the challenge of ensuring energy security for India's 1.4 billion people, while acknowledging that Ukraine has its own perspective on India's energy purchases.

— ANI



KHASAB: Musandam Governorate is seeking to strengthen its position as one of Oman's leading tourism destinations by capitalising on its distinctive natural landscapes, developing infrastructure and expanding investment opportunities across the tourism sector.

The governorate combines towering mountains, dramatic sea inlets, beaches, islands and valleys, creating a diverse landscape where the sea and mountains meet and where visitors can experience a rich marine environment alongside traditional communities and heritage sites.

Officials say these natural and cultural assets provide a strong foundation for developing a diversified tourism sector capable of attracting visitors from Oman and abroad while generating new investment, employment and business opportunities for local communities.

Hamad Ibrahim Al-Shehhi, Director of Khasab Municipality, said Musandam's exceptional geographical, natural and heritage characteristics give it the potential to establish itself as a prominent tourism and investment destination at both the local and international levels.

He said the governorate's assets provide a solid basis for developing a sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to economic diversification and local development in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Al-Shehhi stressed that maximising the benefits of these assets requires modern infrastructure and an integrated system of services capable of keeping pace with the governorate's growing tourism activity.

Khasab Municipality is therefore implementing a range of development and service projects aimed at improving infrastructure, enhancing the urban environment and making the governorate's wilayats more attractive to residents, visitors and investors.

The projects include the development of waterfronts and public parks, road paving and improvements to transportation networks, modern lighting systems, urban beautification schemes and the development of public facilities and services.

According to Al-Shehhi, waterfront development is particularly important in enhancing Musandam's tourism appeal because such projects make better use of the governorate's distinctive coastal locations while providing visitors and residents with attractive public spaces.

The development of waterfronts is also expected to stimulate tourism and related economic activity by encouraging visitors to spend more time in the various wilayats and creating spaces suitable for recreational and community activities throughout the year.

Road and lighting projects, meanwhile, are playing an important supporting role by improving access to tourist sites and natural attractions, facilitating traffic movement and raising safety standards.

Better connectivity is particularly significant for a governorate whose tourism appeal is closely linked to its mountains, valleys, beaches and remote coastal areas.

Al-Shehhi said infrastructure projects should be regarded as long-term development investments rather than simply service projects. By creating an attractive environment for visitors and investors, they can stimulate



tourism-related businesses, support small and medium-sized enterprises and generate additional employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

The Office of the Governor of Musandam is also giving particular attention to tourism development as part of its broader development priorities.

This includes strengthening co-operation between government institutions and the private sector and following up on tourism initiatives and projects to ensure that investments generate sustainable economic and developmental returns.

The governorate is also working with various partners to make greater use of its tourism assets through programmes and events held as part of the Musandam Winter Season. These activities contribute to attracting visitors, extending the tourism season and highlighting the governorate's distinctive competitive advantages.

Nawfal bin Mohammed Al-Kamzari, Assistant Director of the Heritage and Tourism Department in Musandam Governorate, said the combination of beaches, clear waters, sea inlets, islands and mountains gives Musandam a distinctive character that sets it apart from other destinations.

He noted that the governorate's mountains provide spectacular views overlooking the sea and coastal villages, while its valleys add another dimension to the landscape.

This geographical diversity allows visitors to combine relaxation, adventure and nature exploration within a single destination.

Al-Kamzari said Musandam's natural resources provide significant scope for developing different tourism products. The coastal areas can support hotels and resorts with sea views, cruises and marine excursions, while the mountains offer opportunities for hiking trails, camping and adventure activities.

He noted that combining these natural assets with modern tourism projects and high-quality services could increase visitor numbers, raise economic returns and strengthen Musandam's position



as a distinctive tourism destination.

Among the governorate's best-known attractions are Khor Sham, Telegraph Island, Jabal Harim and several marine islands, in addition to beaches such as Basah, Hal and Al-Khalidiyah.

Musandam also possesses a rich architectural and historical heritage, including the forts of Khasab, Bukha, Dibba and Al-Kumzarah.

Its villages and settlements provide another important tourism dimension. Khor Al Najd, Kumzar, Lima and the mountain villages offer visitors opportunities to explore traditional lifestyles and experience the relationship between local communities and the distinctive environment in which they have developed.

Al-Kamzari said Musandam's geography is particularly attractive to visitors interested in nature and adventure because mountains, beaches and sea inlets are located within a relatively compact area.

Visitors can take cruises through the inlets and around the islands, observe marine life and explore the coastline, while those seeking adventure can participate in mountain hiking, camping and exploration of natural landscapes.

At the same time, the governorate's tranquillity and relatively pristine environment provide opportunities for visitors seeking relaxation away from crowded urban centres.

The continued development of infrastructure and tourism services is therefore considered essential to ensuring that visitors can access these attractions comfortably and safely.

Al-Kamzari pointed to improvements in roads and streets, as well as the development of public facilities and services, as important elements in creating a more integrated tourism environment.

The governorate has also witnessed growth in hotels and tourist resorts, alongside the development of public gardens, parks, beaches and waterfronts equipped with recreational and service facilities.

These developments are helping to combine access, accommodation, recreation and nature-based experiences and allow visitors to make greater use of Musandam's tourism resources.

Several new tourism and heritage projects are also being implemented.

Among them is the tourist hotel project in the Ras Amoud area, which is expected to provide modern accommodation facilities and contribute to meeting growing demand from visitors.

Another important project is the Visitors Centre in the Wilayat of Dibba, which is intended to provide tourism and heritage information and introduce visitors to the natural, historical and cultural

characteristics of Musandam.

The centre is expected to enhance the visitor experience and encourage tourists to explore a wider range of attractions across the governorate.

Beyond infrastructure and public projects, officials see considerable scope for private investment.

Accommodation is one of the most promising areas, with opportunities for hotels, resorts and hotel apartments. The marine tourism sector also offers opportunities for cruise operators, diving centres and companies specialising in excursions to sea inlets and islands.

Ecotourism is another emerging area, particularly given Musandam's natural environment.

Investment opportunities include eco-lodges, camping facilities, mountain activities and nature-based experiences that allow visitors to explore the governorate while maintaining a strong focus on environmental protection.

Officials believe this approach can help diversify Musandam's tourism products while ensuring that development remains compatible with its natural characteristics.

Al-Kamzari said the variety of investment opportunities enables the governorate to attract projects tailored to its geography and distinctive identity, supporting the transition towards a more sustainable tourism model that

balances economic development with environmental protection and cultural preservation.

Tourism is also expected to make a growing contribution to the local economy by increasing demand for accommodation, transportation, restaurants, marine activities, retail and traditional handicrafts.

The sector can create direct employment in hotels, resorts, tourism companies and marine activities, as well as indirect opportunities for tour guides, transport operators and small businesses.

The development of tourism therefore has the potential to provide local communities with additional sources of income while supporting the wider objective of economic diversification.

Looking ahead, Musandam is focusing on expanding opportunities for investors by allocating additional tourism land for high-quality projects, including hotels, resorts and recreational facilities.

Officials emphasise that future developments must combine high standards of service with responsible use of natural resources.

Sustainable tourism is consequently emerging as a central component of Musandam's development strategy. The objective is to benefit from the governorate's unique mountains, coastline and marine environment while safeguarding these resources for future generations.

Greater promotion of Musandam in regional and international markets will also be important. Participation in tourism exhibitions, targeted marketing campaigns and the use of digital platforms can raise international awareness of the governorate and attract new visitors and investors.

The integration of Musandam's natural and heritage assets with improved infrastructure, modern tourism services and new investment opportunities is expected to strengthen the governorate's competitiveness.

With its distinctive geography, rich heritage and expanding tourism infrastructure, Musandam is increasingly positioning itself not simply as a scenic destination, but as an emerging tourism economy capable of supporting sustainable development, local enterprise and investment.

The challenge ahead will be to ensure that this growth preserves the very qualities that make Musandam distinctive — its mountains, sea, marine ecosystems, traditional communities and cultural identity — while creating a modern and competitive tourism environment aligned with the long-term objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

SPORTS

SPANISH LA LIGA



Mbappé’s penalty saved in Madrid’s defeat at Betis

BARCELONA: Kylian Mbappé stutter-stepped in his runup, aimed for the lower left side of the net — and watched as Real Betis’ goalkeeper leapt to smother his penalty shot on Friday.

Moments later, the whistle blew at La Cartuja Stadium. Real Madrid lost their first match in Jose Mourinho’s return to the bench this season.

Alvaro Valles’ save of Mbappé’s injury-time penalty kick secured an unexpected 1-0 win for the hosts in La Liga.

Valles capped his outstanding performance, which included a diving swat of an early header by Jude Bellingham among other saves, with his biggest save of the night.

Mbappé looked set to cancel out Troy Parrott’s 81st-minute goal when he stepped to the spot. Vinicius Júnior earned the penalty when he dribbled down the left side of the endline and Betis defender Natan rashly slid into him.

Valles said he had studied Mbappé’s penalties and guessed correctly he would go to his right side. Valles celebrated with a roar—and a little chest bump into a stunned-looking Mbappé.

“We were sure we had it, but

of course you also need a bit of luck,” Valles said about predicting Mbappé’s strike. “He is very good at trying to make you commit early and not showing you where he is aiming. I was fortunate to stop it.”

Mbappé has made a strong start to the season, scoring in two of three games, including one hat-trick.

But he was far from his best in Seville. Besides the penalty miss, he also squandered a double chance in the first half after Vinicius set him up with Valles drawn out of position.

Both of Mbappe’s back-to-back attempts hit a different Betis defender. Mbappé also had a shot that glanced the goal frame.

“My team played a great game, and sometimes you lose and you don’t know why,” Mourinho said. “We dominated, controlling everything, with lots of attacks and chances. If we had drawn we would have been left frustrated, so imagine how we feel after losing.”

Mbappé led the World Cup in scoring this summer and will get a chance to redeem himself for Madrid when it hosts Inter Milan in their Champions League opener on Tuesday. - Agencies

Isak’s double in Reds’ first victory of season

Liverpool got clicking right from kickoff at Ipswich as two goals were scored in the opening minutes to give their new coach Iraola maiden win of the Premier League

IPSWICH: Alexander Isak scored twice and Bradley Barcola debuted as Liverpool got their first win in the English Premier League under their new coach after beating Ipswich 2-0 away on Friday.

Liverpool had been held to a pair of 2-2s against Newcastle and Nottingham Forest in Andoni Iraola’s first games in charge.

But Liverpool got clicking right from kickoff at Ipswich as Isak struck twice in the opening minutes from a pair of assists by Cody Gakpo.

Barcola went on for his first action in a Liverpool shirt as a 63rd-minute substitution.

He joined from Paris Saint-Germain on Monday in a deal worth 123 million pounds (\$166 million).

Isak got going in the sixth when the Sweden international took a Gakpo pass on the right side of the box and struck a powerful shot that hit goalkeeper Kjell Scherpen before finding the net.

Gakpo set up Isak again just three minutes later. He used the outside edge of his boot to bend a long forward pass behind the defence to meet his team-mate’s run. Isak did the rest by switching foot before firing home.

Isak’s first season at Anfield was marred by injuries and he scored only four times in 22 appearances. But he’s up to three in the third



round and Iraola is confident the striker will “produce the numbers.”

“Yes, with Alex, if he is fit, if he is available, if he is in good shape, I think he will produce the numbers,” Iraola said.

“My demands with Alex will not

be about the goals, probably will be about other things. I will demand other things so we can play well, because if we play well we are in good positions and the goals will come.

“He has to contribute towards

the collective and when everyone helps, the goals and assists will come.”

Ipswich, promoted at the end of last season, has two losses and one win in its return to the top flight. - Agencies

EUROPEAN LEAGUES



PSG shocked by Monaco at home

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) suffered their first loss in their domestic leagues on Friday as they coughed up a lead in French Ligue 1.

PSG fell at home to Monaco 2-1 on the same day that coach Luis Enrique agreed to stay at the European champions through 2030.

PSG looked to be on its way to their first win when Marquinhos put the hosts ahead in the 31st, but Monaco rallied with goals by Flavio Nazinho in the 58th and Stanis Idumbo in the 72nd.

Monaco lead Ligue 1 as the only team to win their first three games.

PSG had already drawn 2-2 with Rennes and Lille in their first two games. They also lost the French Super Cup to Lens 1-0 last month.

Their first league defeat came hours after the French powerhouse announced contract extensions for coach Luis Enrique and several players.

João Neves, Lucas Beraldo, Senry Mayulu and Willian Pachó all got new deals through 2031, while Fabian Ruiz had his contract extended through 2028.

Luis Enrique, 56, has steered PSG to back-to-back Champions League titles and three French league titles. The Spaniard’s previous contract was set to expire next summer.

Prior to PSG, Luis Enrique coached Spain after winning his first European Cup with Barcelona. In France, he has succeeded in finally fulfilling PSG’s aspirations.

US striker Folarin Balogun was left out of Monaco’s squad after the collapse of his proposed transfer to Everton this week.

Como atop Italy

Assane Diao scored a brace as Como rolled to a 4-1 win at Genoa in Serie A. Nico Paz and Martin Baturina also added goals.

Cesc Fabregas’ side leads the Italian standings by one point ahead of a pack of six teams that have yet to play this round.

Como will make their Champions League debut against Leipzig on Sept. 10, with Manchester United to visit in October and PSG in January.

In Germany, Stuttgart stomped Köln 4-1 in the Bundesliga. - Agencies

No ‘big deal’ if Musiala has another seizure: Kompany

MUNICH: Bayern Munich coach Vincent Kompany says it wouldn’t be “a big deal” if star attacking midfielder Jamal Musiala were to collapse again as he copes with a neurological issue which causes seizures.

Musiala went public with his diagnosis of “absence seizures caused by a neurological dysfunction” after he collapsed twice in consecutive preseason games.

He’s back in training after a change to his medication but has yet to play again.

Kompany said Bayern had the “very best experts” giving medical advice, and “if it does happen again in 40, 50, 60 days’ time or in 40, 50, 60 games’ time, then it’s no longer a big deal for us. We know how to deal with it and some stage he’s just going to be a totally normal athlete again.”

The 23-year-old Musiala was included in Bayern’s squad for the Champions League on Thursday, and



Kompany said he’s evaluating his performances in training before deciding when to include Musiala in a game-day squad again.

“He’s doing well, he’s had a good week,” Kompany said. “This initial shock in public is hopefully slowly subsiding.”

Bayern have said the club

knew of the issue since at least last season, and Musiala has said there is “no additional health risk” associated with playing football.

Musiala’s last competitive game was at the World Cup as Germany lost on penalties to Paraguay in the round of 32. - Agencies

WORLD CUP SELL-OFF PLAN

FIFA accuses European body UEFA of ‘smear campaign’

LAUSANNE: FIFA accused European football body UEFA of a “smear campaign” in a court filing on Thursday concerning FIFA President Gianni Infantino’s failed plan to sell stakes in the World Cup and other competitions.

Last week, UEFA filed requests for discovery of evidence connected to Infantino’s proposal in three US courts.

“While these applications are styled as legal pleadings with captions and docket numbers, they are little more than press releases in further support of UEFA’s smear campaign against FIFA and its leadership,” FIFA said in a filing in US District Court in Colorado.

FIFA’s filing in Colorado on Thursday was a motion to intervene, asking that the discovery process be deferred or dropped.

One of UEFA’s discovery requests was filed in the Southern District of New York and seeks disclosure of documents from Josh Kushner and his investment firm Thrive Capital Management. Kushner is the younger brother of Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump’s son-in-law.

Thrive was involved in Infantino’s FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) proposal to sell stakes in the World Cup to private equity for \$4.2 billion. FIFA withdrew



the proposal on August 1, just days after it was made public, after intense pushback.

Other court filings seeking discovery of evidence related to the World Cup sell-off were filed in Florida, where FIFA had its 2026 World Cup operational base, and in Colorado, against an adviser to Infantino, Greg Maffei, once the CEO of Liberty Media.

UEFA has said in court documents that it is preparing a criminal complaint against Infantino in Swiss courts for possible financial mismanagement.

“Infantino claimed that the plan would ‘unleash the commercial potential and opportunity that

FIFA has,” UEFA lawyers told the courts.

“In truth, it was a vehicle for Infantino and that small circle to acquire a permanent stake in and otherwise profit from FIFA’s most valuable assets to the detriment of FIFA, its members, and other parties within the football family.”

FIFA argued that UEFA’s request “suffers from a fundamental defect: UEFA seeks discovery in aid of a foreign criminal proceeding that does not exist and that UEFA admittedly lacks the authority to initiate.”

In the filing, FIFA accused UEFA of coercing its European federations to oppose the plan. - Agencies

Tour of Salalah rolls out with 95 cyclists from 28 countries

The five-day international event showcases Dhofar’s landscapes while promoting cycling, tourism and local talent

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The sixth edition of the Tour of Salalah got underway in Dhofar Governorate on Saturday, bringing together 95 cyclists from 28 countries for a five-day programme of international competition against the backdrop of the governorate’s spectacular landscapes.

Organised by Dhofar Municipality in cooperation with the Oman Cycling Association, the event aims to showcase Dhofar’s natural and cultural attractions, strengthen Oman’s presence on the international cycling map and host races accredited by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI).

The participating countries are Oman, the United Kingdom, Algeria, Ethiopia, Germany, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Australia, Bahrain, the Netherlands, South Africa, France, Mongolia, Uganda, Spain, Malaysia, Rwanda, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Eritrea, Mauritius, New Zealand and Switzerland.

The Tour also seeks to develop



cycling in Oman by enhancing the skills of local riders, identifying promising young talent and raising the technical level of the sport. It promotes health awareness by encouraging the community to adopt cycling as an active lifestyle.

A technical meeting for the participating teams was held in Salalah on Friday, where officials reviewed technical regulations, distributed race jerseys and finalised routes for the various stages.

The event opened with the sec-

ond edition of the Dhofar Classic, a one-day international race covering 98 kilometres from Al Haffa Souq to Hajeeh.

Eduardo Sepúlveda of Argentina, riding for Li Ning Star, won the 2026 Dhofar Classic, held as the one-day precursor to the Tour of Salalah. Brazil’s Nicolas Mariotto Sessler of Victoria Sports Pro Cycling Team finished runner-up, while Edison Alejandro Callejas took third place.

The Dhofar Classic will be fol-

lowed by the four-stage Tour of Salalah, scheduled from September 6 to 9, with routes designed to showcase some of Dhofar’s most prominent natural and tourism attractions. The UCI lists the Tour of Salalah as a Class 2.2 stage race on its 2026 calendar. The first stage will cover 127 kilometres from Mughsail Beach to Mirbat Castle, while the second stage will span 108 kilometres from Dahariz Beach to Wadi Darbat.

The third stage will be the long-

est, covering 156 kilometres from Taqah Castle to Samhan, before the fourth and final stage takes riders over 108 kilometres from Ain Razat to the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah. The stage details are also published by the Oman Cycling Association.

Saif Al Rashidi, Chairman of the Oman Cycling Association, said the Tour of Salalah represents an important milestone in the development of cycling in Oman.

He said the association was committed to delivering an exceptional edition that combines the intensity of international competition with the scenic beauty of Dhofar, making the event both a major sporting competition and a tourism showcase.

Al Rashidi said the timing of this year’s tour was determined after considering various technical, organisational and tourism-related factors. Holding the event during the final stages of the Khareef season is expected to help minimise its impact on traffic while facilitating the use of long-distance race routes. He added that the association aims to make this year’s edition exceptional while building on the successes of previous editions and further establishing the Tour of Salalah as one of the region’s prominent cycling events.

The event also provides an international platform to showcase Dhofar’s tourism potential and demonstrate the ability of Omani teams and institutions to organise and host major sporting events to high standards.

US OPEN 2026: MEN’S SINGLES

Alcaraz powers past Wu to reach fourth round

NEW YORK: Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz underlined his status as the man to beat at the US Open with a ruthless 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 victory over China’s Wu Yibing on Friday as he reached the fourth round and continued his bid for a third title at Flushing Meadows.

The victory extended Alcaraz’s match-winning streak at the Grand Slams to 17 following his triumph at Flushing Meadows last year and his Australian Open win in February, the latter helping him to become the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam.

The Spaniard arrived in New York having missed nearly five months of action with a wrist injury and has looked increasingly assured with each passing round, although Yibing briefly halted his early momentum by recovering a break in the opening set.

World No.113 Yibing, bidding to become the first Chinese man to make the last 16 of a Grand Slam in the professional era, was unable to build on that bright spell on Arthur Ashe Stadium and Alcaraz reasserted his authority to move ahead.

The seven-times major champion’s speed around the court and relentless accuracy were on full display in the second set, but Yibing’s stubborn resistance drew a scream of frustration from him before he conjured up the magic needed to double his lead.

‘More long breaks’
Feeling better than he expected after a four-month absence, Alcaraz is planning to take more breaks during the tennis season. He said his body feels good and he’s had no setbacks after his matches.

“It feels like I’ve been competing the whole time. So I surprise myself the way that I’m feeling and the way that I’m recovering after every match,” Alcaraz said. “So I’m just really happy about it that I’m able to perform at my best after every match.”

“I just want to step on the court, have joy, have fun on the court, because sometimes playing such a long season or playing a lot of tournaments week after week, I feel like I’m not playing with joy, I don’t have fun on the court. I just want to miss the tennis sometimes, miss the tours, miss you guys,” he said.

“That’s why I just want to have long breaks, because it’s impossible to last the whole season playing every tournament.”

Tsitsipas beats Lehecka
Former top-five player Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece, who has struggled in recent years, upset 18th-seeded Jiri Lehecka Friday to reach the US Open fourth round for the first time.

Tsitsipas fired four times as many aces as his Czech opponent, closing the match with a service winner to defeat the Czech 2-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/3), 6-1. - Agencies



US OPEN: WOMEN’S SINGLES

Navarro shocks Muchova to enter round of 16



NEW YORK: Emma Navarro stunned Czech seventh seed Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-5 on Friday, notching up her third win over a top-10 opponent this year as she joined the American march into the weekend at the US Open.

The 26th seed did some of her best work from the baseline as she absorbed the blows from Muchova, who had been sidelined after reaching the Wimbledon final in July due to minor surgery.

Navarro next plays either Elina Svitolina or Anna Kalinskaya in the round of 16. “I knew it was going to be tough today,” said Navarro who joined compatriots Taylor Townsend and Jessica Pegula in the fourth round, with Madison Keys and Coco Gauff yet to play their third-round matches.

After trading breaks, Muchova dropped her serve with a misfiring forehand in the penultimate game of the opening set, where she

produced 22 unforced errors and struggled to find her rhythm.

Navarro, who reached the semi-finals two years ago in a career breakthrough, beat down her opponent’s defences in a more competitive second set, trading breaks twice before converting on her third break-point chance in the 11th game.

Navarro, a darling of the outer courts who said she has played her last six matches in New York on the Grandstand, thrust her fists in triumph after sealing the win with a lethal forehand.

Pegula struggles
Pegula kept alive her bid for a maiden Grand Slam title when the third-seeded American rallied from behind to beat fellow former US Open finalist Leylah Fernandez 1-6, 6-4, 6-3 and make the fourth round at Flushing Meadows on Friday. - Agencies

US OPEN: WOMEN’S DOUBLES



Serena and Venus Williams lose on return

NEW YORK: Serena and Venus Williams electrified Arthur Ashe Stadium but fell to Chan Hao-ching and Maya Joint in three thrilling sets in their return to the US Open women’s doubles on Friday.

The superstar sisters, whose 14 Grand Slam doubles titles include two US Opens, rallied from a break down in the third set and led the deciding 10-point tie-breaker 5-0 but fell 6-3, 6-7(6), 7-6(7) to the 14th-seeded pair.

Venus, 46, and Serena, 44, hadn’t played Grand Slam doubles since

the 2022 US Open and last won a match together at Roland Garros in 2018. They showed flashes of their brilliant best, Serena proving particularly dangerous patrolling the net but struggling with her serve.

After losing the first set, they recovered to level the match in the second-set tie-breaker.

They belted no fewer than 20 winners in the set, holding serve throughout and leveled the match when Joint smacked an overhead long to roars from the crowd.

Chan and Joint regrouped to

seize a 4-2 lead in the third. The sisters rallied, but couldn’t get to the finish line as Taiwan’s Chan and Australia’s Joint fought back superbly to clinch the victory.

Serena, the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion considered by many to be tennis’s greatest women’s player, returned to the courts of Flushing Meadows for the first time since 2022 during last week’s mixed doubles championship where she paired up with Carlos Alcaraz. Earlier in the season, the 44-year-old had returned to Ma-

jeor singles play as a Wimbledon wild card four years after “evolving away” from the game. The sisters received a thunderous ovation when they took court, all business in understated white outfits.

Every blistering volley and overhead smash from the Americans received cheers, and when they sprinted to the lead in the decisive 10-point tie-breaker, the noise was deafening. “The atmosphere was surreal,” Joint said. “Being able to play against such legends of the game is super special.” - Agencies

IN PICTURES



BOLLYWOOD ACTOR SALMAN KHAN HOSTS ‘BIGG BOSS’ SEASON 20 IN MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Salman Khan hosts the Indian Hindi-language reality television show ‘Bigg Boss’ Season 20, in Mumbai. — ANI Photo



LIGUE 1: MONACO AGAINST PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN: Aleksandr Golovin (L) of Monaco vies with Joao Neves of Paris Saint-Germain during the Ligue 1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain and Monaco in Paris, France. — Xinhua



EGYPT SHOWCASES BLEND OF ANCIENT, MODERN CIVILIZATIONS: This photo shows a city view in Cairo, Egypt. Egypt is home to an ancient civilization that flourished along the Nile River. From the pyramids that have stood for millennia to its bustling modern cities, the ancient and the contemporary intertwine across the country, reflecting a civilization that has endured through the ages. — Xinhua



83RD VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL KICKS OFF: Photo shows the red carpet of the opening ceremony of the 83rd Venice International Film Festival in Venice, Italy. During the film festival 21 films competing for the Golden Lion for Best Film. — Xinhua



EXHIBITION BRIDGES GAP BETWEEN CENTURIES-OLD CHINESE ENCYCLOPEDIA, PUBLIC: A girl views an image at an exhibition featuring the digital version of the Siku Quanshu, or The Complete Library of the Four Treasuries, in Lanzhou, northwest China's Gansu Province. — Xinhua



2026 TORONTO INTERNATIONAL BUSKERFEST KICKS OFF IN CANADA: Buskers perform at the 2026 Toronto International BuskerFest in Toronto, Canada. This 4-day event is bringing together about 100 performers from around the world. — Xinhua

MUSICIANS PERFORM AT CHINESE FOLK MUSIC CONCERT IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: Musicians perform at the Chinese folk music concert “A Panorama of Hunan” in Geneva, Switzerland. The Chinese folk music concert “A Panorama of Hunan” made its debut on its five-country European tour. — Xinhua





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