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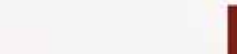
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OMAN, RWANDA SEEK STRONGER INVESTMENT RELATIONS IN MINING, ENERGY AND LOGISTICS



His Majesty the Sultan and President of
Rwanda hold official talks at Al Hosn Palace

SALALAH: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda held an official session of talks at Al Hosn Palace in Salalah on Monday evening.

Discussions focused on cooperation and investment in mining, renewable energy, food security, land ports, logistics and health-care, with the aim of strengthening investment partnership

between the two countries in a manner that meets the aspirations of their peoples and serves their mutual interests.

The talks were attended from the Omani side by His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs; His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs; His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, Sayyid

Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court; General Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office; Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior; Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister; Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance; Dr. Hamad bin Said Al Aufi, Head of the Private Office; Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, President of Oman Investment Authority; Eng. Said bin Hamoud

Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology; Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals; Anwar bin Hilal Al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion; and Nasra bint Salim Al Hashmi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Kenya and Non-Resident Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda.

The session was attended from the Rwandan side by Olivier Ndu-

hungirehe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Yusuf Murangwa, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Antoine Kajangwe, Minister of Trade and Industry, Solange Uwituze, Minister of State at the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Juliana Muganza, CEO of Rwanda Development Board, Dan Munyuzza, Non-Resident Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Sultanate of Oman and other officials. — **ONA**

TARIFF STRUCTURE

Oman sets EV charging fees from October 1

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, in coordination with the Public Services Regulatory Authority and the Oman Zero Neutrality Centre, has announced fees for electric vehicle (EV) charging services ranging from 50 to 120 baisa per kilowatt-hour, effective October 1.

Under the approved tariff structure, the fee will be 50 baisa per kWh for chargers with a capacity of up to 90 kilowatts, 90 baisa per kWh for chargers with a capacity



of 91 to 180 kW, and 120 baissa per kWh for chargers with a capacity of 181 kW or more.

The new fees are part of efforts to regulate Oman's EV charging market, improve price transparency and provide users with clearer information, while supporting the expansion and sustainable operation of charging infrastructure.

The tariffs were set following a study of the economic and operational aspects of EV charging stations, aimed at balancing affordability for consumers.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Sayyid Badr meets several Honorary Consuls

1 Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, met in Salalah, with a group of Honorary Consuls of Oman accredited to a number of countries and cities around the world. **>A3**

WORLD

'Hormuz will open if US stops attacks'

2 Iran will keep the Strait of Hormuz open if the US stops attacking Iran. **>A7**

MARKET

Oman and China explore investments

3 Oman and China have discussed enhancing investment ties. **>B1**


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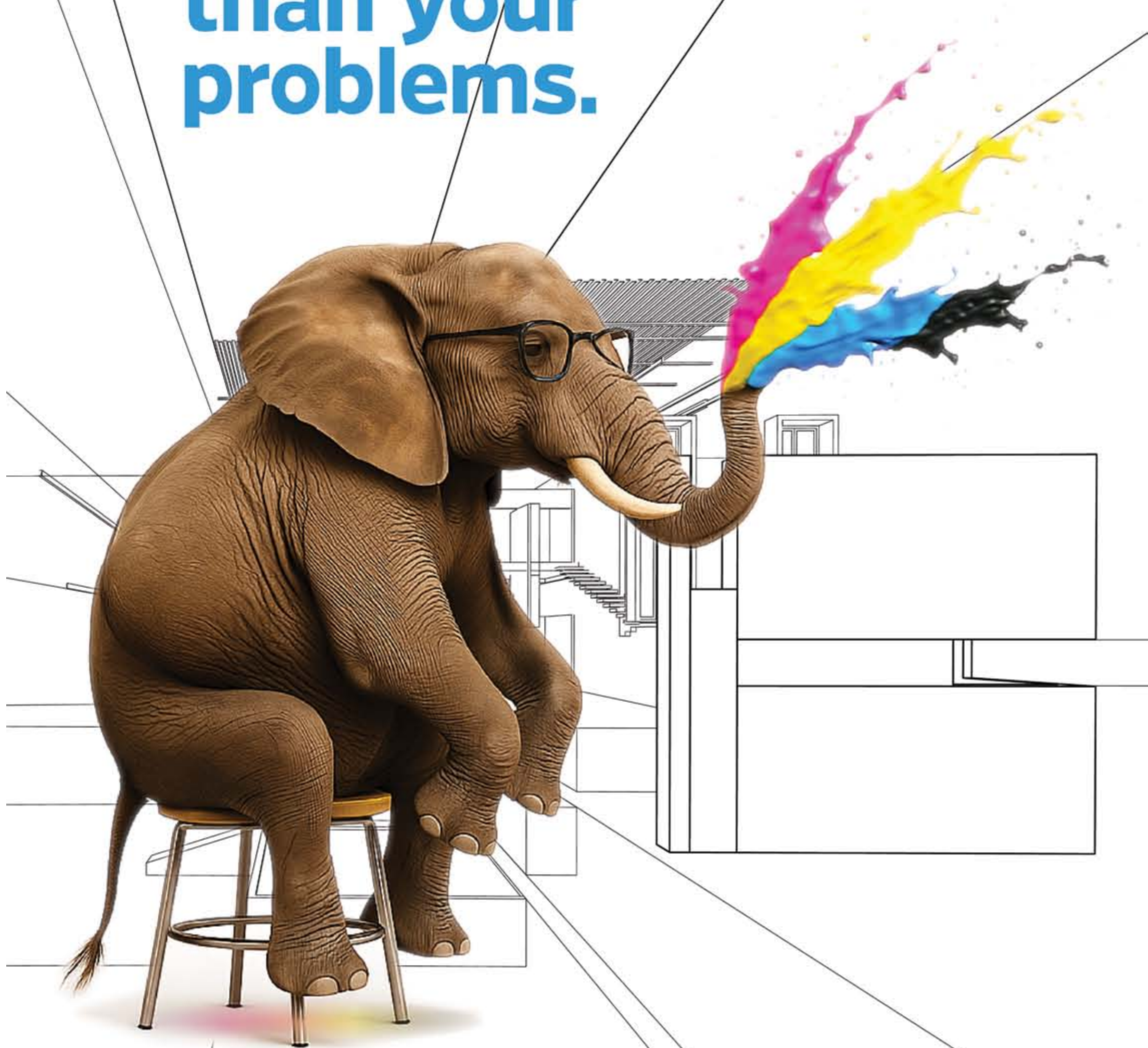
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COMMENTARY

Youth in Mind: Unlock the Lock to Soar High

As he walked down memory lane, he was vividly able to trace the dreams that had once filled his heart. Like episodes of a film, each one came racing before his eyes one after another, vivid yet fleeting. They passed him by before he could capture them, before he could turn them into tangible results, before he could bring about the change he was so eager to see in the world.

The story goes that Saif was constantly pulled back by an invisible force, something he could neither see nor explain that deprived him of the courage to speak up. It was as though a lock had been placed on his voice, keeping him trapped in a stalemate, caught between what he dreamed of becoming and what he was actually able to do. His life plot took him from one situation to another, the common denominator of which was his preference for being quiet. He would watch his friends and colleagues speak, regardless of how humble or ordinary their contributions might be. But when it came to his turn to speak, he would become a shrewd delegator and a master of procrastination. He would be swift in passing the bucket to someone else, justifying it by saying that his turn would come next time. However, next time would never come. How many presentations went that way? How many group discussions passed while he remained silently dead, watching from the sidelines? He had brilliant ideas, but those ideas were like the ebb and tide, swinging restlessly inside his mind, yet remaining besieged in his throat. They never found their way into the open. His colleagues tried to encourage him. His professors inspired him to step out of his comfort zone. But all efforts seemed to be in vain. It seemed that life inside the comfort zone

was tempting in the short run. It was safe. It was familiar. There was no exposure, no judgment, no risk of failure. But deep inside him, there was a fierce struggle a strong wind of objection blowing against such a status quo. When he was alone, he would roar like a wounded lion. He would scream within himself: Why can't I? Why don't I act? Why do I keep allowing myself to remain this way? It was a venting process that would sweep through his mind like a powerful wind. But soon, his fury would abate, the storm would calm, and everything would return to normal. The fears were many: the fear of being criticized or laughed at; the fear of making a mistake; the fear of opening up; and a score of unhealthy justifications that kept him locked inside the walls of his comfort zone. Time passed, and he eventually graduated with a high grade point average. But his job seeking episodes opened another agitating and unfortunate chapter in his life. He recalled applying for a job as an accountant. He went through the announcement and studied the requirements carefully. He did his homework about the company and prepared himself well. Deep inside his mind, he was saying, this is my opportunity. I know this field. I can answer the panel's questions. I am ready. Then came the D-day. The moment he entered the building, darker thoughts began invading his mind. Nervousness crept in. His heart started racing. His throat became dry. His palms turned cold and sweaty. When he finally sat in front of the interviewing panel, he was no longer comfortable. More importantly, he was certainly not confident. The answers that sounded so convincing inside his mind suddenly became weak when they had to travel through his voice. His body language



spoke a different language. His tone of voice narrated the rest of the story. One job opportunity after another slipped through his fingers, unsuccessfully.

And once again, he found himself standing at the same familiar crossroads, knowing he had the ability, but unable to translate that ability into action. I am sure that, as you read these lines, many people like Saif have come to your mind. Perhaps his story resembles situations you have experienced yourself, moments when you had something to say but chose to remain silent, opportunities you allowed to pass by, or ideas that remained trapped inside your mind, never finding their way into action. Maybe, in some way, there is a little bit of Saif in all of us.

Mohammed Abdullah Qahtani, the 2015 World Champion of Public Speaking, was once haunted by stuttering, something that exposed him to ridicule and made him the subject of mockery among his classmates and people around him.

In his book, 'The Power of Words: The Journey of a Stuttering Champion', Mohammed narrates many incidents from that difficult chapter of his life experiences that could easily have pushed him further into isolation and silence. But somewhere along the way, he decided

that this would not be the end of his story. He took a leap of faith and insisted that he would no longer remain besieged within the walls of his comfort zone. The lock that had held him back for years was eventually unlocked. And once the lock was broken, he soared. He went on to win the World Championship of Public Speaking, turning what had once been perceived as his greatest weakness into a source of strength and inspiration. His journey became a powerful reminder that sometimes the very walls we believe are protecting us are the same walls preventing us from discovering who we can truly become.

His story has since become a remarkable source of inspiration for young people around the world, a testimony that the courage to step beyond our limitations can transform not only our lives, but also the way others see what is possible.

In her book 'Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway', Susan Jeffers explores fear from a different perspective. She argues that fear is not necessarily a psychological barrier that we must first eliminate before taking action. Rather, much of what we experience as fear is learned and conditioned, which means that we can learn to respond to it differently. We do not have to wait for fear to disap-

pear; we can feel the fear and do it anyway. Jeffers identifies three levels of fear:

- Level One: Fears about things that happen. These include external situations such as rejection, failure, criticism, illness, loss, aging, or financial difficulties.
- Level Two: Fears about what we think might happen. These are deeper fears connected to our identity and sense of self such as what if I fail? what will people think of me? what if I am not good enough? or what if I make a fool of myself?
- Level Three: The fear of not being able to handle it. Jeffers considers this the deepest level, the belief that "If this happens, I won't be able to cope with it. The real fear, therefore, is often not the event itself but our belief that we will be unable to handle whatever comes our way. To handle fear, Jeffers recommends taking action despite the fear rather than waiting until we feel confident.

She encourages people to replace the question How can I get rid of my fear? with How can I move forward despite my fear? Her approach includes taking small steps outside the comfort zone, making decisions, accepting uncertainty, taking responsibility for our choices, and repeatedly confronting what frightens us. Through action, we teach the brain a new lesson: I can do this, and I can handle the consequences.

This week, students resumed their studies at schools and universities across the country after a long summer holiday. It is therefore timely for teachers, professors, and parents alike to spot cases like Saif early and provide them with the psychological safety, encouragement, and support they need to confront their fears at the bud before they grow into formidable challenges that keep these young people locked within this mental trap.

Let us help them come forward. Let us create an environment where they feel safe to speak, to make mistakes, to experiment, and even to fail without the fear of being ridiculed or judged.

Let us help them discover their "Aha!" moments, those moments of realisation when they suddenly become aware of what has been holding them back and recognise the magnitude of the behavior that has kept them confined.

Most importantly, let us help them develop that sincere desire to unlock their locks. Because the key to transformation is not always found outside us; sometimes, it is already in our hands, waiting for us to have the courage to turn it. It is only when they unlock the lock that they will be able to soar high, unleash their potential, and embark on the journey of becoming the best versions of themselves.

One soothing remedy for empowering them to unlock the lock is to encourage them to join the Toastmasters programme just like Saif & Mohammed did. It can become a journey of self-discovery. one that gradually helps them find their voice, build their confidence, and discover abilities they may never have known they possessed.

Once they embark on this journey, they may never look back. They will learn that fear does not have to be a barrier; it can be a companion on the road to growth. They will learn to feel the fear and do it anyway, and, in doing so, discover the gifts that lie on the other side of fear. Sometimes, all our youth need is a safe place to speak, someone who believes in them, and the courage to take that first step

An Omani writer focusing on youth development and cultural issues.

Forum raises awareness on heritage conservation

The event is being held with the participation of 30 local and international volunteers from Oman, Iran, Egypt, Russia, India, Italy and Spain



BAHLA: Bahla Volunteers Team is organising an 11-day forum as part of the World Heritage Volunteers 2026 Initiative titled "Working for the Future".

The forum, which kicked off in the Wilayat of Bahla on 3 September 2026, focuses on a number of traditional crafts associated with the local community, including pottery, woodworks and artistic metalworks, among crafts that mark the cultural heritage, knowledge and skills passed

down from ancestors to subsequent generations.

The forum is being held in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the Ministry of Education (represented by Oman National Commission

for Education, Culture and Science), and the SMEs Development Authority (Riyada).

The event is being held with the participation of 30 local and international young volunteers from the Sultanate of Oman, Iran, Egypt, Russia, India, Italy and Spain.

The forum seeks to raise public awareness about the need to conserve world heritage, empower youth and local communities to participate in protecting heritage sites, foster heritage-related skills and provide a platform for exchanging knowledge and best practices in the fields of cultural heritage preservation and management.

The cultural and voluntary activities implemented within the "Cultural Property" forum in the state of Bahla embodied a cognitive and human experience that combines preserving traditional crafts and involving youth in protecting heritage and promoting cultural exchange between participants from the Sultanate of Oman and a number of countries of the world. -ONA

Conference aims to exchange expertise on sustainable growth



SALALAH: The Arab Towns Organisation discussed developing the work of the organisation's institutions and enhancing their role in empowering Arab cities, smart cities, the digital environment, and cybersecurity for a safe urban future, alongside the future of sustainable urban mobility in Arab cities.

This came during the 64th executive meeting of the organisation, held yesterday in Dhofar Governorate on the sidelines of the 20th Arab Towns Organisation Conference, scheduled to take place on Tuesday at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex

for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah under the theme "More Innovative and Sustainable Cities".

Organised by Dhofar Municipality in cooperation with the Arab Towns Organisation and featuring the participation of 22 Arab and Islamic countries, the conference aims to exchange expertise to achieve sustainable development and discuss a number of topics related to urban development, digital transformation of cities, elevating quality of life, challenges facing Arab cities, and the future of urban development. -ONA

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLEAN AIR FOR BLUE SKIES

Oman monitors air quality to protect against pollutants

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Environment Authority (EA), joined countries around the world in marking the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, observed annually on 7 September.

The day aims to raise awareness of the importance of improving air quality and reducing sources of pollution, and to encourage national and international efforts toward providing a healthy and sustainable environment for current and future generations.

This year's occasion is held under the theme "Clean Air for Climate Action," a message that directly links improving air quality with mitigating the effects of climate change, and affirms that measures to reduce emissions can simultaneously achieve health, environmental, and economic benefits for communities.



The Sultanate of Oman is giving growing attention to air quality as one of the key pillars of environmental protection and human health, with the Environment Authority working to strengthen the air quality monitoring and observation system, track various sources of emissions and pollutants, and develop the tools

and technologies used in collecting and analyzing environmental data, thereby supporting decision-making and the formulation of appropriate measures to curb air pollution.

The Authority continues its efforts to regulate and monitor emissions resulting from industrial and developmental activities, and

to strengthen compliance with environmental requirements and standards, alongside employing modern technologies in monitoring operations, which contributes to raising the efficiency of the air quality management system and achieving better levels of environmental protection.

Linking air quality with climate action represents one of the important pathways to achieving sustainable development, as a number of sources of air pollution are also linked to greenhouse gas emissions. This makes reducing emissions, improving the efficiency of resource and energy use, and promoting low-emission solutions steps that simultaneously contribute to improving air quality and supporting efforts to address climate change.

The observance of the International Day of Clean Air under-

scores the importance of integrating efforts among government institutions, the private sector, communities, and individuals, and of raising awareness of practices that help reduce emissions and preserve air quality, in support of national directions toward a sustainable environment and a low-carbon economy.

In this context, the Sultanate of Oman has an integrated national network for monitoring ambient air quality, operated through dozens of stations strategically distributed across the various governorates and industrial and vital areas, alongside continuous emission monitoring devices at industrial sources. This system measures pollution indicators and analyzes data in real time through modern digital platforms and systems, such as the "Naqi" application, enhancing readiness and

rapid response to protect the environment and public health.

These efforts and ongoing field studies have culminated in the Sultanate of Oman achieving a significant leap in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), rising from 149th to 50th place globally, in addition to ranking first regionally in the air quality index, reflecting the effectiveness of the national policies and initiatives adopted in this field.

It is worth noting that the United Nations General Assembly designated 7 September as the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of clean air and encouraging cooperation and joint action at the national, regional, and international levels to address air pollution and its effects on human health, the environment, and the climate.

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INTRODUCTORY PROGRAMME

Sayyid Badr meets Honorary Consuls of Oman

SALALAH: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, met in the Wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar Governorate with a group of Honorary Consuls of the Sultanate of Oman accredited to a number of countries and cities around the world.

The meeting highlighted the role of honorary consuls within the framework of friendship and cooperation relations with the Sultanate of Oman, as well as highlighting various opportunities for economic, commercial partnership and cultural and scientific exchange.

The Foreign Minister affirmed



the importance of the ongoing engagement with the honorary consuls and benefiting from their networks of relations and expertise in the context of human and civilisational communication between peoples and cultures.

The Foreign Ministry prepared for the honorary consuls an introductory programme about Dhofar Governorate and the capabilities and opportunities it possesses in various sectors.

The meeting was attended by a number of Honorary Consuls of the Sultanate of Oman, namely: Boleta Senkiene in Lithuania,

Eng. Ivo Vaněk in the Czech Republic, Francesco Palau in Milan, Italy, Talal bin Salim Al Wahabi in Istanbul, Türkiye, Pablo Caralps in Barcelona, Spain, Tommaso D'Errico in Florence, Italy, Hussein bin Saif Al Harthy in Rwanda, Erdene Dorjnamjim in Mongolia, Dr. Mohammed Chand in Botswana, and Prakash Nair in Kerala, India.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Khalid bin Hashel Al Muselhi, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Administrative and Financial Affairs.

-ONA

CABLE

HM offers condolences to President of Tanzania

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, on the death of her husband, Hafidh Ameir Hassan.

His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathy to President Samia Suluhu Hassan, the family of the deceased and to the friendly people of Tanzania.

-ONA

Digital Educational Atlas of Oman launched

The Ministry of Education has worked to keep pace with scientific and technical developments in the field of geographic information



He explained that the Sultanate of Oman's hosting of this edition of the conference carries significant scientific and institutional value, as it provides an opportunity to enhance specialised scientific dialogue and the exchange of expertise among researchers and specialists at the national and international levels, and to expand the scope of cooperation and partnership among academic, research and professional institutions, thereby contributing to supporting sustainable development pathways and future foresight.

He indicated that the Ministry of Education has worked to keep pace with scientific and technical developments in the field of geographic information and to strengthen their presence within the curriculum development system, through expanding the deployment of geographic information systems and modern technologies, particularly within social studies curricula, alongside developing related digital initiatives and projects, and strengthening institutional efforts in this field through the Modern Geographic Technologies Committee and its associated initiatives and programmes.

For his part, Prof. Elias Abdul Rahman delivered a speech on behalf of UTM, in which he discussed aspects of joint scientific and academic cooperation with academic institutions in the Sultanate of Oman in the fields of geographic information and geospatial technologies, as well as the importance of employing modern technologies and innovations in geographic information, and enhancing integration between scientific knowledge and practical applications.

Following this, the "Digital Educational Atlas of the Sultanate of Oman" was launched, representing a modern digital educational platform that combines geography, history and spatial technologies, and supports the use of digital data and maps in education, thereby enhancing students' analytical and spatial thinking skills and linking theoretical knowledge with digital applications and future skills.

The conference's activities included a visual presentation reviewing modern geographic technologies in school and higher education and the Ministry of Education's efforts to develop them, as well as the opening of the accompanying exhibition, in which 20 governmental, private and academic entities are taking part, with exhibits ranging across projects, devices, systems and scientific programs related to recent developments in geographic information and geospatial technologies and their applications in various educational and developmental fields.

The first day's program included four scientific sub-sessions. The first discussed "Empowering School Curricula with Spatial Technologies: The Science of Place" through six working papers, while the second addressed "The Importance of Modern Surveying Device Applications in Geography" through 12 working papers.

The third session reviewed "Leveraging Geographic Information System Technologies to Build Interactive Digital Solutions for Education" through nine working papers, while the fourth session addressed the theme "Geographic Information Systems as a Driver for Achieving Sustainable Tourism: Alignment with Oman Vision 2040" through nine working papers.

The conference aims to enhance the international exchange of knowledge and expertise in the field of geographic information, transfer and localize the latest technologies to national institutions, and build sustainable research partnerships between universities and research centers, in addition to supporting the Ministry of Education's directions toward integrating geographic technologies into curricula and developing methods of applied learning and spatial analysis, thereby contributing to preparing a generation equipped with digital analysis skills and geographic thinking.

The conference also seeks to support data-driven spatial decision-making, promote the use of geographic technologies in sustainable development, resource management and addressing environmental challenges, empower national cadres and enhance the competence of specialists through workshops and training programs, stimulate investment, innovation and entrepreneurship in the geographic technologies sector, and strengthen the Sultanate of Oman's regional and international standing in this field, in addition to promoting Dhofar Governorate as a global tourist destination and offering international participants an experience that combines knowledge and tourism.

The organisation of the conference in the Sultanate of Oman underscores the importance of employing geographic knowledge and technologies in supporting development and future foresight, and strengthening cooperation among academic, research and professional institutions, in line with the rapid transformations in the field of geospatial information and supporting its utilisation across various sectors.

-ONA

His Majesty's wise approach praised by Red Cross officials



MUSCAT: Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross discussed the requirements and steps necessary to complete the procedures for its official recognition within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

This came during a meeting between Badr Mohammed Al Zaabi, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Oman Charitable Organisation, and Pierre Krähenbühl, Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and his accompanying delegation, during an official visit to the Authority's headquarters in the Sultanate of Oman.

The delegation of the International Committee praised the humanitarian role undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman, and the wise approach of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik in supporting humanitarian efforts and enhancing international cooperation, commending the role of Oman Charitable Organisation in facilitating the work of the International Movement and supporting its humanitarian activities.

Strengthening dialogue

The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Oman Charitable Organisation expressed his appreciation for this visit, aimed at strengthening dialogue and cooperation with the International Committee and benefiting from its long-standing expertise in humanitarian work, in a manner that serves national directions to develop the humanitarian work system and enhance its presence at the national and international levels.

For his part, the Director General of the International Commit-

tee of the Red Cross explained that the visit aims to gain a closer understanding of the Authority and its management officials, to learn about the directions for the coming phase, and to facilitate coordination and support efforts aimed at completing the requirements for the recognition of the Omani Red Crescent.

During the meeting, both sides affirmed the importance of building the Red Crescent on solid institutional and humanitarian foundations, and benefiting from international expertise in the fields of governance, institutional development, training, capacity building, and the exchange of expertise, in a way that enhances its readiness and capacity to fulfill its humanitarian mission.

They also affirmed their aspiration for a new phase of cooperation and partnership, including technical support, training, development, and capacity building, alongside continued coordination regarding the path of the Omani Red Crescent, in a way that contributes to strengthening its humanitarian role and establishing a sustainable partnership that serves humanity and supports joint humanitarian efforts.

The meeting was attended by Abdullah Mohammed Said, Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mission in the Sultanate of Oman; Elbida Papa-chatz, Head of the Strategy and Government Relations Section in the Office of the Director General of the International Committee in Geneva; Dr. Abdullah Hamed Al Badi, Humanitarian Affairs Advisor at the International Committee's Mission; and a number of specialists from the Authority.

-ONA

AL MURTAFAA CAMP

Signal Corps team wins RAO's Volleyball Championship

MUSCAT: The Signal Corps Team of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) on Monday won the RAO's 2026 Volleyball Championship, after defeating the 11th Infantry Brigade's team 3-1 in the final match, held at Al Murtafaa Camp.

The championship's closing ceremony was held under the auspices

of Maj. Gen. Matar bin Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman, who presented the championship's trophies to the top teams. The team of the 11th Infantry Brigade secured second place, while third place was won by the Sultan of Oman's Artillery team.

-ONA



HM the Sultan receives President of Rwanda

An official reception ceremony was held in honour of the President of the Republic of Rwanda

SALALAH: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda at Al Hosn Palace in Salalah yesterday, on the occasion of his official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. His Majesty welcomed the distinguished guest, expressing his best wishes for a pleasant and successful visit for him and his accompanying delegation.

An official reception ceremony was held in honour of the President of the Republic of Rwanda. Upon the arrival of the presiden-

tial motorcade, a squadron of the Royal Cavalry lined up in salute. His Majesty accompanied the President to the dais, where the national anthem of Rwanda was played and a 21-gun salute was fired in his honour.

His Majesty then greeted the official delegation accompanying the President of Rwanda, while the President greeted the Omani side, which included Their Highnesses, Excellencies and military commanders.

The President of the Republic of Rwanda is accompanied by an official delegation including Olivier Nduhungirehe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Yusuf Murangwa, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Antoine Kajangwe, Minister of Trade and Industry, Solange Uwituze, Minister of State at the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Juliana Muganza, CEO of Rwanda Development Board, Dan Munyuza, Non-Resident Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Sultanate of Oman and other officials. — ONA



HIS MAJESTY HOSTS AN OFFICIAL DINNER IN HONOUR OF PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik hosted an official dinner at Al Hosn Palace on Monday evening in honour of Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of his official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. Prior to the dinner banquet, His Majesty and the President of Rwanda exchanged commemorative gifts, expressing the depth of friendship and good relations between the two countries. The dinner banquet was attended by a number of Their Highnesses, members of the Royal Family, Their Excellencies the Ministers and Advisors, senior military leaders, and a number of Their Excellencies the Undersecretaries.



Governor of Dhofar receives Paul Kagame

Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said led the welcoming party for the guest and his accompanying delegation upon their arrival at the Royal Airport in Salalah



SALALAH: President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda arrived in Salalah on Monday on an official two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman. HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar led the welcoming party for the guest and his accompanying delegation upon their arrival at the Royal Airport in Salalah.

The guest was also received by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi,



Foreign Minister; Anwar bin Hilal Al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (Head of the Mission of Honour); Nasra bint Salim Al Hashmi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Kenya and Non-Resident Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda; and Dan Munyuza, Non-Resident Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA

CARNATIC RECITAL

Sivasri Tejaswi Surya leaves Muscat spellbound

Times News Service

MUSCAT: For a little over four hours on the evening of Friday, 21 August, a hall at the Al Falaj Hotel in Muscat held something the capital's music lovers do not often get to share on this scale: a full-length Carnatic recital by Sivasri Tejaswi Surya, performed to a house of more than 1,200 people.

The evening opened, as such evenings should, quietly. A Bharatanatyam curtain-raiser of five items set the register for what was to follow — precise, unhurried, and generous with the audience's attention.

The ceremonial lighting of the lamp brought the gathering to its feet, and by the time the artistes took their places on stage the hall had settled into the particular stillness that tells a performer the room is listening.

What followed was a recital in the full classical form: two halves separated by a short interval, an ensemble of vocal support, mridangam, dholki and harmonium, and — in the second half — a thani avartanam that drew the loudest and longest applause of the night. Sivasri Tejaswi Surya moved between the meditative and the exuberant with an ease that belied the



demands of the format, holding phrases long enough for the hall to breathe with her and then releasing them into passages of rhythmic brilliance that had listeners marking tala on their knees. Whole rows sat forward.

Children who had arrived restless were, by the second item, entirely still. Audiences in Muscat are known for their warmth, but those present spoke afterwards of something beyond warmth — of an evening that, for a few hours, transported a crowded hall somewhere else entirely, and returned it reluctantly.

Long after the closing item, listeners lingered in the foyer

rather than leave, which is perhaps the most honest review a concert can receive. The artistes themselves said as much.

Performers who tour widely are not easily surprised by an audience, and yet the response from the Muscat gathering — its attentiveness, its knowledge of the repertoire, its willingness to sit with a slow, elaborate passage rather than wait for the next familiar melody — was singled out repeatedly from the stage as among the finest they had encountered.

That is a compliment to this city and to the listeners in it, and it is worth recording.

An evening of this scale does not happen in isolation. It happens because it is possible — and it is possible here because of the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman has, for generations, made room for the many communities that have chosen to make it their home, and it has done so with a grace that residents of this country never take for granted.

Under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, that tradition of tolerance, openness and cultural coexistence has been carried forward and strengthened.

It is because of this that the arts of many nations are able to find a stage in Muscat, that visiting artistes are received here with such courtesy, and that a hall of 1,200 people can gather on a Friday evening to share in music from far away, entirely at home.

To the leadership of Oman, to its people, and to the institutions of this country that have created and protected the space in which cultural life can flourish, the sincere gratitude of everyone associated with this evening is owed. It is a privilege to be able to invite artistes of this calibre to perform here, and that privilege is a gift of this country.

Fisheries sector's importance in food security discussed

ROME: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, is participating via videoconference in the 37th session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 37), held at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the Italian capital, Rome.

The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman was represented by Eng. Yaqoub Khalfan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Fisheries.

The session, which continues through 11 September with the participation of member states as well as regional and international organisations concerned with the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, addressed a number of strategic topics related to the future of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, most notably enhancing the sector's contribution to achieving food security and nutrition, as well as ensuring the sustainability of fisheries resources.

The meeting discussed developing management systems based on data and scientific evidence, alongside following up on the implementation of FAO's Blue Transformation framework, in a manner that contributes to sustainably increasing production, improving the efficiency of value chains, and enhancing investment and employment opportunities in coastal communities.

The meetings touched upon the status of fisheries resources globally, the challenges arising from climate change and their impacts on marine ecosystems and fisheries production, alongside ways to develop sustainable aquaculture and enhance its ability to meet the growing demand for fishery products.

The meeting discussed international trade and market access,

product quality and safety, reducing loss and waste along production and marketing chains, ways to support small-scale fisheries, empowering fishers, coastal communities, and women working in sector-related activities, in addition to enhancing monitoring, control, and inspection systems, combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and activating relevant international measures, chief among which is the Agreement on Port State Measures.

The participation of the Sultanate of Oman in the session comes as an affirmation of its keenness to actively contribute to formulating international directions and policies related to fisheries sustainability and aquaculture development, reviewing its experience in developing the sector, strengthening partnerships with the Food and Agriculture Organization and regional and international organisations, and exchanging expertise in the fields of fisheries research, management of shared stocks, statistical systems, fisheries control, and value chain development.

The fisheries sector in the Sultanate of Oman is considered among the promising economic and productive sectors within the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, benefiting from the Omani coastline extending over more than 3,000 kilometres and its characteristic diversity in marine resources and organisms.

Fisheries production in the Sultanate of Oman reached about 991,000 tonnes during 2025, valued at nearly OMR703 million, with the artisanal fishing sector contributing about 716,000 tonnes—representing over 72 percent of total production—reflecting the economic and social importance of this activity and its role in supporting coastal communities and providing job opportunities.

NCSI

Oman records OMR4.7bn trade surplus by end of June

MUSCAT: Oman's trade balance recorded a surplus of about OMR4.7 billion by the end of June 2026, compared with a surplus of about OMR3.1 billion during the same period of 2025, marking an increase of about 51 percent.

Data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that the total value of Oman's merchandise exports rose by 15.3 percent, reaching about OMR13.2 billion by the end of June 2026, compared with about OMR11.5 billion during the same period of 2025.

This increase is attributed to a 16.5 percent growth in the value of oil and gas exports, which reached about OMR8.6 billion, compared with about OMR7.4 billion by the end of June 2025.

The value of re-exports rose by 20 percent to reach OMR978 million, compared with OMR815 million during the same period last year, while non-oil exports recorded growth of 11.4 percent to reach about OMR3.6 billion, compared with about OMR3.3 billion during the same period last year.

The value of merchandise imports also rose by 2.1 percent, reaching about OMR8.6 billion by the end of June 2026, compared with about OMR8.4 billion by the end of June 2025.

In terms of trading partners, the UAE topped the list of leading destinations for Omani non-oil ex-



Data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that the total value of Oman's merchandise exports rose by 15.3 percent

ports with a value of OMR1.134 billion, followed by Saudi Arabia with OMR 357 million, and then the Republic of India with OMR333 million.

With regard to re-exports, the Islamic Republic of Iran topped the list of leading destinations for re-exports by the end of June 2026, with a value of OMR254 million, followed by the United Arab Emirates in second place with OMR221 million, while the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia came in third place with OMR188 million.

On the side of merchandise imports, the United Arab Emirates topped the list of leading countries exporting to Oman by the end of June 2026, with a value of OMR 2.423 billion, followed by the People's Republic of China with OMR 1.194 billion, and then the Republic of Türkiye with OMR 676 million. -ONA



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/2026/086	11kV & LV NETWORK IMPROVEMENT WORKS (NIW) - 2026 (LOT-05)	22-September -2026	30-September -2026	52.500
DISC/2026/087	UTILITY NETWORK EXTENSION – Lot – 08B/2026	22-September -2026	30-September -2026	52.500
DISC/2026/088	Supply of Transformers for Nama Dhofar Service (Tanweer), Transformers 33/11 & 33/0.433 KVA	22-September -2026	30-September -2026	52.500
DISC/2026/089	REPLACEMENT OF 11kV CAPACITOR BANKS AT VARIOUS PRIMARY SUBSTATIONS	22-September -2026	30-September -2026	105.00

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



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DHOFAR SERVICES

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

Public warned against fake traffic fine discount scams

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has warned the public against misleading messages circulating online that promote fraudulent websites and links claiming to offer discounts of up to 50 percent on traffic fines.

The authority stressed that these unauthorised schemes are

designed to deceive individuals and compromise personal user data.

Members of the public are urged to refrain from clicking on unknown or suspicious links and to disregard information from unverified sources.

The ROP advised citizens and residents to verify all official news through verified police channels

and to immediately report any suspicious online activity or fraudulent links to the authorities.

Man arrested in Ibri after stealing car left with key in ignition

Meanwhile in another instance the Royal Oman Police, has arrested an individual for stealing a vehicle from in front of a shop in

the Wilayat of Ibri, Al Dhahirah Governorate.

The Royal Oman Police said in a statement: "The police command of Al Dhahirah Governorate arrested a person for stealing a vehicle from in front of a shop in the Wilayat of Ibri after finding the ignition key inside it. The legal procedures are being completed against him."



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Finance and insurance sectors in Oman seeing rapid transformation

Finance and Insurance Forum in Salalah aims to strengthen the role of innovation and financial technology in developing these sectors and raising their operational



of a number of government and private institutions operating in the finance, funding and insurance sectors in the Sultanate of Oman.

Zaher Khusaif Al Harasi, Chairman of the Finance and Insurance Committee at the North Al Batinah Branch of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the third edition of the forum represents a continuation of a journey that began with the first edition, which focused on empowering private sector institutions and strengthening their sustainability, while the second edition focused on consolidating partnership and integration and discussing the legislative environment, digital transformation and innovative financing. He added

that the current edition moves into a phase more closely linked to the future, led by financial technology, innovation, digital transformation, readiness, risk management and business continuity, affirming that these areas have become fundamental pillars for growth, competitiveness and sustainability in the financial and insurance sectors.

Al Harasi also explained that the finance and insurance sector is witnessing rapid transformations driven by modern technologies, artificial intelligence and data analysis, which opens opportunities for developing services, raising operational efficiency, accelerating procedures and improving the beneficiary experience, pointing to the importance of keeping pace

with these transformations within frameworks that enhance stability, readiness and sustainability.

He affirmed that the forum aims to strengthen the role of innovation and financial technology in developing the finance and insurance sector and raising its operational efficiency, supporting the readiness of financial institutions and insurance companies to deal with crises and disasters by adopting smart solutions and developing risk management and business continuity systems, in addition to strengthening a business environment attractive to investment and innovation and supporting the growth and sustainability of the private sector.

The forum's programme includ-

ed a number of dialogue sessions and specialised working papers, including a main session addressing the role of the financial sector in supporting the national economy, and a dialogue session titled "The Financial Sector in the Age of Digital Transformation: Innovative Legislation, Smart Investment, and Sustainable Growth," which discussed the most prominent changes witnessed by the sector and the requirements for developing the regulatory and investment environment.

Dr. Mughait Shawkat, Executive Advisor at the Islamic Research and Training Institute, presented a working paper on the role of Islamic finance and investment in supporting economic transformation in the Sultanate of Oman, and the importance of expanding the role of capital markets, funds and sukuk in financing projects and boosting economic activity.

He explained that the Islamic finance industry in the Sultanate of Oman rose from about \$36 billion by the end of 2025 to an expected approximately \$45 billion during 2026, while Islamic banks and windows account for about 23 percent of the banking system's assets, pointing to growth opportunities in the areas of takaful insurance, asset management and Islamic funds.

A dialogue session within the

sustainability and future theme also discussed "The Role of Financial and Insurance Institutions and Smart Applications in Supporting the Private Sector," and the importance of employing digital solutions and smart applications to raise the efficiency of financial and insurance services and enhance the competitiveness of private sector institutions.

The forum was accompanied by a specialised exhibition with the participation of a number of government and private institutions, showcasing the regulatory and legislative services governing the finance and insurance sector in the Sultanate of Oman, alongside the financial, funding and insurance services and digital solutions and applications offered by the participating institutions.

The forum concluded with a number of recommendations, most notably developing the legislative and regulatory environment to keep pace with developments in financial technology and digital business models, achieving a balance between innovation and financial stability, strengthening data- and risk-based oversight, and employing artificial intelligence and modern regulatory technologies to raise the efficiency of supervision. — ONA

Full story@timesofoman.com/business

Talabat Wins Excellence in Women Empowerment at the Workplace - Ecommerce Award



Talabat was felicitated with the 'The Origin Excellence in Women Empowerment at the Workplace - Ecommerce 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.

The award recognises Talabat's commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace where women are empowered to grow, lead and build meaningful careers within the evolving ecommerce sector. Through initiatives that support professional development, equal opportunities and an inclusive organisational culture, Talabat continues to contribute to creating workplaces where women can thrive. As a leading technology and ecommerce platform in the region, Talabat has played an important role in shaping the digital economy



while creating opportunities for talent across diverse functions. Its focus on empowering women reflects the growing importance of diversity and inclusion in building resilient, innovative and future-ready organisations.

Talabat's recognition at The Origin 2026 celebrates its efforts to champion women in the workplace and create an environment where talent, ambition and leadership can flourish. The achievement highlights the role businesses can play in advancing women's participation and progress across Oman's private sector.

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.

For more information, contact: 78471944/97221630

WOSOOOL SYSTEM



Muscat Governorate reviews electronic document and records management system

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Governorate on Monday, in cooperation with the National Records and Archives Authority, conducted a workshop to display the ninth and tenth enhancements to the Wosool electronic document and records management system.

It included features designed to streamline procedures and improve the efficiency of using the system.

The workshop forms part of the ongoing development of the Wosool system and benefitting from feedback provided by users in entities that have begun using it. This contributes to enhancing the user experience and improving the efficiency of managing documents and records electronically.

The workshop highlighted the key new enhancements, including improvements to the electronic signature mechanism by simplifying the steps involved and enabling users to customise numerous default settings, such as job role, language, display name, font type and signature image.

It introduced a direct preview feature before the signature is approved.

The enhancements comprised improvements to the text editor, such as the ability to convert numerals between Arabic and Eng-



lish formats, insert the Omani Rial symbol, and control text size and colour.

Additionally, features for creating, editing and formatting tables have been enhanced, and the option to search for fonts.

The follow-up inbox has also been enhanced by adding search, filtering and sorting options, making it easier to access transactions more quickly and accurately. Us-

ers can search by user, department or subject, filter results according to various standards, and sort them by creation or modification date. These enhancements simplify digital procedures and advance the efficiency of handling electronic documents and records. Thereby supporting the quality of institutional performance and expediting the accomplishment of transactions.

Muscat Governorate continues its efforts to reinforce digital transformation and develop its institutional work system through adopting technological solutions, strengthening integration with government entities, and exchanging expertise and experiences.

These efforts contribute to creating a more efficient and flexible working environment while supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Iran signals Strait of Hormuz could reopen if US halts attacks

Rezaei said Iran's position on the strategic waterway was directly linked to Washington's military posture towards Tehran

TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei has said Tehran will keep the Strait of Hormuz open if the United States stops threatening or attacking Iran. In an interview with Iranian

state broadcaster Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) on Sunday, Rezaei said Iran's position on the strategic waterway was directly linked to Washington's military posture towards Tehran. "Iran will commit to keeping the Strait of Hormuz open when the US neither threatens nor attacks Iran," Rezaei told IRIB. Rezaei also stated that Iran plans for a new restricted maritime area outside the Strait of Hormuz in the coming days, potentially extending restrictions into parts of the Arabian Gulf. "This area starts from the US naval blockade line to include areas of the Arabian Gulf," he said. The Iranian security chief warned that ships entering the newly designated zone would face sanctions. "Any ship entering this new area will be placed on the sanctions list," Rezaei said.



The comments come amid heightened tensions over the status of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a strategically important waterway for global energy trade amid the West Asia conflict. Rezaei also claimed that Iranian forces had identified several American military targets but had deliberately refrained from striking some of them, including the Titan base in Jordan and US bases in Erbil, amid renewed exchange of fire between the two sides in the

region after weeks of no hostilities. "Iran had identified some American targets but did not intentionally strike them, such as their Titan base in Jordan and some of their bases in Erbil," he said. According to the Iranian security chief, Tehran's earlier military actions amid the conflict against US positions contributed to a shift in Washington's approach to the conflict. Rezaei also spoke about the situation in Lebanon and Hezbollah's role in the country's conflict, particularly in the south, with Israel, saying military confrontations should not be assessed solely through a series of wins and losses. "In no war does victory after victory and defeat after defeat make sense; wars have ups and downs," he said. He further asserted that Hezbollah had maintained the upper hand throughout the conflict despite

facing sustained military pressure from Israeli forces. "The upper hand has always been with Lebanon's Hezbollah," Rezaei said. Rezaei's remarks indicate that Tehran is linking the future status of the waterway to the absence of US military threats or attacks while simultaneously warning of additional restrictions on vessels operating in areas that Iran may designate as restricted. **Stark warning issued to US** Meanwhile, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on Monday issued a stark warning to Washington against any misadventures towards Iranian energy facilities, warning of sharp repercussions. In a post on X he said that Iran's oil and gas production chain is "sprawling, accessible, and exposed." — ANI

PRESIDENT ZELENSKY

Ukrainian forces hit Russian oil facilities and drone launch site

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday said Ukrainian forces had struck Russian oil-processing facilities, a site used to store and launch attack drones and a target in the Black Sea in response to Russian strikes on Ukraine. Zelenskyy, in a post on X, said that Ukrainian forces had struck an oil refinery in Russia's Ryazan region, while long-range capabilities were used against oil-processing facilities in the Perm region and Tatarstan. He said, "Our warriors continue responding justly to Russian strikes on Ukraine. An oil refinery was hit in the Ryazan region. Our long-range capabilities were used against oil-processing facilities in the Perm region and Tatarstan and against a site used to store and launch attack drones in the Kursk region. A target was also hit in the Black Sea. I thank every one of our units for their precision!" The Ukrainian claims came as Russia continued strikes on Ukrainian port infrastructure and vessels, according to Russian state news agency TASS, citing the Russian Defence Ministry. TASS reported that Russian strike drones hit the Mavka dry cargo vessel, which was carrying military equipment, at the port of Chernomorsk on Sunday evening. According to TASS, Russian forces on the morning of September 7 (Monday) also struck a production and loading complex at the port of Izmail that the Russian Defence Ministry claimed was being used to unload military cargo delivered to Ukraine by Western countries from vessels. TASS further reported that a patrol boat used to escort vessels carrying military cargo was struck in the Black Sea. The Russian Defence Ministry had earlier said on September 6 that its forces struck two logistics centres in Ukraine's Odesa region using Geran-4 seeker drones, TASS reported. TASS also said Russian strike drones had hit a dry cargo ves-



sel carrying military equipment supplied to Ukraine by Western countries in the Black Sea. On Sunday, US special envoy Steve Witkoff and US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner held "substantive" discussions with Ukrainian officials in Kyiv and pushed for Kyiv and Moscow to resume talks, CNN reported. The visit by the two key Trump aides was the first to Kyiv since the conflict broke out. While no major breakthroughs were announced after Sunday's talks, Witkoff said he was "confident that there'll be a good resolution here." The talks followed rigorous meetings Witkoff and Kushner held with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Saturday, part of a renewed push by the US to bring an end to the Russia-Ukraine war. CNN reported that the US-Ukraine talks concluded on Sunday evening local time after two rounds of discussion, followed by a third round of negotiations with European representatives. As per the American broadcaster, officials from the United Kingdom, France and Germany were present in Kyiv, according to Kyrylo Budanov, head of the Office of the Ukrainian Presidency. During the visit of the American envoys, Russia and Ukraine enacted a 72-hour temporary ceasefire, specifically halting air-strikes on each other's capitals. CNN reported, citing Ukraine's Air Force, that Russian strikes continued while avoiding Kyiv. — ANI

CAMBODIA

Project to boost eye healthcare launched

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia's Ministry of Health on Monday officially launched a comprehensive six-year eye health governance project spanning from 2026 to 2031. Speaking at the launch event in Phnom Penh, Health Minister Chheang Ra said that eye health is a foundational pillar of the broader healthcare system and remains essential to achieving the nation's Universal Health Coverage (UHC) goals. The minister said the project represents a collective mission to ensure all citizens, especially

those living in vulnerable, rural, and remote areas, gain access to quality, equitable, inclusive, and affordable eye care. "Vision is an indispensable tool for acquiring knowledge and understanding," he said. "By helping children with vision impairment, we secure their futures and empower the individuals who will one day shape our nation." He urged unified action to ensure "no one is left behind" as Cambodia works to build a robust, sustainable, and equitable eye health system. — Xinhua

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
- Leadership in ICV
- Leadership in CSR
- Social Impact Leader of the Year and many more

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

SCAN TO NOMINATE

For partnerships, table bookings or award nominations, contact:

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OMAN OIL PRICE RISES

The price of Oman crude oil has increased, with prices for delivery by November 2026 reaching \$104.54. The price of Oman crude oil rose by \$2.74 from the price of Friday, which was \$101.80. -ONA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 7,605.90 points, down by -0.34% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by -0.14% at 621.16 points. Al Madina Investments, up 4.05%, was the top gainer while, Al Hassan Engineering, down 16.67%, was the top loser.

MEETING

Oman, China explore economic and free zone investment partnerships

MUSCAT: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz), received yesterday at the authority's headquarters in Muscat an economic delegation from Hainan Province of the People's Republic of China, headed by Bater, Executive Vice Governor of Hainan Province.

During the meeting, the two sides explored ways to enhance economic and investment cooperation in special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities supervised by the Authority were reviewed, alongside discussing possible areas of cooperation with the Chinese province of Hainan, as well as exploring opportunities to establish investment partnerships between companies and institutions



from both sides across a number of promising economic and industrial sectors.

The two sides emphasized the

importance of coordination, facilitation, and creating an environment supportive of cooperation, in parallel with involving

economic zones, companies, and the private sector in developing and executing investment and commercial opportunities and

projects of mutual interest.

They also highlighted benefiting from mutual experiences in developing and managing economic and specialized zones, enhancing integration between zones and ports, developing industrial clusters, and attracting qualitative investments, thereby contributing to transitioning from general frameworks of cooperation to practical partnerships based on specific initiatives and projects.

During the meeting, the ecosystem of special economic, free, and industrial zones supervised by the Authority was presented, along with the supportive investment environment it provides, benefiting from the Oman's strategic location, regulatory flexibility, and openness to regional and global markets, as well as the logistical depth provided by the network of ports, airports, and integrated infrastructure, which enhances in-

vestors' ability to access markets and expand their businesses.

The two sides addressed the importance of enhancing communication between the business communities in the Sultanate of Oman and Hainan Province, and introducing the opportunities available for Chinese companies to invest and expand in the zones supervised by the Authority, contributing to attracting qualitative investments, enhancing industrial integration, and transferring knowledge and modern technologies.

Both parties also affirmed the importance of continued coordination and exchange of expertise, as well as working to explore new areas for cooperation and partnership, enhancing economic and investment relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the People's Republic of China, represented by Hainan Province, and serving the mutual interests of both sides. -ONA

Oman evolving as a specialised structured-finance market

Rather than lending against a sponsor's balance sheet, it is built around the cash flows, assets, contracts and risks of a single transaction, so a project is assessed on its own economics



VINOD KUMAR PK
vinodkumar@timesofoman.com

MUSCAT: Oman is becoming a specialised structured-finance market with real depth in infrastructure, renewables, logistics and hydrogen. As Vision 2040 projects move from development into execution, structured finance is the bridge between national ambition and global institutional capital, said Nooreen Naaz, Associate Vice President (Capital Markets & Partnerships), Graystone Capital.

Structured finance sits between conventional corporate lending and the capital markets, she said added that, "Rather than lending against a sponsor's balance sheet, it is built around the cash flows, assets, contracts and risks of a single transaction, so a project is assessed on its own economics."

"In Oman this means project and infrastructure finance, syndicated lending, asset-backed structures, acquisition finance, export-credit-supported facilities, sukuk

and, increasingly, green and sustainability-linked instruments," she said. Power, water, ports, logistics, petrochemicals, renewables and green hydrogen are the natural candidates, the practical advantage of this type of financing is scale she added.

A single structure can bring local banks, international lenders, export credit agencies, Islamic institutions and institutional investors into one project, which is how Oman finances assets are far larger than any domestic balance sheet could carry alone.

Although there is no single official statistic labelled "Oman structured-finance market," Nooreen Naaz said, "These transactions are reported across bank lending, project finance, syndicated loans, bonds and sukuk. But the direction is unambiguous."

Central Bank of Oman (CBO) data shows that total credit reached OMR38.2 billion at the end of June 2026, up 12.3 percent year on year, with deposits rising 13 percent to OMR37.3 billion. Under

der Vision 2040's financial-sector programme, bank financing directed to priority diversification sectors increased by around 14 percent and now represents roughly 23 percent of commercial banks' lending portfolios.

Capital markets are carrying more of the load. Oman returned to international markets in November 2025 with a \$1 billion sovereign sukuk priced at 60 basis points over US Treasuries. In June 2026, the eleventh local sovereign sukuk attracted nearly OMR250 million of demand against a base size of OMR100 million, roughly 2.5 times, allowing the greenshoe to be exercised and the issue to close at OMR120 million with a 4.2 percent profit rate.

Underpinning all of it is the sovereign's own repair work. Government debt fell to 34.6 percent of GDP at the end of 2025, from 67.9 percent in 2020. That is the single biggest reason international lenders price Omani risk more finely today.

When asked whether structured financing is genuinely reaching

large projects, she said, "Yes, and the track record is stronger than many realise."

The Duqm refinery remains the reference transaction, she said, adding, "The roughly \$8 billion project raised \$4.61 billion of senior debt from 29 financial institutions across 13 countries, with cover from three export credit agencies, and it included the largest Sharia-compliant facility ever extended to a greenfield project in Oman."

Similarly, in 2025, "The refinery passed its lenders' reliability test, establishing the actual completion date and releasing more than \$4 billion of shareholder guarantees. That is a full project-finance cycle, completed."

Renewables also show the same model at smaller scale. The Manah I 500MW solar plant reached financial close with equity and debt from institutions including Korea Eximbank, Societe Generale and Bank Muscat, under a long-term power-purchase framework.

Regarding the instruments involved in structured financing she

said, "Limited-recourse project finance, syndicated and club loans, asset-backed and receivables financing, securitisation, acquisition finance, structured trade and commodity finance, ECA-supported debt, mezzanine debt, bonds and sukuk."

For infrastructure the architecture is familiar: a special purpose vehicle, a long-term concession or offtake agreement, sponsor equity, senior debt and a security package over project assets and cash flows. What matters less is the product name than how construction, completion, offtaker, commodity, operating and refinancing risks are allocated between the project company, sponsors, lenders and counterparties.

When asked whether structured financing is supporting diversification in Oman, she said, "This is where it becomes strategically important."

"Oman's diversification programme requires substantial private and international capital across renewables, green hydrogen, manufacturing, logistics, tourism, mining, food security and digital infrastructure," she added.

"Government and domestic bank balance sheets cannot reasonably fund that cycle alone," she further pointed out.

Structured finance converts commercially viable projects into bankable assets, combining sponsor equity, domestic liquidity, international banks, ECAs, development institutions and capital-market investors.

Oman's green hydrogen sector illustrates the scale. Hydrom's awarded portfolio has grown to nine projects representing more than \$50 billion of prospective investment. "I would add one caution," she said adding, "awarding a project is not the same as reaching financial close. The real test of Oman's structured-finance capability over the next three years is

how many of those awards convert into signed, funded transactions."

Regarding how relevant Sharia-compliant structured financing is, she says, "Highly relevant. Islamic banking has expanded quickly since Oman's framework was introduced in 2012. Assets of Islamic banks and windows reached OMR10 billion by June 2026, up 8.7 percent year on year, with financing of OMR8 billion, approaching one-fifth of total banking-sector assets.

"Ijara, Murabaha, Musharaka, Wakalah, Istisna'a and sukuk can all sit alongside conventional facilities within a single transaction, as Duqm demonstrated. Oman has also issued its first ESG sukuk, by Oman Electricity Transmission Company, an early sign that Sharia-compliant and sustainable finance are converging here, she added.

She further pointed out that in the first half of 2026, Omani issuers raised \$1.82 billion across six bond and sukuk issuances, against roughly \$49 billion in Saudi Arabia and \$25 billion in the UAE. Oman's Financial Services Authority itself describes the domestic capital market as relatively small and less liquid, which keeps banks and international lenders central to large transactions.

The constraint worth naming is that a meaningful share of current issuance is refinancing rather than new capital formation. Deepening the domestic institutional investor base and secondary-market liquidity remains unfinished work.

But size is the wrong measure, she said adding that "Oman is becoming a specialised structured-finance market with real depth in infrastructure, renewables, logistics and hydrogen. As Vision 2040 projects move from development into execution, structured finance is the bridge between national ambition and global institutional capital."

ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS DESTINATION

Al Suwaiq Industrial City abuzz with construction works

Times News Service

AL SUWAIQ: Project site construction works are in full swing at Al Suwaiq Industrial City, with investors spearheading the launch of the industrial city deemed an attractive business destination in North Al Batinah Governorate.

This reflects the growing industrial activity in the city, enhances its appeal as an ideal investment destination in North Al Batinah Governorate, and supports economic diversification and local added value objectives.

Munthir bin Ali Al Nasri, Acting Director General of Al Suwaiq Industrial City, said in a statement that Al Suwaiq Industrial City has so far attracted investment projects worth more than OMR1.4 million, with the total leased area



so far exceeding 80,000 square metres. This, he observed, brings the cumulative total investment in the industrial city to more than OMR2 million and the overall leased area to 90,000 square metres.

The projects being set up at Al Suwaiq Industrial City cover a variety of sectors, including polyethylene production, industrial oil

refining, bitumen polymer modification and the manufacturing of ceramic tiles.

Al Suwaiq Industrial City occupies a total area of 12.2 million square metres. The first phase of the industrial city (1.3 million square metres) will be developed by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), ushering in a new milestone to the system of industrial cities in the Sultanate of Oman.

Al Suwaiq Industrial City boasts a wide range of investment opportunities, competitive incentives and advanced infrastructure.

He also noted that the management of Al Suwaiq Industrial City is working closely with relevant

partners in the public and private sectors to accelerate the provision of essential services to the city and its investors, explore ways to attract investments and facilitate procedures, and organise promotional events to highlight the available investment opportunities and incentives offered to investors.

"These efforts aim to attract value-added industrial projects, broaden the city's industrial activities and boost the sector's contribution to the national economy, while creating new opportunities for the SMEs and supporting supply chains and services associated with the industrial sector," Al Nasri pointed out.

Al Suwaiq Industrial City represents a significant addition to the Sultanate's network of industrial cities, with a range of investment

opportunities, competitive incentives and advanced infrastructure planned for the city.

The city is expected to generate direct and indirect job opportunities for the Omanis, empower the entrepreneurs to launch innovative projects, and contribute to increasing non-oil revenues.

Madayn has also developed studies to identify investment opportunities aligned with the economic diversification strategy and Oman Vision 2040.

Targeted sectors include petrochemicals, food industries and modern agriculture, energy and supporting technologies, recycling and environmental industries, light and medium industries, pharmaceuticals, technology and innovation, heavy industries, and logistics.



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Death toll in Nepal floods rises to 1,355, rescue operations continue

Nepal is observing a day of national mourning on Monday in memory of lives lost in devastating floods which struck on August 26

KATHMANDU: The death toll from the devastating flash floods has climbed to 1,355, according to the latest figures released by Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA).

Nepal is observing a day of national mourning on Monday in memory of lives lost in devastating floods which struck on August 26.

A Cabinet meeting held on September 3 at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers had decided to observe national mourning in honour of the flood victims. Accordingly, the national flag is being flown at half-mast at government offices across the country, as well as at Nepali embassies and diplomatic missions abroad.

The Bhotekoshi flood struck Rasuwa, causing widespread loss of life and extensive damage to homes, roads, bridges, hydro-power facilities and other critical infrastructure.

The disaster also affected downstream areas along the Trishuli River, including parts of Nuwakot and Dhading, leaving communities displaced and disrupting transport, electricity, water supply and other essential services.

Search and rescue operations,



relief distribution and infrastructure restoration have continued in the affected areas, with national security agencies, government authorities, local communities and international partners involved in the response.

On the eve of the national mourning, Prime Minister Balendra (Balen) Shah issued a public statement acknowledging the ongoing work of Nepal's security personnel involved in search, rescue and management operations following flood damage caused by the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli rivers.

The statement highlighted a recent incident at the Central Jail at Khampa Camp in Bidur-6, Nuwakot, where floodwaters damaged administrative structures and reached lower levels of housing facilities.

According to the Prime Minister, 52 personnel from the Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force (APF) transferred all 923 inmates to higher ground within the com-

plex while re-apprehending 50 inmates who attempted to escape through damaged perimeter structures, with several officers sustaining injuries during the process.

Despite damage to nearby barracks, loss of road access and disrupted water supplies, security personnel have continued maintaining operations and supplying necessities at the facility.

Nationwide, joint operations involving the Nepali Army, Nepal Police and APF have resulted in the rescue of 13,391 individuals via air and ground transport.

Current deployments across affected regions include 9,287 personnel from the Nepali Army managing operations in Battar and Dhunche and assembling temporary bridges in Devighat.

Similarly, 7,975 Nepal Police officers are handling frontline search operations, body retrieval and canine unit deployments.

Moreover, 4,203 APF personnel are operating across 13 re-

sponse bases, utilising diving units, rope rescue teams and drone surveillance.

The Prime Minister also noted that 82 security personnel remain unaccounted for following the floods, including 45 from the Nepali Army, 25 from the Nepal Police and 12 from the APF.

Shah expressed appreciation for the continued efforts of the security forces, their families and assisting experts, reaffirming the government's commitment to supporting security personnel deployed in the field.

Australian tunnel rescue expert Arnold Dix, internationally celebrated for his pivotal contribution in extracting forty-one trapped workers from India's Silkyara tunnel during 2023, has characterised ongoing flood mitigation operations throughout Nepal as a professional challenge unlike any encountered previously in his professional life.

Dispatching reports directly

from the field in the wake of catastrophic inundations surrounding the Bhotekoshi river, Dix stated early Monday that disaster response squads are steering through a complex, multi-layered emergency.

"Right now, in Nepal, we are facing something I have never faced before," Dix posted on social media. "Not one rescue, but multiple potential rescues, unfolding at the same time, in different places, each with its own dangers, uncertainties and lives that may still be saved."

Recalling insights gained from the Silkyara mission, where a singular, highly intricate subterranean extraction successfully restored forty-one men to their families, Dix underlined that current conditions near the Bhotekoshi require transitioning from a singular concentration towards managing several concurrent crisis zones amidst intense unpredictability.

Synthesising Western professional duties with Eastern philosophical frameworks, Dix observed that the magnitude of the calamity demands enduring commitment irrespective of immediate results.

"Asian traditions offer another powerful idea: dharma," he wrote.

"The test is not simply whether we succeed. It is whether we continue to do what is right when the path becomes harder, the responsibilities multiply, and the outcome cannot be known."

While search and recovery missions proceed across severely impacted segments of the Bhotekoshi corridor, domestic and overseas response units continue traversing perilous terrain to reach isolated populations.

"Silkyara taught me never to confuse unlikely with impossible," Dix added.

"Nepal is teaching me something more: when several lives may depend upon us at once, hope must become discipline, compassion must become action, and duty cannot depend upon cer-

tainty of success."

Specialist response squads and technical personnel maintain continuous operations on-site, contending with persistent water currents and heavy rubble that obstruct routes to devastated settlements.

Amid these ongoing rescue operations following the devastating floods, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reported that an Indian technical team has made encouraging progress in efforts to clear the Chilime tunnel, while an Indian forensic team has processed more than 400 DNA samples.

According to the MEA, the Indian technical team continued its manual efforts to clear the tunnel at Chilime and made progress on a makeshift path that would allow access by heavy machinery.

The improvised track is now close to one kilometre in length, while the team has also commenced work on creating rope-based access to the tunnel.

Meanwhile, the Indian forensic team has been processing more than 400 DNA samples at two laboratories in Kathmandu and has already generated around 70 DNA profiles, as stated by the MEA.

In related developments, foreign media journalists seeking to collect news from flood-affected areas along Nepal's Bhotekoshi and Trishuli rivers will now be required to obtain a Press Accreditation and Journalist Identity Card from Nepal's Department of Information and Broadcasting (DoIB), according to an official notice issued by the Government of Nepal.

Concurrently, Nepali authorities have issued an alert along the river basins of the Budhigandaki River following floods in the mountainous region of Gorkha.

The alert was prompted by a flood in the Therang River, which flows through Chumanubri Rural Municipality-4 and 2 in the mountainous region of Gorkha district.

— ANI

AT BRICS CHIEF JUSTICES' FORUM



China emphasises judicial cooperation

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of China and President of the Supreme People's Court, Zhang Jun, delivered a keynote address at the BRICS Chief Justices' Forum, emphasising judicial cooperation and mutual learning among member states.

Sharing the developments on social media, Chinese Embassy Spokesperson in India, Yu Jing, wrote in a post on X, "Chief Justice of China and President of the Supreme People's Court, Zhang Jun delivered a keynote address at BRICS Chief Justices' Forum. Zhang said China hopes to deepen mutual learning among judicial civilizations, strengthen pragmatic cooperation, safeguard the healthy development of trade and economy, focus on digital justice, promote the improvement of judicial quality and efficiency, and jointly create a new situation for judicial cooperation among BRICS countries."

Building upon these addresses, the Supreme Court of India hosted the three-day forum from September 4 to 6, bringing together chief justices, presidents of supreme courts and senior judicial leaders from BRICS member states and partner countries.

As part of the engagements, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant held bilateral meetings with judicial heads from Russia, China, Egypt, Indonesia, the UAE, Belarus, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Iran and Uzbekistan. Extending

these diplomatic and legal interactions, the formal discussions covered judicial cooperation, mediation and arbitration for the resolution of commercial disputes, strengthening commercial courts to boost investor confidence, and possibilities of mutual recognition of judicial awards and decrees.

Moving forward with institutional objectives, the judicial leaders also discussed professional exchange programmes through institutions such as the National Judicial Academy, sharing of legal best practices and bilateral conferences on contemporary legal issues.

Complementing these cooperative frameworks, technology integration, including the use of artificial intelligence to improve judicial efficiency, and expeditious judicial processes to strengthen people-to-people ties also figured in the discussions.

Among those who met Justice Surya Kant were Russian Supreme Court Chief Justice Igor Krasnov, Chinese Supreme People's Court President Zhang Jun, Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court Chief Justice Boulos Gahmy Iskander Boulos, Indonesian Supreme Court Chief Justice Sunarto, UAE Federal Supreme Court President Mohammed Hamad Al Badi Al Dhaheri and Belarus Supreme Court Chairman Andrei Shved.

— ANI

AHEAD OF MIDTERMS

Trump admin. makes new appeal to Supreme Court over mail-in ballots

WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump's administration on Sunday again asked the Supreme Court to allow the US Postal Service (USPS) plan for mail ballots to take place effective immediately ahead of the midterm elections, according to media report.

As per the American broadcaster, in its emergency appeal, the Postal Service noted that mail ballots for the November midterms are already being sent in one state, North Carolina, and that other states will soon follow. The USPS asked the high court to quickly allow it to implement its rule, setting up one of the most significant election cases on the court's quick-turn docket in years.

This comes as the Supreme Court is already considering an emergency appeal filed by the USPS earlier on September 3 that urged the justices to allow the agency to implement the new ballot rule ahead of the November elections.

According to CNN, in that appeal, the USPS asked the Supreme Court to stay a temporary restraining order from US District Judge Indira Talwani in Massachusetts that barred the agency from moving forward for two weeks.

In a significant ruling ahead of the November midterm elections,



US District Judge Indira Talwani on Friday issued a preliminary injunction preventing the U.S. Postal Service from implementing its controversial new mail-in voting rules, CBS reported.

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 con-

stitutional 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.

The recent appeal to the top

court comes as the Trump administration pushes to give the USPS an unprecedented role in elections.

CNN reported that North Carolina has already begun mailing out ballots. Alabama will begin doing so on Sept. 9. At least five additional states will begin mailing ballots on September 13, according to the Justice Department.

"Once those ballot envelopes enter the mainstream, there is no retrieving them," the Justice Department told the Supreme Court in its filing on Sunday.

"And while the injunction allows the Postal Service and the states to continue taking steps to ensure that their envelopes satisfy the rule's requirements, each day the injunction is in place risks sowing confusion and chaos because the injunction makes those preparatory steps voluntary, rather than mandatory."

The USPS rule would require state and local election officials to upload lists of their mail voters to a portal.

It would also require election officials to use special barcodes on the envelopes to ease tracking of that mail. As per CNN news, many election officials have argued that it's already too late to implement those requirements.

— ANI

INDIA

12 rescued, 7 dead in Delhi building collapse

NEW DELHI: A total of 12 people have been rescued from the site of the Satya Niketan building collapse, while seven people have died, Delhi Police said on Monday.

Delhi Police said one more person was recovered from the debris, taking the total number of people rescued to 12.

Inspector General of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) Narendra Singh Bundela said NDRF and Fire Service teams were working to retrieve one more

person from the debris, who was likely unconscious.

"As for the current situation, a total of 12 people have been retrieved; six were subsequently declared dead, and five were admitted to hospitals. One body is yet to be extricated; the NDRF and fire service teams are attempting to bring him out—he is likely unconscious," Bundela said in the press conference.

He said the state machinery was activated soon after the building

collapse and two NDRF tactical teams were working on the ground.

"The state government is taking the matter seriously; the Chief Minister visited the site yesterday and issued directives, so the state government is taking appropriate action," Bundela said.

Speaking about the NDRF's response time, Bundela said the force follows a protocol under which teams are required to deploy from their base within 20 minutes of receiving a call.

"... Regarding response time: for any rescue force—whether it is the fire service or the Delhi Police (which has a PCR system)—there is a set protocol. For the NDRF, the protocol requires us to deploy from our base within 20 minutes of receiving a call. We have identified locations across India where teams remain on standby 24/7 on a rotational basis, allowing for an immediate response to any call..." he said.

— ANI



AS GLACIERS MELT,

CAN COMMUNITIES BE PROTECTED?

Rising temperatures are increasing the risk of floods and avalanches in mountain regions. The disaster in Nepal and Tibet shows the urgent need for solutions, and the tools that could help save lives

High mountain glaciers formed in the ice age are retreating and becoming unstable as the burning of fossil fuels heats the climate and leads to a decline in snowfall.

The instability creates the conditions for large glacial sections to collapse, triggering ice and rock avalanches that can dam river valleys before tidal waves of water are released.

Following the glacier collapse that triggered what is known as a mountain tsunami in Nepal and Tibet on August 26, thousands are still missing and feared dead. Unlike the 2025 glacier avalanche that destroyed the town of Blatten in Switzerland — where nearly all inhabitants were evacuated — a lack of early warning systems in the Himalayas left locals and tourists at the mercy of flash floods.



How much is climate change to blame?

The causes of glacier collapse are part of a complex web of interrelated changes to high mountain landscapes due in part to rising global temperatures, say scientists.

Levan Tielidze, research fellow in glacial geomorphology at Australia's Monash University, said the Himalayas are not, as is often imagined, a "frozen and relatively stable environment," but "dynamic systems in which glaciers, snow, permafrost, rock slopes, rivers and monsoon processes interact."

"As the climate warms, these components are changing simultaneously, meaning hazards can cascade from one process into another," he told DW. When rock, ice and water interact in more unpredictable ways on the world's highest peaks, the resulting debris flows "can transform into a catastrophic flood far downstream."

Almost 25 years ago, in what was then the biggest glacial collapse in history, one glacier crashed onto another in the Caucasus Mountains of North Ossetia in Russia. The event caused avalanches of ice and debris that slid more than 24 kilometres (15 miles) and killed around 125 people.

"The Kolka Glacier disaster was one of the early warnings of the increasing occurrence and potential severity of such glacier-related hazards," said Tielidze.

Meanwhile, the UN says glaciers in Nepalese mountains have declined by one-third in 30 years, which has added to their instability.

Some research suggests that even if emissions from burning fossil fuels were low enough to prevent the planet from heating by more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) compared to pre-industrial times, the wider Hindu Kush Himalayan region could lose up to half its glacier cover — compared to 2020 levels — by the end of the century.

For Dipesh Chapagain, senior scientist at the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, there is "ample scientific evidence linking greenhouse gas emissions to global climate change, which in turn is driving glacier retreat, permafrost thaw and ice avalanches."

"These changes are increasing both the frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters in mountain regions," he added.

Chapagain has studied hundreds of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) in the Hindu Kush Himalaya region — caused when meltwater from glaciers and snow creates a lake that eventually bursts and sends extreme flash floods downstream. The number of these events per decade has increased fivefold since the 1950s.

The glacier collapse in Nepal and Tibet shares similarities to a GLOF event.



However, the former was very different as it skipped the "intermediate lake-formation stage entirely ... and directly triggered the flash flood," said Chapagain.

The avalanche also generated seismic activity equivalent to about magnitude 5.2 before the momentum of the water-rich debris flow that entered the river system saw it travel roughly 100 kilometers, noted Tielidze.

"These hazards are becoming so difficult to classify," he said, in reference to the way mountain rock, ice and water are interacting in more unpredictable ways due to climate change.

Is it possible to adapt to more extreme glacier collapse impacts?

The 2025 glacial collapse in the Swiss Alps that destroyed the entire village of Blatten resulted in one fatality. Detailed surveillance of glacier deformation and the surrounding terrain allowed



authorities to evacuate the population before the catastrophic collapse.

But this is less possible in the Hindu Kush Himalaya, which contains more than 63,700 glaciers, said Tielidze.

"In the Himalayas, we need to move beyond monitoring only individual dangerous lakes," he said. "We need integrated systems combining satellite observations, seismic detection, glacier and slope monitoring, river gauges, weather forecasts and automated warnings."

For rapidly evolving events such as the Nepal disaster, detecting seismic movement could give downstream communities "precious minutes of warning," he added.

Chapagain said the transboundary nature of glacial hazards in the Himalayas makes "cross-border and regional cooperation on disaster preparedness" just as urgent as early-warning systems.

However, currently available adaptation technology and capacity may be insufficient to "respond to a disaster on the scale we've just witnessed on the Bhotekoshi River in Nepal."

"What we have learned from this is we can adapt to climate change but not to climate apocalypse," said Shreya K.C., the Kathmandu-based advocacy working group cocordinator of the Loss and Damage Youth Coalition, in a statement.

A rapid reduction in planet-heating emissions that are at driving glacial melt and instability will need to accompany any adaptation measures.

"We cannot engineer our way out of unlimited warming," said Tielidze. "Some mountain hazards will remain unpredictable and some changes will eventually exceed the capacity of communities and infrastructure to adapt." - DW



SPORTS

Odegaard sinks Chelsea in London derby thriller; Everton hold United

The Premier League winners rallied from a goal down to get past the gritty Blues at Emirates Stadium

LONDON: Reigning Premier League champions Arsenal came from behind to beat big-spending Chelsea 2-1 in a pulsating London derby at Emirates Stadium on Sunday. Chelsea stunned the home fans by taking a second-minute lead through £117m summer signing Morgan Rogers' volley after the Gunners failed to clear Reece James' free-kick. That was the first goal Mikel Arteta's side have conceded this season.

Despite their flying start, Chelsea had not kept a clean sheet in their previous 18 Premier League games and Xabi Alonso's side were forced to withstand wave after wave of Arsenal pressure.

Emiliano Martinez denied Bukayo Saka, while Jorrel Hato and Wesley Fofana each made crucial blocks before the Gunners levelled in the 25th-minute after former Chelsea forward Kai Havertz beat Martinez at his near post with a well-placed finish. In a high-quality



match, Chelsea - who spent close to £350m in the summer transfer window - came within a whisker of retaking the lead. After captain James had forced David Raya into a save from outside the box, Pedro Neto hit the post after a wonderful solo run before Martin Odegaard settled it in the 50th minute.

The Arsenal captain beat Martinez after Havertz's clever dummy, the Norwegian's second goal in three Premier League games.

Chelsea substitute Estevao thought he had equalised right at the end of the game but Raya produced a brilliant finger-tip save as

the Blues lost for the fifth straight league game at Emirates Stadium. Gunners pass first major test

This was Arsenal's first major test against rivals who had also won their opening two matches, and they passed it after exposing Chelsea's defensive vulnerabilities. Along with Manchester City, the Gunners are one of only two teams to have a 100% winning record after three games, but their latest success came after an unexpected setback.

Arsenal's first league title for 22 years was built on their stubborn defence and there will be ques-

tions about how they conceded so early against their London rivals.

Yet the spirit and character that propelled them towards the Premier League crown last season remains strong after they were made to dig deep before celebrating an eighth straight Premier League win stretching back to last season.

Arsenal's failure to bring in an elite forward during the transfer window has led to questions, yet it was two familiar faces whose goals turned it around for Arteta's side in the shape of Havertz and Odegaard.

Meanwhile, it was a solid first start in red and white for Ezri Kon-

sa, whose £55m arrival from Aston Villa has gone under the radar, as Arsenal signed off with three points before the start of their Champions League campaign away to Napoli on Wednesday.

Chelsea finished in 10th place, a whopping 33 points behind Arsenal last season.

While Alonso's side still have plenty of catching up to do, there was evidence in this game they will compete towards the top end of the table this time.

Alonso, however, needs to get on top of his side's defensive frailties. Chelsea have not kept a clean

sheet in the league since 17 January and although they pushed Arsenal all the way, there will be disappointment about both goals they conceded.

United held by Everton

Man United, which has only one victory in three league games, conceded a stoppage-time goal to draw 1-1 with Everton after twice holding the lead. Deadline-day signing Ainsley Maitland-Niles came off the bench to make his debut and score a long-range shot into the top corner to salvage a point for his new club. - Agencies

EUROPEAN LEAGUES



Juventus end Amorim's winning start at Milan

TURIN: Substitute Federico Gatti scored a stoppage-time goal to earn Juventus a 1-1 draw against AC Milan on Sunday and extend their unbeaten start to the Serie A season.

Juve dominated the first half at Allianz Stadium and were denied by three fine saves from Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan.

The visitors took a surprise lead when Alphonso Areola became the first player to score against Juventus this season.

However, defender Gatti connected with Teun Koopmeiners' cross to emphatically head home and prevent former Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim from becoming Milan's first manager since 1958 to win his opening three league games.

Milan, for whom new loan signing Omari Hutchinson was an unused substitute, are fourth in the table, with Juventus fifth.

The game was a matchup of two traditional Italian heavyweights that failed to qualify for the Champions League. Both teams had won their opening two matches in the league this season.

Bologna scored in stoppage time to draw 2-2 with visiting Sassuolo, while Frosinone struck in stoppage time to beat Venezia 3-2. Parma and Monza drew 1-1.

Augsburg top in Germany

Augsburg conceded six minutes into the match but scored four unanswered goals in the second half to defeat Eintracht Frankfurt. Augsburg's second straight win saw the club go top of the standings on goal difference. Three other teams have also won two matches to start the season - Freiburg, Borussia Dortmund and Elversberg.

Also, Mainz routed Hamburger 5-0 on the road. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Barcelona hammer five past Valencia

VALENCIA: Barcelona maintained their perfect start to the season with a rampant 5-0 win against bottom-placed Valencia on Sunday.

Hansi Flick's side broke the deadlock after just five minutes when Lamine Yamal ran in behind the Valencia defence and converted a perfectly weighted through ball from Fermin Lopez.

Lopez doubled the lead when he rifled Anthony Gordon's lay-off into the bottom left corner of Stole Dimitrievski's goal. It was Lopez's fourth goal and Gordon's fourth assist in as many matches this season.

Barcelona began the second half as ferociously as the first when Raphinha tapped in his sixth goal of the season.

Lopez, Barcelona's best player on the afternoon, sprinted the length of the attacking half to set up the former Leeds winger for his 50th goal in the Spanish top flight.

Midfielder Pedri combined with Dani Olmo for a one-two and neatly slotted home to score Barca's fourth, before Olmo slithered between Valencia midfielders to slip Lamine Yamal through for his fourth goal of the campaign.

The match at the famous Mestalla stadium saw debuts for former Premier League players Harvey Elliott and Gabriel Jesus, who both appeared as second-half substitutes. It was Rodri's first start for Barcelona since his £65m move from Manchester City.

Barcelona capitalised on Real Madrid's shock loss to Real Betis on Friday and now sit three points clear at the top of La Liga. The Catalan side have scored 17 goals in



four matches this season, conceding just two.

"I think we played a fantastic game," Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said. "We controlled the game, we were dominant. This is

what I want to see from the team."

Valencia have earned just one point and scoring one goal in four matches this season.

There were signs of unrest from the home support, most notably a

planned protest which saw a section of Valencia fans delay their entry to the stadium before flooding to their seats in the 19th minute. This is in reference to 1919, the year the club was founded.

Barcelona now turn their attention to the Champions League when they host Feyenoord on Wednesday in the first group stage match of the campaign. Up next for Valencia is a trip to Sevilla on Friday.

Lucas Boye had a hat-trick and Mariano Diaz scored his third goal of the season as Alaves defeated Osasuna 5-2 at home for their third win and second place in the standings. Sevilla, with 10 men from the 56th, took the lead at Espanyol in the 85th but conceded deep into stoppage time for a 1-1 draw. - Agencies

AFTER LIVERPOOL EXIT

Al Hilal hire Hughes as sporting director

RIYADH: Richard Hughes has become sporting director of Saudi Arabian club Al Hilal just days after stepping down from the same post with Liverpool in the English Premier League.

Al Hilal said their board has "finalised the contract" with Hughes who took over his role after arriving on Sunday.

The club said the move was meant to "contribute to raising the quality of technical work, developing recruitment and scouting processes, and enhancing integration across all aspects related to the football sector."

Hughes had joined Liverpool in 2024 from Bournemouth and oversaw the appointment of head coach Arne Slot after celebrated manager Jurgen Klopp stepped down. Liverpool went on to win the Premier League title the following season but endured a disappointing campaign last term despite



spending around \$500 million on new signings. Slot was fired at the end of the season and replaced by Andoni Iraola.

Liverpool said on Saturday that Hughes wanted to "seek a fresh challenge." He departed less than two months after Michael Edwards exited as CEO of football for Liverpool owner Fenway Sports Group.

Al Hilal are Saudi Arabia's most successful team with 21 league titles and four Asian Championships.

In April, the Saudi Public Investment Fund sold a 70% stake in Al Hilal to Kingdom Holding Company, the firm run by Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, a billionaire businessman and member of the Saudi royal family. - Agencies

Fiorentina dismiss Grosso

FLORENCE: Fabio Grosso at Fiorentina became the first head coach fired in Europe's five biggest football leagues this season after an 0-3 start in Serie A for the Tuscan club - which is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

"ACF Fiorentina confirm that Fabio Grosso has today been relieved of his duties as First Team Head Coach," the club said late Sunday - a day after a 2-1 home loss to Torino.

A new coach was not immediately named.

Grosso, who converted the decisive penalty in Italy's shootout victory over France in the 2006 World Cup final, had been hired in June after Paolo Vanoli coached Fiorentina to a 15th-place fin-



ish last season.

Grosso is the first head coach fired this campaign in the top leagues of Italy, England, France, Spain

and Germany.

After beating Serie B side Benevento in the first round of the Italian Cup, Fiorentina were routed 4-0 by Roma in its Serie A opener then lost 3-0 to promoted Frosinone in their home league debut.

In Serie A, Fiorentina have scored one goal and conceded nine.

The poor results have come amid several celebrations for Fiorentina's centennial. The club was founded in 1926.

Fiorentina owner Rocco Commisso died in January and the club is now run by his son, Giuseppe Commisso.

Fiorentina next visit promoted Venezia on Friday, followed by an Italian Cup derby with Pisa next week. - Agencies



Antonelli takes stunning Monza victory from 19th spot on grid

The Mercedes racer delivered an inspired recovery on home soil to extend his Formula One championship lead to 66 points

MONZA: Kimi Antonelli rose from the rear of the grid to claim victory in Sunday's Italian Grand Prix, capping off a brilliant comeback drive by passing Mercedes team-mate and title rival George Russell in the closing laps on Sunday. Antonelli started his home race down in 19th position after an engine penalty, with Russell on

the front row of the grid, but the youngster rapidly climbed to the front of the field via a devastating blend of raw pace and smart overtaking. The Italian extended his championship lead to 66 points. Antonelli's performance is the second furthest back a driver has ever come from to win a grand prix after John Watson's victory from

22nd on the grid in the 1983 United States Grand Prix West. It was a statement performance from the 20-year-old, who remarkably was on Russell's tail and challenging for victory within 16 laps of the start. "Unbelievable! I'm so happy," said Antonelli. "I could never have imagined to be here today, but we managed to pull it off. It's a dream coming true. What an incredible day. I couldn't do it without my team, family and everyone who supports me. Still a few races to go, so we're going to keep our head down, but now we're going to enjoy today." Red Bull's Max Verstappen took the final podium place ahead of the McLarens of Lando Norris and

Oscar Piastri with Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton sixth. A mid-race Virtual Safety Car played its part in the outcome, when Antonelli opted to pit under caution for a fresh set of medium tyres, and Russell stayed out on used hards, which gradually faded and made his life more difficult. Aside from a brief trip through the gravel as he attacked Russell late on, Antonelli could not be faulted across 53 laps at the Autodromo Nazionale Monza - making another huge statement in his quest for the 2026 world title. Russell had to settle for second place, crossing the line some four seconds behind Antonelli, while Red Bull's Max Verstappen completed the podium finishers in a de-

termined display that also featured several bold passes. Lando Norris beat McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri to fourth via their own close fight, with Lewis Hamilton the lead Ferrari in sixth after team-mate Charles Leclerc crashed heavily at the final corner on the second lap of the race. After his breakthrough pole position, and a promising start, Pierre Gasly struggled to keep up with the front-runners and fell to seventh, as Arvid Lindblad, Franco Colapinto (who did well to recover from an off-track moment) and Yuki Tsunoda completed the points. Gabriel Bortoleto and Nico Hulkenberg were next up in their Audi machines, the latter was involved in a Turn 4 scrap with

Liam Lawson that the stewards reviewed, while Carlos Sainz took 13th for Williams. The aforementioned Lawson ended his second substitute weekend for Red Bull in P14, ahead of Haas pair Ollie Bearman and Esteban Ocon, Albon in the other Williams and the Cadillacs of Sergio Perez and Valtteri Bottas. Both Aston Martin drivers joined Leclerc on the sidelines later in the race - Fernando Alonso returned to the pits with suspected car damage and Lance Stroll pulled off the track due to a hydraulics issue. In a back-to-back sequence of races, F1 moves straight on to Madrid for the Spanish Grand Prix over the weekend of September 11-13. **Agencies**

FORMER SKIPPER

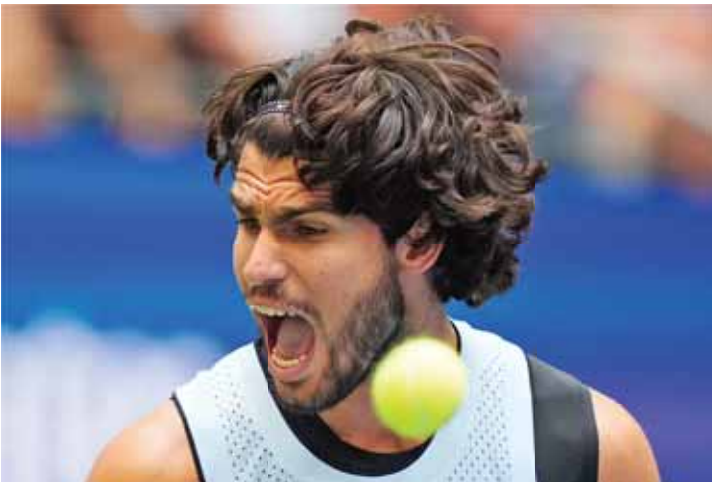
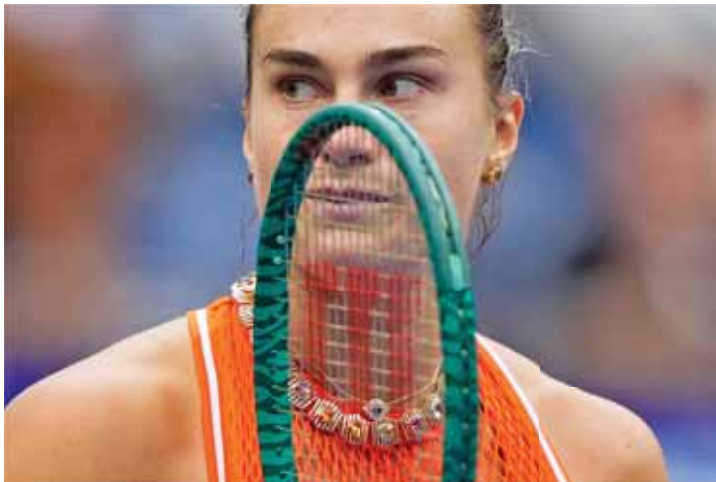
Kevin Pietersen joins England white-ball coaching team



LONDON: Former England batsman Kevin Pietersen has been named a specialist mentor to help England's men white-ball team succeed at next year's World Cup in southern Africa, the England and Wales Cricket Board said on Monday. Pietersen will join up with England men's white ball head coach Brendon McCullum for September's IT20 ODI series against Sri Lanka and will go on the team's white-ball tours to Australia and South Africa in the winter, home series against Pakistan and New Zealand in the summer and the 50-over World Cup co-organized by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia October 4 - November 21. "Putting on the England uniform again for the first time since 2014 is a profound honor and a deeply special moment," Pietersen said. "We have an incredibly talented white-ball squad, and I am excited to get in the trenches and work relentlessly hard with

these players to maximize their potential. To be a part of Brendon's think tank over the next 12 months is a fantastic opportunity, and I cannot wait to get started." McCullum welcomed the move. "I'm particularly excited for our batters to get the opportunity to work with him," he said. "(He) has a unique understanding of what it takes to perform at the highest level, which will be hugely valuable to our players. We've always respected each other and had a strong appreciation for what the other brings to the game, so I'm really looking forward to working together." Pietersen scored more than 5,500 runs for England in 136 ODIs and 37 T20 matches. In his 104 test matches, he scored 8,181 runs. He was dismissed from the England team after an embarrassing 5-0 loss at the 2013-14 Ashes series in Australia. Pietersen was a mentor for Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League last year. **Agencies**

US OPEN



Defending champions Sabalenka and Alcaraz book spot in quarters

NEW YORK: Defending champions Aryna Sabalenka and Carlos Alcaraz are back to the quarter-finals at the US Open, and they made it look easy on Sunday. The top-ranked Sabalenka solved some early struggles holding serve and overpowered Taylor Townsend 6-4, 6-3 on Sunday. Alcaraz also advanced in straight sets, beating Tommy Paul 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 in the second match at Arthur Ashe Stadium. "I'm happy with that performance," Alcaraz said. Townsend broke Sabalenka three times in her first four service games as she looked to spring the upset. Sabalenka found a groove, regained her confidence and did not lose another point after falling behind 3-1 in the second set. "I love matches like that because it was really challenging," Sabalenka said. This was the first meeting be-

tween Sabalenka and Townsend, who gave her opponent fits in the first set but struggled to find her own rhythm. Next up for Sabalenka is Wimbledon winner Linda Noskova, who needed six match points to get past Marta Kostyuk 7-5, 5-7, 6-4. "I played a couple of matches against her in the past, which also wasn't the easiest matches," Sabalenka said of Noskova. "Really aggressive style of the game. Serving really well, playing super fast. You've got to stay really low to be able to handle that power and energy." **Alcaraz cruises ahead** Playing his first tournament following a four-month absence because of a right wrist injury, Alcaraz said last week he would not be coming back if he could not play like his usual self. The 23-year-old Spaniard has

made good on that so far, dropping just one set through four rounds. Asked if he thinks he is back to form, Alcaraz responded, "I think so." The US Open is bringing that out in him. "I'm just trying to enjoy my time onAlcaraz will play Tuesday against American Ben Shelton, the No.8 seed who swept Stefanos Tsitsipas on Sunday night in his strongest performance of the tournament. Townsend and Paul were among the 10 Americans to reach the men's and women's round of 16. That is the most in the fourth round at any Grand Slam in nearly a quarter-century, going back to the 2002 US Open, when there were 11. The five US men - Paul, Shelton, Learner Tien, Frances Tiafoe and Alex Michelsen - are the most at a major since eight in 1995 at Flushing Meadows.

At 20, Tien is the youngest American man in the US Open fourth round since Andy Roddick in 2002. Tiafoe knocked off seventh-seeded Daniil Medvedev 7-6 (1), 6-4, 7-6 (6) to improve to 10-0 in his career at Louis Armstrong Stadium, which he called "the people's court." Michelsen beat Tomas Martin Etcheverry 7-6 (6), 6-4, 6-4. Michelsen and Tiafoe will meet in the quarter-finals Tuesday, guaranteeing an American man in the semifinals. No US men's player has won a Grand Slam since Roddick in New York in '03. There will also be an all-American matchup in the women's quarter-finals. No.3 Jessica Pegula got there by beating No.16 Sorana Cirstea and will face 26th-seeded Emma Navarro, who ousted No.21 Anna Kalinskaya in straight sets. **Agencies**

ODI SERIES

Bavuma to lead SA against Australia

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa have announced as close to a full-strength squad as they have available to open their home summer, with an ODI series against Australia. Regular captain Temba Bavuma will lead the team which, in the clearest indication that they are part of the plans for the 2027 World Cup, includes David Miller and Quinton de Kock. Neither Miller nor de Kock are currently centrally contracted but both were at this year's T20 World Cup and continue to play in franchise leagues around the world. With Kagiso Rabada out of the



series as he recovers from a hamstring injury, Gerald Coetzee, who has not played an ODI since the 2023 World Cup will make his return. Coetzee has battled a series

of injuries in the last three years but played for South Africa A against England Lions in June and against Bangladesh A recently. He will be joined by Marco Jansen, Lungi Ngidi, Corbin Bosch, Kwen Maphaka and Otneil Baartman in a six-man pace pack. **South Africa squad:** Temba Bavuma (capt), Otneil Baartman, Corbin Bosch, Matthew Breetzke, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Tony de Zorzi, Bjorn Fortuin, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Kwen Maphaka, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Ryan Rickelton, Tristan Stubbs. **Agencies**

THREE-MATCH TEST SERIES



Labuschagne in Australia squad to face South Africa

SYDNEY: Out-of-form Marnus Labuschagne has been named in the Australia squad for next month's three-Test tour of South Africa. No.3 Labuschagne, 32, who was born in South Africa, has failed to score a century since 2023 and struggled in two Tests against Bangladesh last month. Having scored one, 31 and four, he was then left out of Australia's squad for three one-day internationals in Zimbabwe and another three in South Africa. It will be Australia's first Test

series in South Africa since the infamous 'Sandpapergate' ball-tampering scandal in 2018. Australia travel to Durban for the first Test on October 9 before the series moves to Gqeberha and Cape Town. **Australia squad:** Pat Cummins (capt), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cooper Connolly, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Michael Nesar, Matthew Renshaw, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Beau Webster. **Agencies**

ROUND-UP

Lexus RZ500e offers exclusive ownership benefits in Oman

The RZ500e is Lexus’ first dedicated Battery Electric Vehicle marking a new chapter in a journey toward electrification that began in 2005

MUSCAT: Lexus Oman brings a dedicated set of ownership privileges to the all-new RZ500e, the brand’s first SUV Battery Electric Vehicle in the region. As part of the ongoing Lexus Benefits Campaign “Crafted Beyond Measure...Rewarded Beyond Expectations,” customers who take home the RZ500e can enjoy one year of vehicle registration, a 5-year or 50,000 km service package covering five services at 10,000 km intervals and NUKHBAH Loyalty Points worth OMR 100, valid until 7 October 2026. (Terms & Conditions Apply)

The RZ500e is Lexus’ first dedicated Battery Electric Vehicle marking a new chapter in a journey toward electrification that began in 2005. At the heart of the RZ500e is a newly developed battery and motor system, offering stronger performance, greater efficiency and a longer driving range, while a low centre of gravity and reinforced body structure bring added stability and confidence to every drive.

The RZ500e’s DIRECT4 all-wheel-drive system works in the background to keep power balanced across all four wheels, delivering smooth acceleration and



a stable, assured feel through corners. Inside, the cabin is engineered for calm: extensive sound insulation keeps road and wind noise to a minimum, allowing occupants to enjoy a quiet, refined ride from the moment they step in. The interior

continues this sense of understated luxury, with premium materials and a thoughtfully laid-out cabin. Beyond its refined design and quiet cabin, the DIRECT4 system continuously adjusts torque between the front and rear axles,

adapting to speed, steering angle and road conditions to keep the drive stable and precise, whether accelerating or cornering. This is paired with Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management, which enhances control and confidence

in changing conditions. Comfort is equally considered, with Middle East-exclusive air conditioning tuning, including IR cut glass and seat ventilation, ensuring the cabin stays cool and comfortable even through Oman’s peak summer heat.

On the outside, the RZ500e carries Lexus’ signature spindle design, giving it a sleek, modern silhouette. As Lexus’ first SUV BEV in Oman, the RZ500e is now available at Saud Bahwan Automotive showrooms.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Bank Muscat and Meethaq Islamic banking’s ‘Back to School’ event draws strong family turnout at Muscat City Centre



MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to build on their commitment to community engagement, taking part in initiatives that matter to families across Oman. This was reflected once again in the strong turnout of customers and visitors at the “Back to School” event, held recently at Muscat City Centre, where children took part alongside their parents in a series of engaging activities. The event was held to celebrate the start of the new academic year with children, drawing wide participation from young visitors. A variety of entertainment activities, competitions and games were organised throughout the event, including dedicated Math and Science activities, while a range of gifts were distributed to participants. During the event, visitors also had the opportunity to learn more about the wide range of banking services, products and facilities

offered by Bank Muscat both conventional and Islamic, including its various savings and current accounts, finance products and the wide range of cards, in addition to its digital banking services that allow customers to manage their accounts conveniently, anytime. On this occasion, Bank Muscat also offered a special rate on its Shahadati educational loan, with a reduced interest rate of 3.75% available until 30 October 2026. Designed specifically to help families cover the cost of private school fees, professional certifications and summer courses, Shahadati reflects the Bank’s continued commitment to supporting customers and easing their children’s educational journey. On the Islamic banking front, visitors had the opportunity to explore Meethaq’s Sharia’a-compliant products and services, including children’s savings accounts and savings plans designed to help customers plan towards achieving their financial goals related to

education and other objectives for achieving financial freedom. Visitors also learned about Meethaq’s personal financing solutions, designed to support customers in meeting their immediate needs related to education and medical financing, in addition to various financing solutions and cards with multiple feature and benefits. These products and solutions are developed in accordance with regulations issued by the Central Bank of Oman, and undergo a series of Sharia’a reviews and supervisory procedures by Meethaq’s Sharia’a Supervisory Board, ensuring compliance with the principles of Islamic Sharia’a while addressing customers’ financial needs and aspirations. Committed to maintaining their leading role in the banking sector, Bank Muscat continue to develop its products and services on an ongoing basis, in line with current and future developments and in a manner that meets customers’ aspirations.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LEARNING

Indian School Rustaq opens new AI, science and technology labs

RUSTAQ: Indian School Rustaq marked a significant milestone in its journey towards academic excellence, innovation and technology-enabled learning with the inauguration of its AI and Innovation Lab, Composite Science Lab, Language and Communication Lab, and Junior Computer Lab. The laboratories were inaugurated on the evening of 15 August in the presence of an august gathering comprising the Chairman of the Board of Directors, members of the Board of Directors, the Education Advisor to the Board of Directors, the President and distinguished members of the School Management Committee, former SMC Presidents of ISML, parents, teachers and students. The programme commenced with a prayer and the national anthems, followed by the welcome address delivered by Dileep Kumar, Convener of the School Management Committee. This was followed by an address by the President of the School Management Committee, Harikrishnan, who shared his vision and thoughts for the continued growth and progress of the school.

The newly established laboratories were formally inaugurated by Chairman Syed Ahmed Salman, marking a new chapter in the school’s commitment to technology-enabled and experiential learning. Adding great value to the occasion, students showcased their technological skills in the AI and Innovation Lab through Mechatron and Arduino-based robotic models, including an obstacle-detecting car, light-following car and distance-alert system, along with a live 3D printing demonstration. In the Composite Science Laboratory, students of Classes VIII and IX demonstrated experiments on exothermic reactions, catalysts and natural acid-base indicators, reflecting their ability to apply scientific concepts through hands-on learning. The laboratory is fully equipped with models, chemicals and scientific apparatus, providing students with the necessary resources to develop and



strengthen their scientific skills in alignment with the new CBSE pattern, which emphasises experiential and practical learning. The Language and Communication Lab was also inaugurated by the Chairman in the presence of the dignitaries and school community. During their visit, the dignitaries interacted with students, who confidently demonstrated the lab’s learning portal and explained how it supports the development of their listening, speaking, pronunciation and communication skills. The newly built Junior Computer Lab was subsequently inaugurated by the dignitaries, further strengthening the school’s technology-enabled learning facilities. In his address, Salman shared his vision for the school and emphasised the importance of modern learning environments in nurturing innovation and future-ready skills.

A special highlight was the interactive session with the Chairman, where parents, students and staff engaged in meaningful discussions, shared their views and sought guidance. The programme also featured a welcome dance, group song and the “Unity in Diversity @ ISR” traditional attire display. Students further presented hand-painted artworks to the distinguished guests as tokens of appreciation. The event concluded with the Vote of Thanks by Principal Abu Hussain, who expressed gratitude to the dignitaries, school management committee, teachers, parents and students for making the occasion a memorable success. The inauguration stands as a proud milestone for Indian School Rustaq, reflecting its continued commitment to innovation, practical learning, technology-enabled education and the holistic development of its students.



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