

OMAN
Observer
DAILY



AN 8-PAGE SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ON INDIA'S 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY IS DISTRIBUTED WITH TODAY'S EDITION

VOL. 45, NO. 275
PAGES 20 | BAISAS 210



2010000387405

IN BRIEF

HM’S GREETINGS TO
PRESIDENT OF INDIA

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Droupadi Murmu of the Republic of India, on the occasion of her country’s Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere wishes for continued progress and prosperity for the friendly Republic of India, hoping that the relations between the two countries would see further growth and expansion in various sectors to serve the interests of both countries.

HORSES DAZZLE IN
AL ASHKHARAH FEST



A traditional horse show (Al Aardha) was held in the Niyabat of Al Ashkharah in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, as part of Al Ashkharah Festival. The event saw wide participation from horse owners from across the Sultanate of Oman, as well as visitors and tourists from outside Oman.

DETAILS ON P2

47 DEAD IN INDONESIA
AFTER 7.7 EARTHQUAKE

At least 47 people were killed after a magnitude 7.7 earthquake and dozens of aftershocks struck off eastern Indonesia on Saturday, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB) said in its latest statement. Rescue teams have yet to reach Nagekeo, the region closest to the epicentre, after landslides blocked roads and disrupted communications, officials said. “The quake was massive, the shock was so strong,” said Nona, a 51-year-old resident of Talibura, a village in East Nusa Tenggara. “There were 13 of us inside the house and we all ran to save ourselves.”

DETAILS ON P6

HM’s greetings conveyed to President of Chile

SANTIAGO: President José Antonio Kast of the Republic of Chile received Ambassador Abdulghaffar bin Abdulkareem al Balushi, who presented his credentials as non-resident Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Chile, at the Presidential Palace in the capital Santiago, on Saturday.

The President of Chile welcomed the ambassador, wishing him success in his new duties and expressing his hope for further development and growth in the bilateral relations between the two



The ambassador conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the President.

friendly countries.

During the meeting, the ambassador conveyed the greetings and best wishes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the President of the Republic of Chile, along with His Majesty’s wishes for continued health and happiness and continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Chile.

The President of the Republic of Chile asked the ambassador to convey his sincere greetings and wishes to His Majesty, along with his wishes to him for continued good health. — ONA

No oil pollution impact on
Masirah Island’s shores

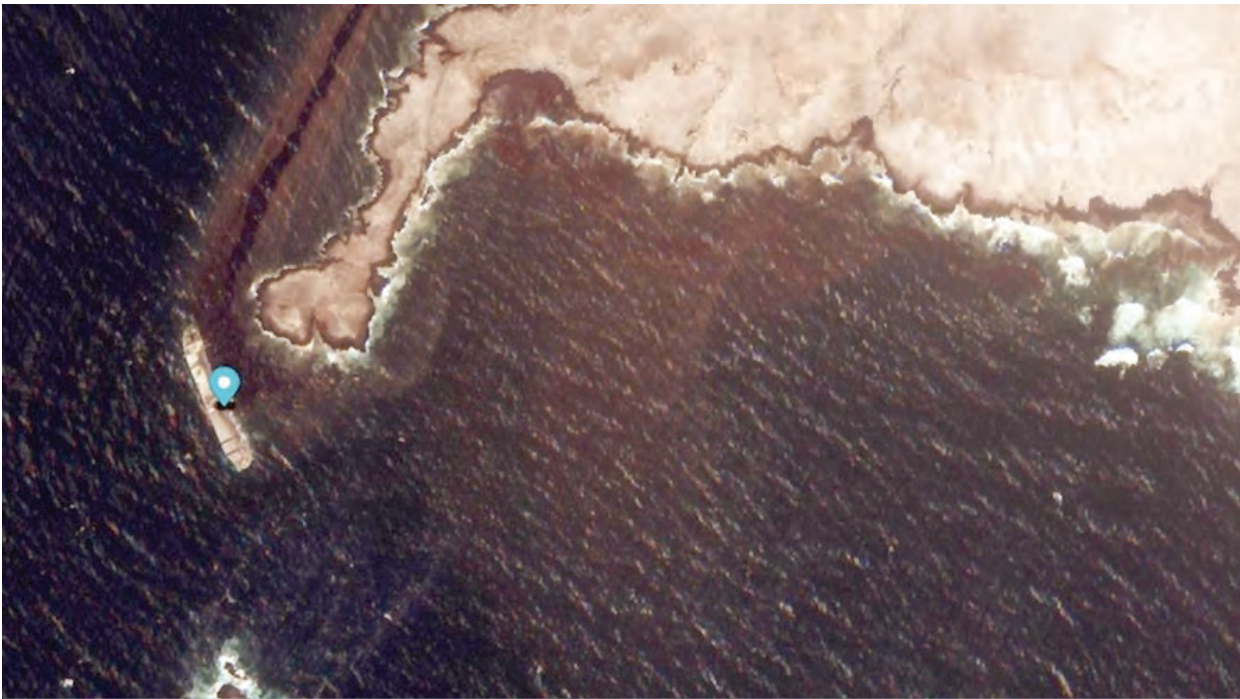
1 2 - k m s h o r e l i n e a f f e c t e d i n R a s M a d r a k a h a r e a

THE Environment Authority continues to carry out monitoring, follow-up and response operations regarding the oil pollution. The latest field results indicate that the extent of shorelines affected by pollution in the Ras Madrakah area is approximately 12 km, with response operations currently under way on site, while no significant traces of pollution have been observed at other locations.

Monitoring results to date confirm that no impacts resulting from the oil pollution have reached the shores of Masirah Island, the southern part of which falls within the zone of potential influence.

With regard to the oil slick at sea, monitoring data and updated models indicate that it continues to move along its observed trajectory in the open sea, in a south-easterly direction from the Wilayat of Masirah towards the high seas, with ongoing tracking of its movement in accordance with marine and meteorological variables.

The Environment Authority, in coordination with the relevant entities, continues to carry out monitoring, field response and assessment of developments, and



The oil pollution has reached the shores of Masirah Island.

Monitoring results to date confirm that no impacts resulting from the oil pollution have reached the shores of Masirah Island

is taking the necessary measures to mitigate environmental impacts and protect the marine and coastal environment.

As part of the efforts made by the basic services sector, Dr Mansour bin Talib al Hinai, Chairman of the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) and Head of the Basic Services Sector, made a field

visit to the Wilayat of Masirah in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate and the Wilayat of Al Duqm in Al Wusta Governorate, on Saturday.

During the visit, the head of the basic services sector inspected and followed up on measures taken by the water sector and the waste management sub-sector of the basic services sector. — ONA

Tourism sector’s contribution to GDP at 2.9%

MUSCAT: The tourism sector in the Sultanate of Oman continued to achieve positive growth indicators during the first quarter of 2026, recording an increase in its contribution to the gross domestic product, with its role growing as one of the main sectors supporting economic diversification and a key contributor to enhancing the contribution of non-oil activities to the national economy.

Data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information showed that the contribution of the tourism sector to the gross domestic

product at current prices rose to 2.9 per cent by the end of the first quarter of 2026, compared to 2.6 per cent during the same period of 2025, while the direct GDP of tourism rose to RO 293.8 million, recording a growth of 6.5 per cent.

While the total tourism output at the end of the first quarter of this year reached RO 610.4 million, an increase of 9.7 per cent, the total direct added value of the sector also increased to RO 286.4 million, with a growth rate of 6.6 per cent.

The data indicated the continued expansion of the sector’s



contribution to economic activity, supported by the growth recorded by most tourism-related activities. Accommodation services achieved the highest contribution rate to the total direct added value of tourism at 24.8 per cent, followed by travel agency and booking services at 19.7 per cent, then transportation services at 18.7 per cent, and restaurant services at 18.3 per cent, indicating the diversity of growth sources within the sector and the benefit to economic activities related to tourism.

At constant prices, the direct GDP

of tourism reached RO 279.9 million, compared to RO 272.3 million during the same period last year, with a growth rate of 2.8 per cent, while the sector’s contribution to GDP remained stable at 2.9 per cent, reflecting the continued real growth of the sector alongside the growth recorded at current prices.

The results are an extension of the upward trajectory witnessed by the sector in recent years, as the contribution of tourism to the GDP rose from 1.6 per cent in 2020 and 2021 to 2.9 per cent by the end of the first quarter of 2026. — ONA

OMAN

SHORTTAKES



The event showcased equestrian skills, including horsemanship, horse handling, traditional racing, horse taming, tent pegging, and other skills.

Traditional equestrian shows dazzle at Al Ashkharah festival

AL ASHKHARAH: A traditional horse show (Al Aardha) was held in the Niyabat of Al Ashkharah in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, as part of Al Ashkharah Festival. The event saw wide participation from horse owners from across the Sultanate of Oman, as well as visitors and tourists from outside Oman.

Al Aardha traditional horse show was held as part of the festival organisers' commitment to showcasing Omani heritage in a vibrant form, providing a platform for horsemen and folk groups to demonstrate their skills and traditions to the public. The event aimed at introducing and preserving this heritage show while also enriching visitors' experience, stimulating the local economy and supporting tourism.

The event was organised by the Al Ashkharah Festival's committee in cooperation with the Al Asayel Equestrian Club in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali. Over 100 horses and riders from the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali and several other wilayats in the Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, in addition to riders from the Al Sharqiyah North Governorate, took part in the shows.

The event showcased equestrian skills, including horsemanship, horse handling, traditional horse racing, horse taming, tent pegging, and other equestrian skills. Children and junior riders also participated in the equestrian displays, giving the younger generation an opportunity to attend and participate in this heritage and contributing to the continuity and transmission of equestrian skills across generations.

The event also featured a number of accompanying folk and traditional arts, including Al Razha, Al Bar'a, Al Azi, and maritime arts, which together form a tableau combining horsemanship with artistic heritage. — **ONA**

The ancient Omani engineering marvel moving water beneath wadis

STAFF REPORTER
IZKI, AUGUST 15

Long before modern civil engineering formalised the mechanics of fluid dynamics, ancient Omani builders devised an ingenious solution to a recurring challenge: carrying precious water across roaring, flash-flood-prone Wadi beds without modern power, pumps, or concrete.

Known locally as the Gharraq Fallah (dunker-emerger) system—and in modern textbooks as an inverted siphon—this subterranean mechanism allows gravity-fed irrigation channels, or aflaj, to cross vast depressions. By steering water deep underground

beneath seasonal torrents, ancient builders ensured uninterrupted flow to desert communities while keeping infrastructure safe from flood damage and evaporation.

According to Dr Said bin Shannan al Khalasi, Assistant Professor at the Unesco Chair for Aflaj Studies at the University of Nizwa, Al Qaswat is a deep, continuously flowing Dawoodi falaj. Extending nearly 6.4 kilometres from its mountain groundwater source, it produces up to 139 litres per second. Its history spans over a millennium, with references found in 11th-century classical manuscripts and a rare 17th-century document signed by Imam Nasir bin Murshid al Yaarubi.



The Al Qaswat Falaj in the Wilayat of Izki.

The true engineering feat, however, lies in how the falaj negotiates its greatest natural obstacle: Wadi Halfayn, one of Oman's largest and most powerful flood channels. Traditional

Omani irrigation relies on a continuous downhill slope. When Al Qaswat's builders reached the steep, sprawling trench of Wadi Halfayn, bridging it above ground was impossible—floods

would regularly sweep away aqueducts. Instead, they built the Gharraq Fallah.

Using local stone bonded with Sarooj—a traditional, highly durable Omani hydraulic mortar made of specially fired clay—builders constructed a sealed conduit running directly beneath the riverbed. The system relies on the communicating vessels principle: The Gharraq (Dunker): Water enters a vertical intake shaft on one bank. Subterranean Transit: Driven by hydrostatic pressure, the water surges down and through a sealed subterranean tunnel beneath the wadi bed.

The Fallah (Emerger): Because the source origin sits at a higher elevation than the

exit, pressure forces the water upward through an outlet shaft on the opposite bank, resuming its open-air flow.

“While other ancient civilisations, like the Romans, built massive elevated stone aqueducts, Omani engineers chose the opposite path by hiding the channel underground,” notes Dr Al Khalasi. “It required a sophisticated grasp of water behaviour.” Today, Al Qaswat's ancient siphon remains fully operational. Utilising a time-sharing system based on the Athar (a 30-minute unit), it reliably divides water between the villages of Saddi and Harat al Raha, sustaining over 4,000 residents through pure physics and centuries-old Omani ingenuity.

Over 900,000 visit OAA Museum since its launch

STAFF REPORTER
MANAH, AUGUST 15

THE Oman Across Ages Museum has surpassed 909,000 visitors from its opening through the end of 2025. Over the same period, the landmark cultural institution successfully organised 294 events and 184 educational and cultural programmes aimed at diverse segments of society, solidifying its role as a premier destination for cultural tourism.

Located in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, the museum narrates Oman's rich history and civilisational journey using interactive audio-visual elements, and immersive technologies. The institution aims to document national memory while making Omani history accessible to future generations through an engaging mix of historical substance and contemporary exhibition techniques.

Al Qasim bin Abdullah al Fahdi, Director of the Communications and Media Department at the museum, highlighted the institution's pivotal role in safeguarding national heritage. He stated that the museum serves as a bridge connecting Oman's ancient



Education remains a central pillar of the museum's mission.

civilisational footprint with its renewed modern renaissance, emphasising national identity, human development, and innovation.

“Reading history allows generations to understand past transformations and utilise those lessons to build the future, reinforcing values of hard work, responsibility, and innovation,” Al Fahdi noted.

Education remains a central pillar of the museum's mission. Through interactive workshops and learning programmes

tailored for youth and students, the museum directly links Omani educational curricula with hands-on museum experiences. Facilities such as the Knowledge Center (Hisn Al Shoomooh Library) provide extensive research resources, while interactive technologies foster critical thinking and research skills.

Al Fahdi emphasised that these efforts align with the strategic goals of Oman Vision 2040 across culture, education, and tourism. By

Campaign on consumer protection held in Dhofar

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, AUGUST 15

Document your contracts and keep your receipts for a safe and enjoyable journey while enjoying the khareef holiday.

The Directorate-General for Consumer Protection in Dhofar Governorate has been teaching consumer rights and protection through a series of campaigns throughout the holiday season. The Consumer Protection concluded its awareness activities at the Children's Theatre in Salalah Gallery, following a series of programmes that combined education and entertainment, including competitions and interactive segments, to promote consumer awareness concepts among children through simplified and engaging methods.

The programme had interactive segments, competitions, and awareness activities to reinforce children's awareness of their rights and improve their consumer behaviours in a style that blends knowledge with



The programme had interactive segments, competitions, and awareness activities to reinforce children's awareness of their rights and improve their consumer behaviours in a style that blends knowledge with entertainment.

entertainment. This year, an important part of the series of awareness campaigns has been the collaboration with Dhofar Municipality with the event “Mobile Food Safety Laboratory 2026”, which saw diverse awareness segments

targeting various age groups, contributing to enhancing consumer awareness through interactive and innovative methods.

The campaign included awareness-raising in sign language in collaboration with the Omani Society for Persons with Disabilities, alongside the deployment of virtual reality (VR) technology to deliver awareness using innovative interactive methods.

The Consumer Protection Authority continued its awareness efforts within the #YourAwarenessIsYourSafety campaign, where it participated in the events of the Advanced Scouts to raise awareness of consumer rights.

The Consumer Protection Authority is also continuing its regulatory efforts within the #YourAwarenessIsYourSafety campaign by monitoring stores selling and tailoring school uniforms and abayas and verifying compliance with the applicable regulations and requirements, thereby contributing to the protection of consumer rights and the enhancement of market stability.

بنك دحفار
BankDhofar



Lionel Messi,
Official Mastercard Ambassador

Visit [bankdhofar.com](#)

Limited-edition
Messi Mastercard.

Get your branded card
only in 2026



Get your card today
For more information



SHORT TAKES



Shaikh Syed Fayyaz Ali Shah, Founder and President of the Oman Pakistan Friendship Association, at the meeting.

Oman-Pakistan Friendship Association marks Pakistan Independence Day

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUGUST 15

The Omani Pakistani Friendship Association (OPFA) organised a distinguished gathering to commemorate Pakistan’s Independence Day, celebrating the enduring bonds of friendship, goodwill, and cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The event was attended by Senior Government Officials, Officials of the Embassy of Pakistan, members of the OPFA Board, and prominent members of the Pakistani community.

This event comes to provide an important platform to celebrate the shared values, cultural heritage, and historic relationships between Oman and Pakistan, while promoting greater cooperation, understanding, and meaningful engagement at the community and institutional levels.

Speaking on the occasion, Shaikh Syed Fayyaz Ali Shah, Founder and President of the Oman Pakistan Friendship Association, expressed his sincere appreciation to the distinguished guests and reaffirmed OPFA’s commitment to further strengthening the bonds of friendship between the two brotherly countries. He also expressed his profound appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, for His Majesty’s visionary leadership and continued commitment to fostering friendship, understanding, and cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

He emphasised that such occasions provide an important platform to celebrate the shared values, cultural heritage, and historic relationship between the peoples of Oman and Pakistan, while promoting greater cooperation, understanding, and meaningful engagement at the community and institutional levels.

The Omani Pakistani Friendship Association continues serving as a bridge between the two nations and offers consistent support to initiatives that promote friendship, cultural exchange, economic cooperation, and stronger people-to-people relations.

Corporate Waqf model can power social investment

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, AUGUST 15

COMPANIES SHOULD move beyond one-off sponsorships and consider jointly establishing a waqf institution to create a lasting source of community funding, the Chairman of Dhofar Municipality has said.

Dr Ahmed bin Mohsen al Ghassani made the proposal during the Sustainability Forum 2026, organised by Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) and hosted by the Port of Salalah.

“Many companies wait until an organisation approaches them for sponsorship. They have a sponsorship budget, pay an amount here and another there, and the matter ends there,” Al Ghassani said. “I regard this as a comfort zone. We need to move to another stage.” He called on companies to use existing sponsorship allocations to develop community initiatives that address identified social needs while also supporting their strategic objectives.

“How can we develop initiatives that respond to the community’s needs and, at the same time, to the objectives of these companies?” he asked.

Al Ghassani proposed a waqf institution as one possible mechanism for making corporate social spending more sustainable.

“One company could undertake to establish a waqf institution, or perhaps a group of companies could establish one together,” he said.

A waqf institution manages and



Dr Ahmed bin Mohsen al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, speaks at the Sustainability Forum 2026 in Salalah on Friday.

Many companies wait until an organisation approaches them for sponsorship. They have a sponsorship budget, pay an amount here and another there, and the matter ends there...We need to move to another stage.

DR AHMED
AL GHASSANI
DHOFAR
MUNICIPALITY
CHAIRMAN

invests endowed assets, directing the resulting returns towards defined community purposes. Such a model could shift part of corporate giving from repeated annual expenditure towards a lasting source of social funding.

The speakers did not announce a new institution, capital commitment or implementation timetable at the forum. The proposal remains an option for further discussion among companies and public authorities.

Haitham bin Salem al Salmi, chief executive of MSX, said the exchange already held disclosure data that could help policymakers determine how corporate social spending is directed.

MSX’s environmental, social and governance disclosure framework comprises 30 indicators. Twenty-nine are harmonised with other GCC exchanges, while MSX added

an indicator covering corporate social responsibility and community investment.

Al Salmi said the additional indicator was introduced after questions arose following Cyclone Shaheen in 2021 about the amounts allocated to social responsibility by public joint-stock companies and companies affiliated with Oman Investment Authority.

Oman already has a legal framework for establishing waqf institutions. The published regulations require a bank certificate showing capital of at least RO100,000, a fixed headquarters in the Sultanate of Oman and articles of association consistent with the Waqf Law and its regulations.

A 2025 amendment to the executive regulations of the Income Tax Law added cash and in-kind donations to registered waqf institutions to the categories deductible when calculating taxable income.

According to the Tax Authority, total qualifying donations may be deducted up to a ceiling of 5 per cent of gross taxable income for the tax year.

Sector-specific precedents already exist in Oman, including the Health Endowment Foundation, ATHAR, and the Endowment Foundation for Education Support, Siraj.

Al Ghassani’s proposal would bring the corporate sector into this model, potentially combining company resources, MSX disclosure data and public development priorities.

DHO FAR MUNICIPALITY STEPS UP INSECT CONTROL AT KHAREEF SITES

SALALAH : Dhofar Municipality is stepping up its annual programme to maintain the governorate’s urban and natural environments and control seasonal insects, particularly the biting midge known locally as arnoot. The programme is intended to protect public health and provide a safe and comfortable environment for visitors from Oman and abroad during the Khareef season.

The municipality is running advance field campaigns at major natural attractions and springs, including Ayn Sahalnoot, Ayn Razat, Ayn Hamran, Ayn Tabraq



and Ayn Athum, as well as Wadi Darbat and public parks.

Field surveys and regular site inspections help technical teams identify priority areas and adjust

operations as conditions change.

Control measures include periodic spraying, particularly at locations with high moisture levels. The municipality said the approved pesticides are applied in accordance with public health and environmental safety requirements.

The municipality has also installed smart traps at strategic locations, including Wadi Darbat and several natural springs.

It said the traps are intended to reduce insect numbers without disrupting visitors or affecting the surrounding landscape.

Embassy of India celebrates 80th Independence Day with grandeur

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUGUST 15

The Embassy of India in Muscat celebrated India’s 80th Independence Day with patriotic fervour and witnessed grand community participation, as over a thousand members of the Indian diaspora and friends of India gathered at the Embassy premises early this morning to mark the occasion.

The ceremony commenced with a rendition of India’s National Song, Vande Mataram, performed by students of Indian School Al Maabela, setting the tone for a morning of national pride and celebration.



Ambassador Prashant Pise speaks after unfurling the flag in Muscat on Saturday.

Ambassador Prashant Pise unfurled the Indian Tricolour in the presence of community members and friends of India under the theme “Surya Path Tiranga”, an initiative by the Government of India featuring a global digital relay of the Indian Tricolour as part of the Independence Day 2026 celebrations.

Following the flag hoisting, the Ambassador addressed the gathering and shared key excerpts from the President of India’s Address to the Nation, reflecting on India’s remarkable journey and aspirations for the future.

A curated cultural programme showcasing the diverse talent

enthralled the Indian community in Oman. The occasion also recognised the invaluable contribution of the Indian workforce in Oman, representing the diversity of India and symbolising the important role of the community in strengthening India- Oman ties. In the run-up to the 80th Independence Day under the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, the Embassy organised a Painting Competition, Quiz Competition and Bharat Ko Janiye (BKJ) Quiz, Photography Competition “India Through My Lens” and Phad Painting Workshop and “My India, My Story” initiative inspired by the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.



خريف
ظفار
KHAREEF
DHO FAR

- 1

PRIME LOCATION & TERRAIN: Khabarart is located in the western part of Taqah (Dhofar) and sits up to 850 metres above sea level.
- 2

KHAREEF ATTRACTION: During the season, the region becomes a hotspot due to its cool climate, dense fog, and clouds rolling over the peaks.
- 3

HISTORIC WATER SPRINGS: It features key natural springs — including Ankhar, Za', Shanz, and Inshaf — which historically served as primary drinking sources for locals.



The place is known for the Baidhah—a wild species featuring single-stemmed white flowers resembling lilies, with starchy tubers growing beneath a thick brown skin underground

- 4

CULTURAL FLORA (BAIDHAH PLANT): In October, the mountains bloom with the white-flowered Baidhah plant, whose subterranean tubers are slow-cooked.
- 5

MOUNTAIN HONEY: Thanks to its abundant wild flora and flowering trees, Khabarart is well-known for producing high-quality natural mountain honey.
- 6

ECOTOURISM POTENTIAL: Visitors praise its untouched landscape and serene atmosphere, highlighting Khabarart as a promising destination for ecotourism.

The region’s high peaks offer panoramic views over the surrounding mountains and valleys, while its mild climate and cool breezes create an ideal setting for hiking and outdoor leisure.

KHABARART ENRICHES ECOTOURISM IN DHO FAR



historically vital to local communities, serving as primary year-round sources of drinking water.

While modern water infrastructure has evolved, these springs have retained their importance as natural heritage sites. Visitors today flock to them to enjoy the flowing waters, shade trees, and tranquil atmosphere. Local authorities highlight their potential for sustainable tourism through environmental conservation and the introduction of eco-friendly visitor amenities.

During a tour of the Khabarart region to capture the seasonal atmosphere, Oman Newspaper spoke with several visitors who expressed their admiration for the area’s pristine nature and varied landscape.

Mohammed bin Khamis al Alawi, from the Wilayat of Sur, described his trip as one of his best experiences yet. He noted that the vast green stretches across the peaks, combined with wide valleys and cool weather, give Khabarart a uniquely captivating atmosphere. He added that exploring the region offered a serene escape, making it a must-visit Khareef destination.

Said bin Masoud al Rashdi from Wadi Bani Khalid highlighted the area’s untouched, open nature. He shared that the diverse terrain allowed him to spend hours exploring, taking photos, and taking in the scenery, adding that he looks forward to returning in future seasons.

Similarly, Mohammed bin Amir al Mashaikhi from Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan noted that the unique combination of valleys, mountain peaks, water springs, and low-hanging clouds in a single area gives Khabarart a rare ecological appeal tailored for ecotourists.

Khabarart takes on a distinct character in October, when its high plains bloom with the Baidhah — a wild species featuring single-stemmed white flowers resembling lilies, with starchy tubers growing beneath a thick brown skin underground.

The Baidhah is deeply rooted in the culinary heritage of Dhofar’s residents. Historically, locals harvested the tubers and prepared them using traditional slow-cooking techniques over specialised pits, reflecting a unique cultural practice tied directly to the region’s natural environment.

Khabarart is also well-known for its high-quality natural mountain honey, benefiting from a rich abundance of wild trees and flowering plants that provide an ideal habitat for beekeeping.

Combined with its vibrant floral diversity, Khabarart represents a harmony of natural beauty and cultural heritage, positioning it as a key destination for boosting ecotourism in the Wilayat of Taqah and across Dhofar Governorate.

STAFF REPORTER

KHABARART in the Wilayat of Taqah — one of the standout natural destinations in the Dhofar Governorate — is taking centre stage during the Khareef season. The area is renowned for its soaring mountain heights reaching up to 850 metres above sea level, natural springs, sprawling valleys, diverse vegetation, and breathtaking sights of fog and clouds sweeping through gorges and touching mountain peaks.

Located at the far western end of Taqah, Khabarart features a rugged mountainous landscape and rich ecological diversity. These attributes have made it a favourite spot for nature lovers, photography enthusiasts, and visitors seeking relaxation, particularly during Khareef Dhofar Season when the highlands are carpeted in lush greenery and enveloped in dense fog.

The region’s high peaks offer panoramic views over the surrounding mountains and valleys, while its mild climate and cool



breezes create an ideal setting for hiking and outdoor leisure.

The landscape is especially magical in the early morning hours, as layers of fog pool in the valley beds and ravines. Throughout the day, the scenery constantly evolves with the shifting clouds. Towards the end of Khareef, light northerly winds keep the fog trapped inside the valleys, making the clouds appear to flow gently between the mountains in a striking natural display. Natural springs are among Khabarart’s most prominent landmarks. Ankhar, Za’, Shanz, and Inshaf were

PUBLIC NOTICE



This is to inform all concerned that Mr. Paul Thomas (EMP No. MET 1552) holder of Indian Passport No. V5017067 who was employed as Finance Manager with Middle East Trad. & Cont. LLC (a sister concern of Abu Hatim Group of Companies) has ceased to be an employee of our organization with effect from 15.07.2026.

He is no longer authorized to represent the company or enter into any transactions on our behalf.

Middle East Trad. & Cont. LLC (a sister concern of Abu Hatim Group of Companies) shall not be responsible for any acts, dealings, or commitments made by him after the above date.

For Abu Hatim Group of Companies
Management of Abu Hatim Group

SHORTTAKES



The Mawhiba project, which focuses on community service, won first place.

FUTURE LEADERS CAMP CONCLUDES WITH 70 STUDENTS

SALALAH: *The Future Leaders Camp 2026 concluded at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah, with the participation of more than 70 students from Grades 7 to 9.*

Organised by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Programming Academy, the week-long camp featured 14 student projects competing in a programme designed to foster innovation and entrepreneurship among young people.

The camp focused on developing personal and leadership skills, encouraging teamwork and innovation, and introducing students to entrepreneurship while helping them turn their ideas into potential future projects and opportunities.

The Mawhiba project, which focuses on community service, won first place. Mada, which developed AI-powered glasses to assist visually impaired people in their daily lives, came second, while Sanad Dhofar, a real estate reservation application, took third place.

The projects demonstrated the students' ability to use innovation and modern technologies to develop practical ideas and solutions that address community needs. — ONA

Tourism projects advance in Al Hamra and Bahla

AL DAKHILIYAH GOVERNORATE is advancing a number of development, tourism and heritage projects in the wilayats of Al Hamra and Bahla, with completion rates ranging from 40 per cent to 94 per cent, as part of efforts to enhance tourism and maximise the economic potential of the two wilayats.

The projects include the Eastern Mountain Oasis, the rehabilitation and development of Misfat Al Abriyeen, the rehabilitation of Bahla Market, and the development of the Jibreen entrance and Basya area.

Shaikh Mahmoud bin Rashid al Saadi, Acting Governor of Al Dakhiliyah, stressed the importance of direct field follow-up to monitor implementation, address challenges in coordination with the relevant authorities, and ensure quality and adherence to approved timelines.

He said the governorate is directing projects based on the comparative advantages and strengths of each wilayat to enhance their developmental and economic impact, support tourism and investment, create opportunities for small and medium enterprises, and increase local value.

The Eastern Mountain Oasis project has exceeded 80 per cent completion and is being developed on an area of about 10,000 square



The Misfat Al Abriyeen rehabilitation and development project is 40 per cent complete.

The project has a direct field follow-up to monitor implementation and address challenges in coordination with the relevant authorities

metres. The project includes an investment restaurant, outdoor theatre, shaded seating areas, prayer rooms, pedestrian walkways and open spaces. It aims to promote mountain tourism, improve the visitor experience and create an attractive investment environment. Local content during the implementation phase has reached 85 per cent.

The Misfat Al Abriyeen rehabilitation and development project is 40 per cent complete. It includes a glass bridge and pedestrian walkway, as well as improvements to pathways, lighting, signage and parking areas. The project is expected to improve visitor services and traffic flow while preserving the village's

architectural and heritage character.

In Bahla, the rehabilitation and development of Bahla Market has reached about 94 per cent completion, at a cost exceeding RO 477,000. The project includes the rehabilitation of shopfronts and facades, restoration of traditional architectural elements, and improvements to pathways and services. A tourist corridor will also link the historic mosque with Bahla Fort, a Unesco World Heritage Site, helping boost tourism and commercial activity and support artisans and SMEs.

Meanwhile, the Jibreen entrance and Basya area development project is 40 per cent complete. It includes upgrading facilities, parking areas, lighting and seating, as well as improving the road leading to Salut Centre. The governorate reaffirmed its continued monitoring of the projects and coordination with relevant authorities to address challenges, ensure quality and sustainability, and maximise their intended developmental and economic returns.

The projects form part of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate's programme to monitor development projects across its wilayats and align them with local resources and needs, supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. — ONA

FSQC STEPS UP FISHERY SAFETY CHECKS

MUSCAT: As part of ongoing efforts to monitor developments related to oil pollution in the marine environment, the Food Safety and Quality Centre (FSQC) is continuing field monitoring, investigations and inspections to assess the potential impact on fishing grounds and verify the safety of fishery products. The Centre



The FSQC is continuing field monitoring and inspections.

has intensified precautionary measures, including monitoring fish landing sites, processing plants and fish markets; tracking landing movements and the sources of catches; collecting samples for laboratory testing; and forming technical teams to monitor shorelines and landing sites in governorates along the Arabian Sea. — ONA

Traditional Games Season concludes

SALALAH: *The 2026 Omani Traditional Games Season concluded on Al Dahariz Beach in Salalah, on Saturday.*

Organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in conjunction with Khareef Dhofar Season, the three-day event aimed to promote cultural and sporting awareness, introduce visitors to the Sultanate of Oman's rich heritage of traditional games and sports and revitalise local communities through interactive activities that contribute to preserving traditional games.

It also aimed to support the tourism sector by offering a unique event as part of the Khareef Season, attracting visitors and stimulating investment in Dhofar.

The tournament saw clubs from across the governorate participating in three traditional games.

— ONA



Ministry of Finance





Invest in Oman's Future

Steady & Attractive Returns

Auction of **₹ 80 Million Bonds (with Up to ₹ 20 Million Greenshoe Option)**, 7 Years at 4.50% Per Annum

Government Development Bonds

On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Oman announces the **84th issuance of Government Development Bonds (GDBs)** to be auctioned. The **84th issuance of GDBs** will be issued on **25 August 2026**, carrying a coupon rate of **4.50%** per annum for a maturity period of **7 years (maturing on 25 August 2033)**. These Bonds will be auctioned and priced on **23 August 2026**. Investors may apply for these Bonds through licensed commercial banks by completing the application form.

Security of Capital

The GDBs are direct and unconditional obligations of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman.

Steady Returns

Interest shall accrue from the date of issuance and will be paid semi-annually on **25 February and 25 August** of every year until maturity. The first payment will be made on **25 February 2027**. Interest payments will cease once the Bond matures.

Liquidity

The bonds will be listed and can be traded before maturity in the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) at the prevailing market price.

Collateral Advantage

The Bonds can be used as collateral security to obtain loans from any licensed commercial bank.

Who Can Invest?

The 84th issuance of GDBs is offered to all categories of investors, residents and non-residents (irrespective of their nationalities).

How to buy the bonds?

Investors may obtain bonds through any licensed commercial bank operating in the Sultanate of Oman, upon the submission of an eligible application form. Investors must provide their MCD Investor Code in the application form.

Bank Account Details

The investor must provide the same Bank Account details registered with Muscat Clearing and Depository Co. S.A.O.C. (MCD).

MCD Investor Code

Anyone without an MCD Investor Code can obtain it from MCD's website (www.mcd.gov.om) or via the Oman Stocks app at least one day before applying through the commercial bank.

For any enquires:
Tel: +968 24822222
E-mail: mcd.support@mcd.om

You may also contact us via the "Contact Us" tab on the company's website.

Subscription & Auction Period

84th

Issuance

Opens: Sunday, 16 August 2026

Closes: Thursday, 20 August 2026

Auction: Sunday, 23 August 2026

The minimum subscription amount

₹ 100

To view the prospectus for the 84th issuance of GDBs, please visit the following websites:

Ministry of Finance | www.mof.gov.om Central Bank of Oman | www.cbo.gov.om

Contact the Central Bank of Oman (Market Operations Department) or any commercial licensed bank for details.

Tel: +968 24777145 / 24777832 / 24777635 E-mail: mod@cbo.gov.om

P.O Box 1161, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman

محافظة مسقط
Muscat Governorate



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (28/2026)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following bidding :

Sr.	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Document Fee		Deadline for Obtaining Docs.	Deadline for Inquires Submission	Deadline for Submission
			LO/RE	SMEs			
1	09/2026	Landfill Site Treatment - Al Mabela Landfill	500/- OMR	200/- OMR	12/09/2026	30/09/2026	12/10/2026

Registered companies with Muscat Municipality which are Specialized in above bids are invited to participate as per the following procedures:

1. Company registration with Muscat Municipality must be valid to obtain the bid document.
2. International companies that are not registered in Muscat Municipality's Supplier Register shall submit a formal confirmation that they will complete the registration process in accordance with the applicable procedures if the project is awarded to them.
3. Pay the specified document fee for the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality's Bank account as follows:

Bank Muscat 0423010702710024

4. A copy of the transaction's receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (**BID.QS@mm.gov.om**), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name, office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commercial registration number of the company) and formal confirmation by international companies.
5. The tender document will be provided to the company via email.
6. **2:00 PM** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents.
7. Submission details will be shares later.

NOTES:

1. Companies which are not registered in Muscat Municipality or their registration has been expired shall register through the municipality's website (**www.mm.gov.om**).
2. For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality through this email (**crm_support@mm.gov.om**).
3. If the bidders have any inquiries regarding the scope of the work, they have to sent their inquiries through the following e-mail (**DSM@mm.gov.om**).
4. **10:00 AM** on the above submission mentioned dates, is the last timing for receiving bids. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason.
5. Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Displaced Palestinians walk past tents and destroyed buildings near the beachfront in Gaza City. — AFP

KUSHNER TO VISIT ISRAEL TO BRIDGE GAPS ON GAZA PLAN

TEL AVIV: US President Donald Trump’s envoy and son-in-law Jared Kushner will visit Israel next week in hopes of bridging gaps on a Gaza plan rejected by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, officials said. Kushner and Nickolay Mladenov, the high representative for Gaza of Trump’s so-called Board of Peace, tasked with implementing the deal, will visit both Israel and key mediator Egypt.

The trip comes after Netanyahu publicly rejected a 15-point plan announced by Mladenov in which Hamas agreed to hand over its weapons to a new Palestinian governing committee in Gaza. A Board of Peace official said Kushner and Mladenov hoped for “constructive conversations” on advancing Trump’s overall peace plan, which began with the October 2025 declaration of a ceasefire that has reduced but not ended Israeli strikes in Gaza.

The latest part of the Gaza plan, to which Hamas agreed in late July, would start a phased Israeli withdrawal from much of the Strip, according to an initial version released by the Board of Peace. Israel carried out deadly air strikes in Gaza on Wednesday and Thursday, breaking a lull of over a week following Trump’s announcement of the latest stage of the deal. — **AFP**

TALIBAN GOVT MARKS FIVE YEARS RULING AFGHANISTAN



Afghans ride on a Taliban vehicle during the fifth anniversary celebrations of the Taliban’s return to power, in Herat. — **AFP**

KABUL: The Taliban government celebrated five years of ruling Afghanistan on Saturday, with supporters taking to the streets. Afghans packed into cars decorated with flags and drove around Kabul on a day that government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said “will be written in golden lines in the history of Afghanistan”.

Hundreds gathered around a square beside the former US embassy, while fresh flowers were thrown from military helicopters over a parade of athletes that featured only men because women are banned from sport in Afghanistan.

The number of checkpoints was increased on Saturday in the capital, where some of the vehicles abandoned by foreign forces, such as Humvees, were driven in convoy. Afghans also rallied in other key cities including southern Kandahar and western Herat where stuntmen performed in the streets.

Zia Ahmad Takal, a foreign ministry spokesman, invited countries to “come here, invest, and make extensive use of the available economic opportunities” in Afghanistan. GDP per capita is in decline, due to more than six million Afghans arriving from neighbouring states in three years, while the World Bank estimated real growth reaching 4.8 per cent. — **AFP**

INDIA’S MODI WOOS YOUTH WITH FREE COACHING, AI TRAINING

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday his government would provide free online coaching lessons for competitive exams, weeks after massive youth-led protests forced the education minister to resign. Modi said the initiative was aimed at easing the financial burden on millions of families caught up in the country’s fiercely competitive education system.

The leader made the announcement while speaking

from the ramparts of New Delhi’s imposing 17th-century Red Fort to mark the country’s independence. “We have decided to provide free online coaching for various competitive examinations for our youth. We have the digital public infrastructure, and we have highly talented teachers and educators,” he said.

The move comes after nationwide protests triggered by the leak of a key medical entrance examination paper and a series

of other recruitment scandals. Modi said the free online classes would ease the financial burden on “poor and middle-class families”. “The competition surrounding coaching classes has become a huge burden for middle-class families... (Students) can stay close to their families, receive their care, and avoid placing an additional financial burden on them,” he said.

Modi announced plans to train several million young people in artificial intelligence tools. — **AFP**

Indonesian rescuers face quake debris as toll rises

JAKARTA RESCUERS combed through debris for survivors on Saturday after a powerful earthquake struck off Indonesia’s eastern Flores island, killing at least 47 people, according to disaster officials. The national disaster management agency (BNPB) raised the death toll from 40 late on Saturday, and rescue official Fathur Rahman said 50 people were injured in the 7.7-magnitude quake. Suharyanto, who leads the BNPB, said earlier that people were trapped in several buildings. “These will be the initial targets of the disaster response teams,” said Suharyanto.

Nearly 160 houses, dozens of educational and health facilities and other public buildings were damaged when the earthquake struck the popular tourist island in Indonesia’s east, the BNPB reported. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said preparations were underway to bring aid to some 2,000 people in temporary shelters. The government sent 50,000 aid packages weighing a total of 275 tonnes to the area, and European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen offered help from the bloc’s Copernicus Earth observation satellites. “Europe stands ready to deploy Copernicus, our eyes in the sky, to support search and rescue efforts. Indonesia, we stand with you,” she wrote on X.



Rescuers inspect a heavily damaged building after an earthquake in Sikka, Maumere, Indonesia. — **Reuters**

While a tsunami warning was lifted, authorities urged people not to return to damaged buildings for fear that aftershocks may bring them down. Hundreds remained outside hours later as dozens of aftershocks shook the island. Waves of up to 1.6 metres were reported in some coastal regions of Flores

“I have never felt an earthquake this big,” Yulian Juita Ekalia, who lives in Ruteng city more than 100 kilometres west of the epicentre, said hours after the tremor. “It felt like we were on a trampoline; it was really scary,” said the 37-year-old university lecturer, who was jolted awake at around 5:30 am. “As I rushed to get outside, everything in the house fell down: the television, my son’s trophies, the dish racks, suitcases on top of the wardrobes. When I got outside, my son and neighbours were already there, screaming in fear.”

Rescue official Fathur said that the focus was on locating victims who may be buried under rubble, but rescue efforts have been complicated by landslides cutting off roads. Many Flores inhabitants were left without electricity and telecommunications.

Residents in Nagekeo, an area close to the epicentre, raced for higher ground as the sea retreated early on Saturday — a possible sign of an approaching tsunami, journalists witnessed.

While a tsunami warning was lifted, authorities urged people not to return to damaged buildings for fear that aftershocks may bring them down. Hundreds remained outside hours later as dozens of aftershocks shook the island, the strongest measured at a magnitude of 6.1. Waves of up to 1.6 metres were reported in some coastal regions of Flores, according to Indonesia’s BMKG geological agency.

The epicentre of the shallow quake was located just off the north coast of the island, US and Indonesian authorities said. The affected areas have few, if any, high-rise buildings. A second, deep onland quake was measured at a magnitude of 6.9 near Pematangsiantar on Sumatra island — thousands of kilometres away — some 12 hours after the Flores tremor. There were no initial reports of damage or casualties, and no tsunami alert was issued.

Indonesia experiences frequent earthquakes due to its location in the Pacific “Ring of Fire”, an arc of intense seismic activity stretching from Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin. Flores was struck by a 7.7-magnitude earthquake in 1992. — **AFP**



LEBANON REPORTS 11 DEAD IN ISRAELI STRIKE

ANSAR: Lebanon said Israeli strikes in the south killed 11 people, including three children, on Saturday, the deadliest raids since deals in June eased hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel’s military said the strikes in the early morning were in retaliation for an attack by the group on its troops in south Lebanon.

They came as Israel and Lebanon were set to hold an eighth round of US-sponsored direct negotiations early next month in Rome. The sides agreed a framework deal at talks in Washington in June, but Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said Saturday’s “violations are a clear message on the negotiations process and American efforts aiming to implement this agreement”.

Hezbollah said the Israeli attacks “will be met with an appropriate response”, urging Lebanese authorities to abandon “the humiliating path of direct negotiations”. Lebanon’s state-run National News Agency (NNA) said that Israel “escalated its attacks on the south” early on Saturday, reporting an air strike on a home in the village of Ansar and a “series of air strikes targeting the Ali al Taher ridge”, a strategic hill overlooking the Nabatieh area. It later reported another strike on the southern town of Deir Zahrani. — **AFP**

SEVERE FLOODING

Monsoon rains submerge villages in Myanmar



Severe monsoon flooding has swamped villages and paddy fields in central Myanmar, forcing people out of their homes, including those already displaced by war. The UN said that since July, severe monsoon flooding in Sagaing, Rakhine, Irrawaddy and Kachin states has affected an estimated 390,000 people — 230,000 in Sagaing alone. Heavy rainfall and river flooding in Sagaing had forced more than 11,400 people from 3,220 households to relocate to flood relief centres. — **AFP**

PARTY OVERTURNED

5 dead in Turkish wedding road crash



A Turkish minibus taking a family to a wedding party overturned on Saturday, killing five people, including two children, and injuring 11, authorities said. The vehicle, transporting a family to a wedding in the southeastern city of Mus, was at Lice in Diyarbakir province when a tyre burst and the driver lost control, NTV television reported. The dead children were aged 10 and four, while three of the injured were in critical condition, authorities said. — **AFP**

REPRISAL OPERATIONS

At least 20 killed in new Nigeria violence



More than 20 people were killed in violence between the rival Kambari and Fulani communities in central Nigeria. A lawmaker representing Borgu Federal Constituency, Jafar Muhammad, confirmed the clashes, calling for the deployment of security forces. “More than 20 people were killed on Friday, and these killings are believed to have been carried out by local groups,” he said. “We need heavily armed security forces to bring the situation under control.” — **AFP**

SHORT TAKES



A firefighter walks amid debris at a burnt-out hypermarket following an overnight attack, in the Donetsk region. — Reuters

UKRAINE SAYS IT HIT RUSSIAN ROCKET CENTRE LINKED TO STARLINK

KYIV: Ukraine said on Saturday its long-range strikes had hit a Russian military airfield and a rocket centre that Kyiv says supports Russia’s nascent Starlink-style satellite internet network. President Volodymyr Zelensky said Flamingo cruise missiles struck the rocket facility, about 900 km from Ukraine’s border, as part of Kyiv’s campaign to pressure Moscow to end the more than four-year war by targeting sites deep inside Russia. “It is important that Russia’s war potential be reduced. Peace is needed, and this must be evident in Russia - through concrete damage to specific facilities,” he said in a post on X. He said the airfield hosted aircraft used to attack Ukraine. Ukraine’s General Staff said direct hits were recorded at both the airfield in Russia’s Nizhny Novgorod region and the Progress rocket and space centre in Samara region. It said the strikes had sparked fires at both sites. The General Staff said the Samara plant produces rockets used to launch satellites for the Rassvet broadband network, which Russia is developing as an alternative to SpaceX’s Starlink. Starlink operates in Ukraine, but not in Russia, and has given Kyiv a major advantage in drone operations and battlefield communications. — Reuters

EARTHQUAKE ROCKS SPAIN’S GRANADA



Spain’s cherished tourist hotspot of Granada was in shock on Saturday after a rare 5.0-magnitude earthquake woke residents in the middle of the night and damaged buildings. But officials confirmed no casualties or serious damage, notably to the southern city’s Alhambra palace, a Unesco-listed jewel of medieval Islamic architecture. The tremor took place shortly after 1:00 am with its epicentre in the town of Alhendin. — AFP

AUSTRALIAN STATE TO START GUN BUYBACK SPURRED BY BONDI ATTACK

SYDNEY: Australia’s most populous state will start a gun buyback scheme in November, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Saturday, launching a reform promised after last year’s mass shooting at Bondi Beach. A father-and-son duo are accused of opening fire on a celebration in New South Wales state last December, killing 15 people in one of Australia’s deadliest modern mass shootings. New South Wales authorities pledged a suite of gun control reforms in the wake of the attack, including a buyback scheme.

Albanese said the state’s gun buyback would start on November 2, offering cash for eligible handguns, shotguns and rifles. “We must do everything we can to make sure the antisemitic terrorist attack in Bondi doesn’t happen again,” he said. “That includes meaningful nationwide gun reform.” New South Wales has already passed laws restricting individuals to owning no more than four guns, with some exemptions for farmers. The buyback scheme will be offered to gun owners who have more weapons than allowed under the new rules. They will be paid

as much as \$700 (Aus\$1,000) depending on the type of gun, with costs split between the federal and state governments. State Premier Chris Minns said hundreds of thousands of guns could be returned. “We want those guns handed in, compensated for and safely destroyed,” he said. “This is a big undertaking, but the principle behind it is simple: fewer dangerous guns in our community means a safer New South Wales.” Australian authorities initially announced a nationwide gun buyback rolled out across all states and territories. — AFP

Europe doubles efforts to face record heat, wildfires

THE European Union deployed three helicopters and two water bomber aircraft to tackle a wildfire raging in eastern Belgium on Saturday, the bloc’s crisis commissioner said, after Belgium requested emergency reinforcements to control its biggest blaze in decades. The wildfire in the High Fens, Belgium’s largest nature reserve, has been burning since Friday, with local firefighters, farmers and the army deployed to battle the blaze. By early Saturday afternoon, it had burned 1,600 hectares, local media reported, citing statistics from the governor of Liege, the local province. That would make the fire the biggest on record in Belgium, surpassing a blaze in 2011 which burned nearly 1,400 hectares, data from the European Forest Fire Information System showed.

European countries including Belgium suffered their fifth heatwave of the summer this week, fuelling the hot and dry conditions that support wildfires. Scientists have confirmed human-caused climate change is increasing the “fire-prone” weather conditions that allow wildfires to spread faster and burn longer. The EU coordinates the deployment of extra resources pooled from European countries, when a country requests emergency help. The aircraft sent to Belgium on Saturday were from the Czech Republic, Sweden and the Netherlands, EU Crisis Commissioner Hadja Lahbib said in a post on X. Firefighters



A French aircraft douses retarding liquid over trees during a wildfire in a forest near Luglon, south-western France. — Reuters

and farmers were pumping water from local lakes to battle the blaze, a spokesperson for the infrastructure department for the region of Wallonia said on Saturday. Meanwhile, water levels on the Rhine river fell to record lows overnight as a heatwave across Europe continued, data from Germany’s inland navigation agency WSV showed on Saturday, meaning most transport was shifted to trucks and trains. WSV data showed the water level gauge at the chokepoint of Kaub near Koblenz fell to 6 centimetres late on Friday and was 8 cm early on Saturday. WSV data had shown 10 cm for Kaub early on Friday, which was also below the previous record level of 25 cm recorded in 2018. The river is about 1 metre deeper than the gauge, which has been traditionally used as

an indicator to measure local levels. Kaub levels were last above the 78 cm level in mid-July. As a rule of thumb, if the water level gauge at Kaub falls below 78 centimetres for 30 straight days, as was the case in 2022 and 2018, industrial production falls by 1%, according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy. The Rhine is one of Europe’s most important transport arteries, needed to ship chemicals, commodities, fuel and other goods. German companies have started to report disruption from low Rhine water levels. Chemical producers, utilities, steelmakers and agricultural traders have warned of higher costs, transport bottlenecks and reduced production. Separately, wildfires in England and Wales have hit a record level, fire chiefs said

on Friday, warning that rescue services were battling to keep up with rising risks a day after fires raced from tinder-dry fields to engulf houses on the hottest day of the year. Britain has not faced anything like the devastation wrought across Spain, France and elsewhere in Europe this year, but as the country endures the fifth heatwave of what is expected to be its hottest summerever, it is dealing with more outbreaks of fire than ever before. Phil Garrigan, chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council, said the number of wildfires had now exceeded last year’s total of 1,017. “We’ve well surpassed the figures from the previous high of 2025,” Garrigan said, without detailing this year’s latest figure. “We’re only in the middle of August, and the wildfire season seems to extend way into November at this moment in time. So, we’re anticipating this being not just a record-breaking year, but a considerable increase on the number of wildfires previously experienced.” Prime Minister Andy Burnham urged the public to take extra care during a visit to the town of Stourbridge in central England, one of several locations where on Thursday homes were destroyed and hundreds of people were evacuated. “Britain is a tinderbox right now,” he warned. “This is not over by any means. We’ve got 37 fires smouldering around the country.” Burnham said fire services were working alongside the military in some areas and that he would hold a summit with emergency services to make sure they had the resources they needed. — Reuters

S Korea president proposes talks with North to end Korean War

SEOUL: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung proposed talks with North Korea to formally end the long-running Korean War, as Pyongyang deepens ties with Russia while asserting its status as an “irreversible” nuclear state. The two Koreas remain technically at war because their 1950-53 conflict, triggered by a North Korean attack, ended with an armistice rather than a peace treaty. Lee made the proposal in his speech at a ceremony marking the anniversary of Korea’s liberation from Japan’s 1910-45 colonial rule. “Let us put down our intentions to threaten each other and begin discussions to end the long-running war as the directly involved parties,” Lee said in his speech. “Through this, it may also be possible to discuss effective measures to halt the advancement of North Korea’s nuclear capabilities,” he added. Lee’s proposal came as North Korea this week denounced upcoming annual US-South Korean military drills, warning of stronger deterrence measures. Pyongyang

Lee’s proposal came as North Korea this week denounced upcoming annual US-South Korean military drills, warning of stronger deterrence measures. Pyongyang has also recently been bristling over Japan’s gradual military build-up in the Pacific



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung (centre L) and his wife Kim Hea Kyung wave the national flags during a ceremony to celebrate the 81st anniversary of the Korean Liberation Day. — AFP

has also recently been bristling over Japan’s gradual military build-up in the Pacific — firing off two missiles in as many weeks after Tokyo pledged to up its defence capabilities with a “sense of urgency and crisis”. North Korea has

repeatedly declared itself an “irreversible” nuclear state since a 2019 summit between Kim and US counterpart Donald Trump in Hanoi collapsed over the scope of denuclearisation and sanctions relief. South Korea’s dovish President Lee

has reversed the stance of his hawkish predecessor since taking power in Seoul in June 2025, offering nuclear-armed Pyongyang talks without preconditions. In July, South Korea’s unification minister even claimed Seoul had abandoned its campaign prioritising pressure on the North to dismantle its nuclear weapons, focusing instead on halting the expansion of Pyongyang’s nuclear activities. The hermetic leadership of North Korea has yet to respond to Lee’s repeated offers, and has instead bolstered military ties with Russia. Analysts say Pyongyang is receiving financial support, food, energy and military technology from Moscow for supplying troops and munitions for Russia’s war in Ukraine. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is expected to visit Russia later this year, potentially to discuss further weapons supplies to Moscow. Washington, Seoul’s key security ally, stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea to bolster the country’s defences against threats from Pyongyang. — AFP

OPINION

How your job influences your personality



DR HAMED
AL SINAWI

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at SQU Hospital

WAS having coffee with colleagues from different specialties when one of them asked the questions, do you think our jobs affect our personality and how we think. The neurologist volunteered to answer first. He said that he often meets an elderly neighbour at the mosque, and seeing how she walks with slow and shuffling steps, he started to look at his hand for any tremors which may suggest a movement disorder. The maxillofacial surgeon told us that when he attends social gatherings, he observes people’s jaws and tries to guess who is related to home from the shape of their jaws. They both looked at me to share my answer. I explained that more often I get into therapist mode when my son shares his day in the office, without noticing I find myself asking, “Can you tell me more, or how did

that make you feel?”We often think of our jobs as something that simply fills our time. But what if our work is quietly shaping who we are? What if the person we become is influenced not only by our personality, but also by how we earn a living? Some sociologists once suggested an interesting idea about ancient Japan, where growing rice required people to work closely together. Entire communities had to share water, follow careful schedules, and depend on one another. The theory is that this kind of farming helped shape certain national qualities such as patience, teamwork, and discipline. Whether or not this idea is completely true, it points to a bigger truth. Our jobs do more than use our skills; they also train our minds. Spending every day teaching children

We often think of our jobs as something that simply fills our time. But what if our work is quietly shaping who we are?

may encourage one set of habits. Working in advertising may encourage another. Being a therapist may encourage yet another. The qualities that help us succeed at work can slowly become part of who we are in the rest of our lives. This gives us a reason to be a little more understanding of other people. Sometimes the difficult parts of a person’s character may not be fixed traits; they may be shaped, at least in part, by what that person’s job asks of them day after day. If we notice ourselves becoming impatient, suspicious, angry, or exhausted, it may help to ask an unusual question. Who is my job teaching me to be? We do not develop our personalities alone. They are shaped, little by little, by the environments we spend time in. And sometimes, the changes we most need in our lives may begin with the work we do.

EU DARES DREAM OF ENLARGEMENT ‘SUCCESS STORY’

CAMILLE CAMDESSUS

No meddling, but fingers crossed: as Iceland votes on whether to resume entry talks with the EU, Brussels is watching from afar in the hope the outcome can deliver a rare enlargement ‘success story’ for the bloc. Residents of the small volcanic island in the North Atlantic have until August 29 to answer a simple question: “Should Iceland reopen accession negotiations with the European Union?” The country of 400,000 people has wrestled with the issue before: Iceland applied to join in 2009 after a financial crisis devastated its economy. Brussels and Reykjavik spent years in painstaking negotiations before Iceland ultimately shelved its application in 2015 with a simple letter. Then came Greenland. US President Donald Trump’s threats to take control of the autonomous Danish territory have resonated strongly in neighbouring Iceland, which relies on the United States and Nato for its defence. The Icelandic authorities have since put EU membership back on the table, making the case that joining the 27-nation bloc would be beneficial in the current geopolitical context. A referendum proposal was launched in the spring, not on membership per se, but simply at this stage on reopening talks. A poll conducted by newspaper DV and published in late July put the “yes” camp ahead by about 53 per cent - enough to kindle hope in EU circles that Iceland may be back on track to join the fold. “I think they want a success story” to reinvigorate the European project, said one Brussels-based source, speaking on condition of anonymity. The bloc last expanded in 2013 when it admitted Croatia - its ranks briefly swelling to 28 member states until the UK’s Brexit vote to leave, which it did in 2020. The years since have been marked by halting progress among EU candidates in the western Balkans, with Montenegro and Albania seen as closest in line to join, and the opening of a vast accession process with Ukraine. For many European capitals, Iceland looks like something of a dream candidate. More than 2,000 kilometres from Brussels as the crow flies, the island is already closely integrated with the EU. It belongs to the Schengen free-travel area and also participates in the European Economic Area (EEA), meaning it already applies a large share of EU legislation. But for all that, don’t expect EU officials to jump on a plane to Reykjavik waving little European flags. Icelandic authorities are understood to have explicitly asked Brussels to keep a low profile during the campaign to avoid accusations of interference. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot is among the European officials who have visited Iceland in recent weeks. At a joint news conference with his Icelandic counterpart, he simply stressed Reykjavik had “nothing to lose” from negotiating with Brussels. — AFP

How the phone industry tricks us into upgrading

THERE is something dishonest about the way phone manufacturers promote their latest models. The advertised improvements, if there are any at all, are slight and the increased price includes the billions spent on advertising to persuade us that the phone we bought only one year ago is now a museum piece. That is the trick of the modern phone market. It does not simply sell a device. It sells dissatisfaction. Each year the same show begins again. A new model is announced with great confidence, polished pictures and serious voices telling us that this time the future has arrived. It is faster, thinner, lighter and more advanced than the last one. But for most ordinary users, the changes are insignificant. A little more battery life if you’re lucky, a slightly better screen maybe, a modest increase in speed and perhaps one or two new but unnecessary features which you’ll never use. These are refinements, not revolutions. Yet the advertisers dress them up as though they are indispensable improvements. The aim is plain enough. You are made to feel that the fully functioning phone already in your pocket is somehow lacking. A device that still makes calls, sends messages, checks email and runs ordinary apps is treated as if it were a worn coat that ought to be thrown away. This is not because the phone has failed. It is because the industry’s exorbitant profits depend on persuading people that replacement is necessary and wise. The market creates an artificial need and then claims to satisfy it. Most people are not professional photographers or serious gamers. They do not want constant novelty. They want a phone that works, holds its charge reasonably well, is not too heavy and lets them do the simple things they need each day. The Android I bought three years ago serves me as well as the latest model. In daily use, the difference is frequently so small that one suspects the real advance is not in the phone but in the methods used to advertise it. Large sums are spent on launch events, glossy campaigns



KARIM
EASTERBROOK

The writer is a Former Cambridge School Principal and Author



Majority upgrades are refinements, not revolutions. Yet the advertisers dress them up as though they are indispensable improvements.

and endless media noise, all to make each new release seem like an event of global importance. The cost of advertising is passed on to the buyer, who unwittingly pays to fund the next advertising campaign, which will tell him the phone he just bought is already obsolete. That, in my opinion, is nuts. This constant exaggeration also cheapens the word “innovation”. If every new model is called innovative, the word loses force. Real progress becomes harder to recognise because the public is trained to expect drama at each launch, even when the changes are slight. The result is a kind of commercial fog in which small adjustments are presented as if they were the equivalent of inventing the wheel. Replacing your current phone if the old one no longer works is logical,

but upgrading every year, or every other year, because the market has decided to move on, isn’t. If a phone is still reliable, safe and fit for ordinary use, then replacing it is to surrender to advertising pressure. That is why our old phone remains a sensible choice for most of us. The latest model may be better in a few respects, but the question is whether those differences matter enough to justify spending so much money. For most everyday users, they do not. The old phone still does the job. The new one simply does the same things with better publicity. The mobile phone industry thrives on this cycle of expectation and dissatisfaction. But a three-year-old phone that still works is not a problem to be solved. It is a useful object being talked into obsolescence. And that, in the end, is what I object to.

Life skills education essential to youth



RAY PETERSEN
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

The writer is a media consultant

AM a staunch advocate not only for education, teaching and learning, but for the concept and practical application that education is continuously evolving, not to be restrained by a “this is how it’s always been done” philosophy or perspective. One of my key concerns is how well we, the education sector, are preparing students for the future, for the demands of family, relationships, respect, communication, school, community, study, choices, technology, society, workplace, finance, healthcare, old age and pensions, life balance, and resilience in the face of adversity. These are all, as recent research has shown, indicated areas where college and secondary age students, Year 11 and beyond, have themselves identified individual shortcomings. Perhaps too, therein lies the crux of the problem. Maybe we are so busy having regard to the needs of some individual students that we neglect the essential needs of the wider group. As such, it’s where teachers are caught between a rock and a hard place in terms of where we see our priorities, and the truth is that we will get that ‘right’ as often as we get it ‘not so right.’ We can’t win, given that classroom numbers, which hover around the thirties, are too unwieldy to properly implement differentiation, which is the different ways to teach different students the same thing, depending upon their needs.

Parenting is not given the same value and guidance within the home as it has been done historically, or as it should be done to inspire a greater degree of respect. The wise Confucius said, “If you respect yourself, others will respect you,” and certainly, at school, we see far too little to accept that the home environment is either enriching or respectful. Relationships and communication go hand in hand with respect, as learning when to listen and when to speak is the framework for understanding others and supports lifelong soft skills. Those qualities carry forward too in understanding the roles we all must fulfil in our communities initially, and societies eventually, as we determine not what they can do for us, but what we can do for them. This is where our faith, and our level of respect for others, lead us towards good decisions. Speaking of decisions and choices, beyond school, study and technology are upon our youth almost too soon. However, such is life, and I find myself inspired by the way the New Zealand education sector is looking to the future in making nine different industry-led subjects available for study, “to create pathways that suit their interests, strengths and aspirations,” being Applied Intelligent Systems; Construction and Built Environment; Energy and Infrastructure; Engineering Technology; Food and Fibre

One of my key concerns is how well we, the education sector, are preparing students for the future, for the demands of family, relationships, respect, communication, school, community, study, choices

Systems; Health Services and Care; Hospitality Food and Beverage; Next-Gen Manufacturing, and finally, Tourism. These are ‘live’ opportunities for the contemporary student, practical and intellectual, with genuine workplace opportunities in growth sectors. Getting a job itself is not easy, but without the ability to communicate effectively, work well with others, and resilience, keeping it is almost impossible, simply because nothing comes easily, and life has a habit of biting you when you least expect it. The good news is that you will be an earner, therefore a consumer, a spender, and banks will love you! But according to the Santander Banking Group (Jan, 2025), “79 per cent of students have never created a budget; 76 per cent have never paid a bill; 77 per cent have no meaningful savings; and incredibly, a third of young adults turn to influencers and TikTok for financial advice.” The need for enhanced healthcare, pension matters, and old age sneak up on you, trust me, and unless you get your ‘ducks in a row,’ early in life, your quality of life, later in life, will probably not be what you deserve. I’m a firm advocate that schools and colleges could do better in prioritising these soft and life skills, earlier, while the kids are active, sponge-like learners. Life skills fill the space between knowledge and survival, enhancing your quality of life.

TRUMP TOUTS DROP IN CRIME RATES WITH AN EYE ON MIDTERMS

HUMEYRA PAMUK AND DAN ROSENZWEIG-ZIFF

US President Donald Trump touted falling violent crime rates as evidence that his law-and-order and aggressive immigration agenda is working, seeking to shift attention away from economic concerns that have hurt his approval ratings ahead of November’s midterm elections. Trump visited the Nassau County Police Academy in New York to unveil 2025 data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation that showed the largest year-to-year decline in violent crime on record. Republicans are looking for issues that will resonate with swing voters angry about inflation and the economic fallout from the war with Iran, while casting Democrats as out of step on public safety. In a wide-ranging speech that extended beyond crime to immigration, Iran, New York state politics and other issues, Trump argued without evidence that his mass deportation campaign was a major contributor to that decline, though experts say there is no one reason for the fall. However, the data shows that the fall in crime predates Trump’s return to office, with homicide rates plummeting in 2023 and 2024 to pre-pandemic lows. Some violent crimes, including homicides, surged at the end of the first Trump administration during the Covid-19 pandemic to the highest levels in decades. According to the FBI report, murder and non-negligent manslaughter decreased an estimated 18.1 per cent in 2025 while robberies fell an estimated 18.5 per cent. Violent crime more broadly fell 9.3 per cent and property crime 12.4 per cent. “President Trump promised to make America safe again and the data proves he has done just that,” White House spokeswoman Lauren Bis said. FBI Director Kash Patel and newly sworn-in Attorney General Todd Blanche joined the president at the event with police. The decline has occurred in cities big and small, in places with officials touting both aggressive policing and progressive police reform and with both a high and low density of police officers, suggesting that no single policy explains the nationwide trend. “This is a case in which success truly has a thousand fathers, not just one,” Council on Criminal Justice President and CEO Adam Gelb said. “Everybody is looking for a single easy explanation and that doesn’t exist. There is no magic wand. It’s happening all over the map across the nation and around the globe.” Trump has long complained of a “crime epidemic,” particularly in Democratic-run cities, and used that message to justify aggressive federal intervention, including last year’s deployment of federal agents and National Guard troops to Washington. — Reuters

Drought-hit Dutch rethink on water management

STEPHANIE HAMEL

ON THE banks of the Waal, the Dutch branch of the Rhine, swimmers are sunning themselves on a Nijmegen beach that didn’t exist before the river level dropped a few months ago. Like many European countries, the Netherlands has been hit by a historic summer drought caused by a prolonged dry spell, exceptional heat and intense evaporation. The Dutch - with their dikes, dams and vast waterworks - have long been admired for their tenacity in the face of flood risks. Now their country, which is lower than sea level, finds itself, in an era of global warming, facing a dilemma: how to retain water while protecting themselves from it? “I’ve been coming to this river for, what... 25, 35 years?” said entrepreneur Leon Berkers. “And this is the lowest, the craziest level it’s ever reached.” Berkers is the captain of a restaurant boat that is now listing heavily after becoming stuck on the riverbank. “We can’t even fill the coffee cups to the brim, or they spill,” his son Linus, 19, added with an air of amused exasperation. The drought is particularly visible in the southern and eastern provinces, where the grass has turned the colour of straw and the Rhine this summer reached the lowest level ever recorded there. The shortage of fresh water and a process of salinisation, as seawater pushes inland through the river network, have affected the entire country. And sometimes the effects are devastating. “It feels like we’re in the south of France,” said Marthe Wens, a researcher specialising in water and climate risks at the Institute for Environmental Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. “First of all, there’s nature, of course - there are the trees, the grass,” she said, noting, “the trees already look like autumn.” Another crisis is unfolding underground, threatening the



Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten (C) uses a tool during a working visit to inspect a peat dike and the quay as the Netherlands faces drought in Zoeterwoude on Saturday. — AFP

The shortage of fresh water and a process of salinisation, as seawater pushes inland through the river network, have affected the entire country. And sometimes the effects are devastating

very foundations of buildings. “Foundations are sometimes built on peat bogs: if these dry out, they shrink, and cracks can appear in buildings,” she said. Since mid-July, Rijkswaterstaat, the national water management agency, has classified the situation as an “actual water shortage”. The agency has imposed restrictions on irrigation, while limiting how much certain locks can open to reduce the loss of fresh water and to prevent too much salt water from entering the network. “Not only are the carriers suffering, but also the industries that depend on the goods they transport,” Wens said. With extreme weather events becoming increasingly frequent as a result of climate change, the Netherlands will have to rethink a strategy that has until now been “waterproof.” “We have always designed our systems to protect us from flooding

and to drain excess water into the sea,” said Micha Werner, a professor specialising in drought resilience at IHE Delft, the world’s largest institute for water education. “But as we can see today with climate change, we are increasingly often faced with years of water shortage,” he said. “We therefore truly have to change the way we manage water resources: instead of trying to get rid of water, we actually need to start trying to retain it within our hydraulic systems, and that really requires adaptation,” Werner said. For Leon Berkers, whose restaurant boat has been stuck in the mud for more than a month, adaptation has so far meant improvising fixes to keep “pots and pans from flying around.” Putting out his cigarette before starting the evening service, he sighed: “I think we’ll be without water for at least another two months.” — AFP

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



(FILES) Barcelona's Spanish forward #07 Ferran Torres. — AFP

PSG SIGN SPAIN’S TORRES FROM BARCELONA

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain have signed Spain’s World Cup final match-winning forward Ferran Torres from Barcelona on a contract until 2031, the two clubs announced on Saturday.

Financial details were not disclosed, but media reports said PSG paid €50 million (\$57.83 million) for the 26-year-old.

“I am happy, of course. I think we are improving our team,” PSG head coach Luis Enrique told a press conference on Saturday.

“It has been a transfer window with players leaving, and right now it is important to find this type of player and we want to continue improving... We are always open to improving the team. That is our ambition,” he said.

Portugal forward Goncalo Ramos left PSG for AC Milan in the close season, after scoring 12 goals in 45 appearances.

“Everyone agrees it’s important to make changes when a team is not performing, but to keep winning, you have to be willing to make tough decisions. You have to be ambitious,” added Luis Enrique.

Spain’s World Cup hero Torres arrives in Paris after scoring an extra-time winner in the World Cup final against Argentina.

“I’m delighted to be beginning a new adventure at such an ambitious club as Paris Saint-Germain,” Torres said in a statement.

“I’d like to thank President Nasser al Khelaifi (PSG’s football adviser), Luis Campos and coach Luis Enrique for giving me the opportunity to join the team, which I hope to help win as many trophies as possible.”

The forward scored 21 goals and provided three assists in 49 appearances across all competitions for Barca in their last campaign as the club retained their La Liga title.

Torres joined Barcelona in 2022 after a brief spell at Premier League side Manchester City.

He has scored 25 goals in 65 appearances for Spain and will be reunited with Luis Enrique, having previously played under the Spaniard during his time in charge of the national team.

— Reuters

Al Mishaykhi triumphs in Spark Championship

24 BOXERS COMPETE IN SPARK FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP AT OCEC

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 15

OMAN’S Muneer al Mishaykhi claimed victory in the headline bout as the third edition of the Spark Fighting Championship concluded at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), with 24 fighters competing across 12 bouts in front of more than 2,000 spectators.

Held on Friday as part of Sports Spark, presented by Sohar International, the championship was staged in collaboration with Scorpionest Martial Arts and Sabco Sports, bringing together fighters from Oman and abroad under the supervision of accredited international officials. The event was attended by Eng Said al Shanfari, CEO of OCEC, alongside officials, guests and combat sports enthusiasts.

Al Mishaykhi capped the night by defeating Sina Yadollahifard in the headline boxing contest, while El Sayed Ayman al Mahdi overcame Antonio Tabacon Siesmundo in the other Main Card bout.

The championship also marked an important development for the event, with organisers announcing its official accreditation by the World Boxing Foundation (WBF), alongside a strategic partnership with Highland Boxing Promotion aimed at creating pathways for Omani fighters to enter professional competition across Asia and the Middle East.

Wadhah al Harthi, founder of Scorpionest Martial Arts, said the accreditation represented an important step in the development of professional boxing in Oman and would provide local fighters with greater opportunities to compete internationally.

“The accreditation opens a new pathway for boxing in Oman,” Al Harthi said. “It gives us the opportunity to attract international boxers to compete here, while Omani fighters can pursue professional opportunities abroad through internationally recognised licences and take part in competitions at a higher level.”

WORLD BOXING ACCREDITATION
Al Harthi said Omani boxers had previously been largely exposed to



Muneer al Mishaykhi celebrates after claiming victory in the main bout at OCEC.

amateur competition, making the move towards internationally recognised professional opportunities an important progression for the sport.

He added that securing the accreditation was the result of joint efforts involving OCEC, Scorpionest Martial Arts, Sabco Sports, sponsors and the teams working behind the championship.

“This is an important achievement for Omani fighters and for the development of the sport,” he said. “Our aim is to continue building the platform, develop local talent and provide Omani boxers with opportunities to progress towards international competition.”

On the competition front, the preliminary youth boxing bouts saw Ihsan Hassan Saddam defeat Mehdi Marvazadeh, Gurniwaj Singh Viridi overcome Haitham Saud and Omar bin Abdulrahman Mabkhout beat Omar bin Mohammed al Zadjali.

In the remaining preliminary contests, Hassan bin Issa al Balushi defeated Hazza bin Nasser al Mahrazi, Ahmed al Samri overcame Mulham bin Khamis al Adawi and Neeraj beat Abdullah al Abri. Abdul

Rahman Mustafa prevailed over Malek Hanif, Ahmed Ali defeated Mohammed al Gassani, Sheikh Samer al Ashkar overcame Emad bin Bakhsh Al Balushi and Saif al Ayash beat Egyptian national team boxer Mohammed Abdou.

The Main Card then saw El Sayed Ayman al Mahdi defeat Antonio Tabacon Siesmundo before Al Mishaykhi closed the night with victory over Yadollahifard in the headline bout.

The third edition represented another step forward for Spark Fighting Championship after last year’s event featured 20 Omani and international fighters across 10 bouts and attracted nearly 2,000 spectators. This year, participation increased to 24 fighters across 12 contests, while attendance surpassed the 2,000 mark.

The organisers said the championship will continue to serve as a platform for identifying and developing Omani talent, while the new international accreditation is expected to provide a pathway for local fighters seeking to progress from domestic competition towards the professional international stage.

Seeb, Qurayat make winning starts in Junior Hockey League

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 15

Seeb and Qurayat began their campaigns with victories as the 2026 Junior Hockey League (JHL) got under way at Hockey Oman Stadium in Al Amerat.

Seeb defeated Al Bashayer 2-0 in the opening Group One fixture, while Qurayat overcame Al Amerat 3-1. The results earned both winners their first three points and set the early pace in the group.

The opening match between Seeb and Al Bashayer began cautiously, with both teams maintaining their defensive shape while attempting to build attacks through collective movement. Neither side was able to break the deadlock during an evenly contested first quarter.

Seeb increased their attacking pressure in the second quarter and opened the scoring in the 22nd minute through Mohammed



Abdullah, whose field goal gave his side a 1-0 advantage at half-time.

Al Bashayer pushed forward in search of an equaliser, but Seeb remained organised and continued to create opportunities. Al Mutasem al Hasni doubled the lead in the 42nd minute during the third quarter, placing Seeb firmly in control.

Al Bashayer attempted to reduce the deficit in the final quarter, but Seeb’s defence dealt effectively with the pressure and protected the clean sheet until the final whistle.

QURAYAT BEAT AL AMERAT
In the second match, Qurayat secured a 3-1 victory over Al

Amerat following an improved attacking performance over the final two quarters.

Both teams approached the opening quarter cautiously, with their defensive organisation preventing any early goals. The contest opened up in the second quarter as the two sides exchanged attacks and scored once each, sending them into half-time level at 1-1.

Qurayat then raised their intensity and took the lead during the third quarter after capitalising on space in Al Amerat’s defence. They maintained their attacking pressure in the fourth quarter and added a third goal to complete a convincing opening victory.

Seeb and Qurayat share the early Group 1 lead with three points each, while Al Amerat and Al Bashayer remain without a point after the opening round.

Group 1 action continues on Tuesday, when Seeb face Al

Amerat at 6 pm at Hockey Oman Stadium. Qurayat will then meet Al Bashayer at the same venue at 8 pm, with the two opening-round winners looking to strengthen their positions and the other two sides seeking their first points.

Group 3 will begin on Wednesday, with Salalah taking on Al Ittihad at 5 pm on the hockey pitch at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah.

Organised by the Oman Hockey Association, the league features 10 clubs divided into three groups, with matches staged in Muscat, Sohar and Salalah. Group 2 comprises Al Nahda, Al Musannah, Masirah and Al Suwaiq.

The tournament forms part of the association’s youth competition programme, providing young players with regular competitive matches and allowing clubs to develop their technical and physical abilities.

AIR SPORTS TAKE FLIGHT AS NEW TOURISM OPPORTUNITY



ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 15

Air sports are emerging as more than spectacular displays in Oman’s skies, with the potential to become a valuable sporting and tourism product capable of promoting the Sultanate of Oman’s natural attractions, creating new experiences for visitors and opening opportunities for youth and the wider sports economy. From the mountains and coastlines to the deserts and the distinctive landscapes of Dhofar, Oman possesses a diverse geographical environment that offers favourable conditions for a wide range of air sports. As interest in adventure tourism continues to grow, officials and practitioners believe these sports can play an increasingly important role in positioning Oman as an attractive destination for adventure and sporting tourism.

Dr Ahmed bin Zaher al Alawi, Chairman of the Oman Air Sports Committee, told Observer that air

experience the beauty of Dhofar from a completely different perspective,” he said. “Our ambition is for air sports not to remain simply demonstrations watched by the public, but to gradually become a sustainable sporting and tourism product that contributes to promoting Oman as a destination for adventure tourism.”

INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE
The development of air sports in Oman extended beyond participation, with greater attention being given to organisation, safety, training and international exposure. Al Alawi said the sector now included activities such as paragliding, paramotoring, light sport aircraft, radio-controlled aircraft and other air sports and aeromodelling disciplines.

“The sector has witnessed considerable development in terms of organisation, the number of practitioners, the diversity of disciplines and awareness of safety requirements,” he said.

The committee has also focused on strengthening coordination with relevant authorities, improving training and safety standards, organising teams and practitioners, and creating opportunities for international participation and knowledge exchange.

The participation of pilots and practitioners from Oman and abroad during the Dhofar Khareef activities added an international dimension to the event, while the presence of internationally recognised champions provided an important opportunity for Omani practitioners to observe and learn from elite performers.

Al Alawi said the participation of international stars was valuable not only from a sporting and media perspective but also in terms of technical development.

“The presence of a world champion in front of Omani youth allows them to see advanced levels of performance at close range, learn about training, performance and safety practices and exchange experiences with local practitioners,” he said.

He also stressed the promotional value of air sports, noting that the visual nature of the discipline can showcase Oman’s landscapes to international audiences.

DEVELOPING A NEW GENERATION
Developing a sustainable air sports sector will depend heavily on attracting and developing Omani talent. Al Alawi said talent identification and development was among the committee’s priorities, with the aim of creating a pathway that begins with introducing young people to air sports, identifying those with the interest and ability

The sector now included activities such as paragliding, paramotoring, light sport aircraft, radio-controlled aircraft and other air sports and aeromodelling disciplines



ADIL AL HUBAISHI



DR AHMED AL ALAWI



KHAFEER LOOPEZ

to progress, and providing them with appropriate training. “Our real investment in this sector starts with developing people and preparing them according to proper training and safety standards,” he said.

Schools and sports clubs can also contribute significantly to this process without necessarily involving young people directly in flying activities at an early age. Al Alawi recommended introducing educational programmes and workshops covering aviation sciences, model aircraft, meteorology, aerodynamics and aviation safety.

Sports and youth clubs could also establish specialised teams, organise open days and competitions and create programmes to identify promising talent.

QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS
Certified air sports lecturer, Adil al Hubaishi, said beginners undergo structured courses based on educational programmes delivered by qualified instructors. He explained that young people can be introduced to air sports from an early age, while formal licensing requirements apply when participants reach the required age.

“One of the most important requirements is that the practitioner is medically fit,” Al Hubaishi said, adding that physical fitness is also important because some disciplines require participants to carry equipment weighing up to 26 kilogrammes. He stressed that discipline and mental awareness are essential qualities for pilots.

SAFETY REMAINS PRIORITY
With air sports involving specialised equipment and changing environmental conditions, safety remains at the centre of the development strategy. Al Hubaishi said strict protocols are followed before and after flights, including checks of engines and wings, while pilots are required to use appropriate protective equipment and carry safety equipment such as reserve parachutes and where relevant, self-inflating flotation devices.

Participants are also trained to deal with emergency situations through specialised simulation courses following their initial training. Al Alawi similarly emphasised that confidence must never become recklessness. “A good pilot is not the one who performs the most dangerous manoeuvres, but the one who knows when to fly and when to stop flying,” he said.

INTERNATIONAL AMBITIONS
Al Hubaishi believes Oman has the potential to become a regional and international destination for air

sports through the organisation of championships and specialised events. He pointed to the achievements of Omani pilots as evidence of the country’s potential, noting that five Omani competitors represented Oman at the first official championship they entered and collectively won gold, silver and bronze medals.

World champion Khafeer Tegaró Lopez from Spain, who participated in the Dhofar event, described the Salalah gathering as one of the leading air sports events in the Middle East. He expressed confidence in the future of Omani pilots, particularly the younger generation, saying continued participation and flying experience would help them develop and compete successfully in future international events.

Despite the progress made, practitioners believe further development will require greater institutional and private-sector support. Al Alawi identified the cost of equipment and training, the availability of suitable sites and the

Continued participation and flying experience would help Omani pilots develop and compete successfully in future international events.

KHAFEER TEGARÓ LOPEZ

infrastructure required for sustainable operations among the main challenges facing the sector. He said the experience of the 2026 Khareef Dhofar season demonstrated the need for improved site infrastructure, including power supplies, sanitary facilities, prepared take-off and landing areas and visitor services.

He also called for stronger support for teams and individual practitioners, many of whom currently contribute to the development of the sport with limited resources and significant personal commitment. “We hope to establish a stronger partnership between government institutions, the private sector and the committee, because developing air sports will have a positive impact simultaneously on sport, tourism and youth,” Al Alawi ended.

The committee also plans to increase Oman’s presence in international air sports competitions, attract international championships and pilots, and benefit from global expertise in developing Omani practitioners.

Air sports bring together passion, adventure, challenge and skill, and this is why they are becoming increasingly attractive to young people

DR AHMED BIN ZAHER AL ALAWI

sports witnessed notable development in recent years, supported by Oman’s geographical diversity and the growing interest of young people in adventure-based activities. He highlighted the ‘Fly in the Dhofar sky’ event, held recently in Taqah-Nashib during the 2026 Khareef Dhofar season, as an example of how air sports can combine sports and tourism.

“Air sports bring together passion, adventure, challenge and skill, and this is why they are becoming increasingly attractive to young people, particularly with the growing popularity of adventure tourism and the search for different travel experiences,” Al Alawi said.

The chief Of Oman Air Sports Committee added that Dhofar with its distinctive natural environment during the khareef season, offers considerable potential for the development of air sports. “One of the important aspects of the ‘Fly in Dhofar sky’ event is that it is held during the daytime, helping diversify the activities available to visitors and giving tourists the opportunity to

SPORTS

SHORTTAKES



India's Devdutt Padikkal (L) and Rishabh Pant. — AFP

PADIKKAL HITS UNBEATEN CENTURY FOR INDIA

SRI LANKA: Top-order batsman Devdutt Padikkal made a memorable comeback on Saturday, posting his maiden hundred as India finished the first day of the first Test against Sri Lanka on 288-2 in Galle. Left-hander Padikkal reached 131 not out in a chanceless innings as India batted themselves into a strong position after electing to bat first in the country's 600th Test.

Padikkal was recalled to the side as a late injury replacement for Sai Sudharsan and made a strong claim to become India's long-term number three batsman.

He last played a Test in November 2024 but scored a hundred in a warm-up game in Colombo last week and carried that good form on to Galle.

The 26-year-old faced 178 balls by the end of the day, hitting 12 fours and a six.

India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak praised Padikkal's performance.

"He was waiting for an opportunity and he's made most of it today," he told reporters after the day's play.

"The pitch offered different challenges. There was assistance for seamers after the rain but he showed lots of character."

Padikkal joined K.L. Rahul after opener Yashasvi Jaiswal was run out for 32 following a mix-up, and they combined to put India in a strong position.

Padikkal was the first to reach his half-century, off 81 balls, while Rahul took 127 deliveries to record his 21st Test half-century.

They added 150 runs for the second wicket before Rahul was forced to retire on 77 due to cramps soon after tea. — AFP

Iraola: Liverpool's Como double-header key test



Liverpool's Isak celebrates with Koumas. — Reuters

LIVERPOOL'S double-header against Serie A side Como on Sunday will be a good test ahead of the new Premier League season, manager Andoni Iraola said on Saturday.

Liverpool, who lost pre-season fixtures against Leeds United and AS Monaco, will face Como twice on Sunday, with one match to be played behind closed doors before the second at Anfield.

Iraola said he took positives from last weekend's 3-2 defeat by Monaco but acknowledged his side must improve their consistency ahead of the new campaign.

"The problem we had, as we had against Leeds in Chicago, was that we were not able to sustain our levels, and that is something that can only happen with time and with a lot of hard work on the training ground," Iraola told the club's TV channel.

"I have spoken many times about the type of team I want to see on the pitch, about the intensity, the intent and the energy we are looking for, and while it is clear that there is still a lot of improvement to come, I believe that we are moving in the right direction."

Iraola said Argentina midfielder Alexis Mac Allister had returned to training after the World Cup, giving him a full squad ahead

of the new season, and added that it was now up to the players to deliver consistent performances.

Liverpool also strengthened their defensive options by signing Uruguay international Ronald Araujo on a season-long loan from Barcelona last week, with Iraola welcoming the addition of a player of his quality and experience.

"I am sure he will settle in quickly and have a positive impact on our squad," he said.

Liverpool will start their Premier League season at Newcastle United on August 23. — Reuters

The Kia Tasman

Explore Khareef with Kia's pick-up



Movement that inspires





X-Trek & Rock Mode



Ground View Monitor



3,500 Kg Trailer Capacity

- 277 HP@ 5800 rpm
- 4WD with Electronic Differential Locking
- Double Cabin

Built for every path, designed for every personality. The Kia Tasman adapts to your journey, no matter where it takes you.

Reliable International Automotive LLC. C.R. No. 1707183, Wattayah, Al Mawaleh, Barka, Ibra, Ibri, Nizwa, Sohar, Sur, Suwaiq, Rustaq, Salalah. Contact us at 24579800.

BUSINESS

SHORTTAKES

Sur Industrial City signs six investment contracts worth over **﷮** 56m in H1 2026

BUSINESS REPORTER



ENG NASSER BIN
HAMOUD
AL MABSALI

SUR: Sur Industrial City, operating under the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has successfully signed six investment contracts during the first half of 2026 with a total investment value exceeding RO 56 million.

Covering a total area of more than 60,000 sq m, these newly secured projects span a diverse range of key sectors, including tourism, energy, gas, telecommunications and food production.

Eng Nasser bin Hamoud al Mabsali, Director General of Sur Industrial City, stated that the total cumulative investment in the city rose to RO 2.3 billion by the end of the first half of 2026.

The city currently employs 1,843 workers, of which 1,076 are Omani nationals. “Madayn is preparing to implement a lineup of key future projects in Sur Industrial City.

Sur Industrial City currently employs 1,843 workers, of which 1,076 are Omani nationals. Madayn is preparing to implement a lineup of key future projects.

These developments include the maintenance of Wadi Crossing No 6, extending irrigation water to the Green Belt area in the city and the infrastructure development for the ship docking area dedicated

to shipbuilding and maintenance industry”, Al Mabsali pointed out.

Al Mabsali stated that the first half of 2026 saw the completion of detailed designs for the ship docking facility, along with the general and detailed design for the city’s master plan. Trial operations also began at the ‘Sur-1’ solar power plant.

“Aligning with Oman Vision 2040, the city remains focused on building strong infrastructure, attracting investments and supporting economic diversification. As part of Madayn’s efforts to strengthen institutional performance and support sustainable growth, the city recently launched the Institutional Excellence Competition.

Meanwhile, Sur Industrial City is preparing to unveil investment opportunities across training, medical, quarry operations and labour accommodation sectors”, he added.

Oman prepares bank for climate fund accreditation

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, AUGUST 15

OMAN is preparing an Omani bank for accreditation by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and qualifying a second national institution to work in the field, part of an effort to reach international climate finance without routing projects through foreign intermediaries.

Neither institution was named and no timetable was given, according to a presentation delivered in Salalah. The bank has been selected to pursue accreditation; it has not secured GCF approval.

International entities implemented 77 per cent of GCF projects and national entities 13 per cent, according to a 2024 Transparency International Bangladesh analysis of 2023 fund data, which also found that 68.8 per cent of eligible countries had no direct-access entity. The GCF network has since grown, reaching 168 partner agencies across more than 130 countries by March 2026.

The details were set out at the 25th Annual General Conference on Government Readiness for a Sustainable Future by Eng Khalid bin Mohammed al Balushi of the Environment Authority, in a paper on innovative finance for sustainability.

He put the global financing requirement at \$4.5 trillion to \$6 trillion through 2030.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change costs the needs set out in the national climate plans of 98 developing countries at \$5.01 trillion to \$6.85 trillion cumulatively over a comparable period, or \$455 billion to \$584 billion a year. The two estimates use different scopes and are not directly comparable.

The UN Environment

National platform to coordinate funding requests as domestic institutions seek accreditation with the Green Climate Fund. The GCF network has grown, reaching 168 partner agencies across more than 130 countries by March 2026



The Green Climate Fund (GCF) network now encompasses 168 partner agencies across more than 130 countries.

Programme puts annual adaptation needs in developing countries at \$310 billion to \$365 billion by 2035, depending on method.

International public adaptation finance totalled \$26 billion in 2023, down from \$28 billion a year earlier.

The paper identified exchange-rate volatility, regulatory instability, complex international procedures and thin disclosure data as barriers to access. Weak data makes environmental impact hard to measure and raises the risk of greenwashing.

Accreditation has also been slow, historically taking two to three years. The GCF now runs two cycles a year, each with a two-month application window and a nine-month review — a period that excludes the time applicants take to answer questions and so does not cap the process at nine months.

Oman’s response centres on the National Climate Platform, launched during COP30 in Belém in November 2025 and intended to work as a national coordination and investment centre. Its stated

purpose is to convert strategies into financeable projects, connect them to international funds, development banks and commercial lenders; and coordinate the funding requests Oman submits abroad.

Priority areas are clean energy and green hydrogen; water, agriculture and climate resilience; waste and the circular economy; and private-sector finance. The platform rests on national ownership, partnership and transparency, with digital tools to track investment and improve disclosure.

The finance is tied directly to Oman’s targets.

Its nationally determined contribution seeks a 21 per cent cut in greenhouse-gas emissions by 2030 against a business-as-usual scenario: 7 per cent unconditional and 14 per cent conditional on international finance, technology transfer and cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Net zero is targeted for 2050.

Two-thirds of that 2030 target, in other words, depends on money Oman does not yet control.

be’ah strengthens SME role with **﷮** 4 million in contracts

BALARAB AL TAMIMI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 15

Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be’ah) directed 23.4 per cent of its total budget to small and medium enterprises in 2025, awarding 35 purchases and contracts worth RO 4 million to SMEs and Riyada cardholders, as the company advanced an integrated growth model built on innovation, digital transformation and local content, according to its 2025 Sustainability Report.

The company’s In-Country Value (ICV) Index rose to 38.4 per cent in 2025 from 35.65 per cent a year earlier, reflecting structured local supplier inclusion across procurement. be’ah reported total revenue of RO 17.9 million for the year against expenditure of RO 98.5 million, with RO 25,749 invested in research, development and innovation (RDI).

On the innovation front, be’ah’s Business Technology Mapping exercise gathered 175 attendees across 18 engagement sessions, identifying 30 technical challenges and 21 opportunities for prioritisation. Through the Qimam Hackathon and Sunnaa Al Afkar platforms, 53 youth teams participated, with five

be’ah’s Business Technology Mapping exercise gathered 175 attendees across 18 engagement sessions, identifying 30 technical challenges and 21 opportunities for prioritisation



be’ah Eco-Innovate Oman accelerator drew 61 applications (Picture for illustration).

addressing be’ah-specific challenges in construction and demolition (C&D) waste utilisation, smart waste bins and leachate treatment.

EcoLeachTech, a team from the

National University of Science and Technology, secured second place for a leachate treatment solution using extracts from Omani date pits as a natural coagulant, while Dhofar-based

SME Wadi Ronneb took third place for converting recycled C&D materials into ready-to-use cold asphalt, now being piloted with be’ah.

The Eco-Innovate Oman accelerator drew 61 applications, shortlisting 35 companies and graduating ten, including ventures in water filtration, recycled-materials marketplaces and sustainable retail.

In digital transformation, around 60 per cent of be’ah core IT services were operating in the cloud by year-end, supported by new data centres and a disaster recovery site.

The company enhanced its cloud-based ERP platform, deployed a CRM system for municipal and healthcare waste services and launched the “Manaa” mobile application enabling residents to request services digitally.

A newly established Security Operations Centre provided round-the-clock monitoring, with be’ah reporting zero major security breaches during the year.

Customer satisfaction surveys returned scores of 92 per cent for healthcare waste services, 91 per cent for industrial and hazardous waste and 85.7 per cent for business-to-business municipal solid waste services.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



SOHAR INTERNATIONAL’S MSX DISCUSSION SESSION REINFORCES GROWTH STRATEGY

MUSCAT: Sohar International held a Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) discussion session on August 10, 2026, reaffirming its commitment to transparent dialogue with shareholders and the larger investment community.

Organised in coordination with the MSX and conducted virtually, the session brought together shareholders, analysts and market participants.

The session included a review of the bank’s financial performance for the six months ended June 30, 2026 and outlined strategic priorities for the period ahead in the context of the current economic environment as well as current and evolving risks and opportunities. The presentation and interactive Q&A session featured Abdulwahid al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer, Craig Bell, Chief Financial Officer; and Fahad al Zadjali, Chief Islamic Banking Officer.

Commenting on the session, Abdulwahid al Murshidi said: “This session is part of how we build trust through transparency. Beyond the numbers, it’s about showing investors the thinking behind our decisions and how we are positioning the bank for the next phase of growth.

We are managing the business with discipline across capital, risk and opportunity, while investing in digital, people and customer experience. Our focus remains on delivering sustainable value to shareholders and playing a constructive role in the development of Oman’s financial sector in line with Oman Vision 2040”.

To ensure broad access, the session was delivered via a digital platform. The format supported real-time questions and direct interaction with senior management, underscoring Sohar International’s approach to open and consistent stakeholder engagement. Discussion covered key financial performance metrics across profitability, credit risk, funding & liquidity and capital.

As the bank continues to strengthen its institutional capabilities, it remains focused on sustaining performance momentum and capturing opportunities in an evolving financial landscape. Through disciplined execution and alignment with national priorities, Sohar International continues to support Oman’s economic growth and contribute to the resilience of the banking sector.

SAMSUNG UNVEILS THE LATEST GALAXY Z FOLD8 ULTRA

Samsung Electronics has unveiled a new generation of foldable smartphones, launching one of the standout models in its smartphone lineup as part of a move aimed at expanding user choice while combining advanced productivity, AI-powered experiences, content creation and flexible design.

The new devices build on Samsung’s experience across seven generations of foldable smartphones, with an even



greater focus this time on integrating Galaxy AI into the core user experience. AI capabilities are designed to adapt to the unique form factor and

functionality of each device.

With its new lineup, Samsung is aiming to deliver differentiated experiences tailored to a wide range of needs and usage patterns.

The biggest leap comes with the Galaxy Z Fold8 Ultra, one of Samsung’s most notable additions to its foldable device family. With this model, the company brings its Ultra concept to the foldable category, placing a strong emphasis on performance, productivity and content creation.

Nissan showcases high performance brake colours

NISSAN has officially detailed the visual language behind its performance braking systems, shedding light on how distinct caliper finishes signal vehicle capability, engineering intent and heritage across its sports car and NISMO line-ups. Designed to offer immediate visual context for enthusiasts and everyday drivers alike, Nissan’s custom caliper palette ranges from functional silver to performance-focused red, gold and yellow.

This visual language traces back to Nissan’s performance flagship, the GT-R, where brake hardware and colour became a defining part of how capability was communicated. Today, these finishes can be found across current and historic Nissan performance vehicles globally, with regional examples including the Nissan Z line-up and Patrol NISMO.

Below, Nissan outlines the distinctions between its different brake caliper colours, both past and present.

Silver calipers are standard across most of the Nissan line-up, with the majority of vehicles featuring this colour.

While all Nissan braking systems are designed to provide confident, smooth stopping power across a variety of conditions, those with silver calipers are generally optimised for everyday driving rather than the high-performance applications outlined below.

Red brake calipers are a bold indication that a vehicle has been engineered for high performance.

On the 2027 Nissan Z Performance in the US, Akebono four-piston front and two-piston rear aluminium calipers replace the two-piston front and one-piston rear cast-iron setup offered on the Z Sport. The 2010 Nissan 370Z 40th Anniversary Edition previously featured red Akebono calipers.

In the Middle East, red-painted calipers feature across the Nissan Z line-up. The 2026 Nissan Z Heritage



Nissan reveals the design code behind its brake caliper colours.

From silver to gold, Nissan outlines how specialised braking finishes signal track capability, heritage and engineering precision across its global and regional line-ups

Edition pairs them with a distinctive Midnight Purple exterior and bronze RAYS forged-alloy wheels inspired by Nissan’s GT-R heritage.

The 2026 Nissan Z NISMO features a track-enhanced braking system with massive 15.0-inch front and 13.8-inch rear rotors paired with high-friction performance pads. Powered by a 420-hp twin-turbo V6, the sports car utilises stiffened engine mounts which, alongside the upgraded Akebono brakes, ensure razor-sharp responsiveness and track reliability.

Patrol NISMO also features red brake calipers as part of its performance-focused design. Its front bumper directs cooling air towards the brakes, helping reduce brake disc temperatures by 6%, while its lightweight 22-inch forged-aluminium RAYS wheels further support brake cooling and responsiveness.

Gold calipers are applied to Nissan vehicles equipped with Brembo braking systems.

The iconic R34 GT-R, sold in Japan, was the first Nissan to feature gold calipers, beginning in 1999. Although the GT-R was available

with Brembo brakes before then, its calipers were finished in black.

Gold calipers quickly became synonymous with Nissan performance through the R34. In the US, the Nissan 350Z Track Edition subsequently introduced gold Brembo calipers in 2003.

The R35-generation GT-R continued the tradition with gold six-piston front and four-piston rear calipers, further strengthening the association between the finish and Nissan’s highest levels of braking performance.

Yellow calipers are especially rare on Nissan vehicles. On selected GT-R models, yellow calipers indicate the use of ultra-high-performance carbon-ceramic brakes. Designed to provide exceptional resistance to brake fade over repeated high-intensity track laps, the system was offered on vehicles including the 2020 GT-R NISMO and GT-R Track Edition in selected markets.

At times, concept vehicles and special editions used caliper colours that depart from Nissan’s traditional conventions.

NBO hosts networking event for Sadara priority banking customers in Salalah

MUSCAT: Reaffirming its commitment to delivering premium banking experiences to its customers, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) hosted an exclusive networking evening for its Sadara Priority Banking customers in Salalah, attended by HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), NBO Board Member and NBO CEO, Abdullah bin Zahrán al Hinai. The event brought together Sadara Priority Banking customers and selected industry partners, providing a valuable platform for networking and meaningful



engagement. Commenting on the occasion, Ali bin Mustafa al Lawati, Assistant General Manager and Head of

Private Banking, said: “At NBO, our Sadara Priority Banking customers are at the heart of everything we do. This gathering reflects our

commitment to delivering more than tailored financial solutions by creating meaningful opportunities for our customers to connect, exchange insights and build lasting relationships. We deeply value the trust they place in us and remain dedicated to delivering a premium banking experience that evolves with their aspirations and financial needs”.

Through Sadara Priority Banking, NBO provides customers with a comprehensive range of exclusive benefits designed to offer greater privacy, convenience and personalised support. These include access to dedicated Sadara lounges and reserved parking at selected NBO branches, access to tailored investment opportunities and

financial solutions, including wealth management products, real estate financing and competitive savings interest rates, alongside the support of a dedicated Relationship Manager.

Sadara Priority Banking customers also enjoy a range of exclusive lifestyle and travel benefits, including a Visa Signature Credit Card with 1% cashback, complimentary airport lounge access, travel insurance, exclusive offers through the Xperience app and a complimentary chauffeur service to and from Muscat and Salalah International Airports.

For more information about NBO’s Sadara Priority Banking services, please visit the NBO website or contact the Call Centre on 24770000.

ONLINEFRAUD



The US will allow approved private firms to hack foreign cybercriminal groups under government supervision.

US TAKES RISKY BET ON PVT ‘PIRATES’ TO COMBAT CYBERCRIME

SAN FRANCISCO: The United States will allow private companies to hack foreign cybercriminal groups, a seemingly unprecedented measure that is dividing experts who say it has potential to succeed or spiral out of control.

President Donald Trump signed a memorandum that directed the departments of Justice and Homeland Security to allow certain US companies to spy on and attack transnational criminal organisations.

The White House justified the approach by citing the damage caused by ransomware and online fraud, which it said cost Americans more than \$20 billion in 2025.

The memorandum calls for authorising private partners to take down hackers’ servers or to infiltrate their machines with spyware.

Each operation will require prior government approval and companies will have to post a bond of at least \$1 million.

Any action that could cause death or injury is excluded, as is anything that would meet the threshold of “use of force” under international law.

The effort has parallels with 18th century “privateering”, when governments would authorise private ships or sailors to carry out raids on enemy vessels.

“The private sector holds the data. The public sector holds the authorities”, and the new memorandum “puts them together”, Ari Redbord said.

A former federal prosecutor, Redbord is now head of policy and government affairs at TRM Labs, an analytics firm that works with US authorities.

He embraces the historical comparison to maritime privateering. “Privateering broke down because there was no way to watch a ship once it left port”, Redbord said.— AFP

Government careers set for skills-based overhaul

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, AUGUST 15

A Ministry of Labour paper has outlined a five-pillar pathway to redesign government careers around demonstrated skills, results and measurable impact, reducing the weight of job titles, academic qualifications and length of service in recruitment, development, promotion and mobility decisions.

The proposal was presented by Dr Mohammed bin Mustafa al Najar, Director-General of Training at the Ministry of Labour, during the 25th Annual General Conference on ‘Government Readiness for a Sustainable Future’, held in Salalah from August 11 to 13.

Although the paper does not announce new employment or promotion rules, the same direction was included in the conference’s closing recommendations. These called for government career paths to be redesigned around competencies and skills, with training needs tied more closely to institutional transformation and performance outcomes.

“The real challenge is not delivering training, but ensuring that learning translates into performance and performance into added value for the government entity”, Al Najar said in the paper.

The case for change rests on forces already reshaping government work, including artificial intelligence, smart automation, paperless public services, and the transition towards a green economy.

The paper identified five weaknesses limiting the impact of conventional training: the absence of assessments before training, generic programmes



The Annual General Conference on ‘Government Readiness for a Sustainable Future’ was held in Salalah.

that do not address individual skills gaps, weak links between training and operational targets, reliance on attendance and certificates as measures of success and insufficient workplace learning and follow-up.

Under the proposed model, the focus would shift from training to skills, courses to competence, certificates to the ability to deliver, attendance to impact and an individual job to a continuing career path.

The conventional linear ladder of a job, promotion and then a higher post would give way to a more flexible route built on acquired skills, applied experience, professional credentials, project results and leadership capability.

The paper said this would open multiple routes for progression and give

government entities greater scope to assemble inter-agency teams around priority national projects, rather than limiting employees to vacancies within fixed organisational structures.

The Omani pathway presented in the paper is organised around five pillars: the National Framework for Occupational Competence, the Masar Professional Qualifications Initiative, the Ejada Human Resources Management Matrix, the Ejada Human Resources Development Platform and the Government Training Development Project.

The presentation described the national framework itself as containing 300 competencies across 44 categories and 14 groups, comprising core, specialised and leadership competencies.

Those figures differ in

purpose from the data announced when the framework was launched in December 2024. At the time, the ministry said 44 technical teams and more than 300 specialists had contributed to a framework covering 2,000 job titles across the State’s Administrative Apparatus.

The Ejada matrix, meanwhile, plots actual performance against potential. Its nine-box structure is designed to identify talent, measure capacity for growth, analyse skills gaps and produce individual development plans, rather than assigning the same training programme to every employee.

The proposed Ejada Human Resources Development Platform would combine e-learning, short learning units, AI-enabled personalised pathways, learning analytics and digital certificates.

\$105m fertiliser and chemicals complex planned in Salalah

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, AUGUST 15

Salalah Free Zone (SFZ) has signed a usufruct agreement with DuroMENA LLC, a subsidiary of Omani business group Badr Investment Group, for the development of an integrated fertiliser and chemicals complex with an investment of around \$105 million.

The project will produce 100,000 tonnes per year of Sulphate of Potash (SOP) and 100,000 tonnes per year of Granular Calcium Carbonate, alongside a range of other chemical products.

SOP is a premium, low-chloride potassium fertiliser widely used for high-value crops such as fruits, vegetables and nuts, supplying potassium and sulphur to support



Representatives of DuroMENA LLC signing the usufruct pact with officials of Salalah Free Zone

plant growth, crop quality and resilience to environmental stress. GCC is used as a calcium source in agriculture and soil conditioning, as well as an industrial mineral and filler in products including plastics, paints, coatings, paper, rubber and construction materials.

The complex will target export markets across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), India, Southeast Asia and East Africa, supporting Oman’s ambitions to expand non-oil exports and strengthen its position as a regional manufacturing and logistics hub.

Commenting on the agreement, Dr Ali Tabouk, CEO of Salalah Free Zone, said the project represents an important step in strengthening the zone’s position as a destination for high-value industries.

“It supports our efforts to build integrated industrial value chains and develop a chemicals and fertilisers cluster, while enhancing exports and reinforcing the Sultanate of Oman’s competitiveness as a regional industrial hub”, he said.

Mohammed al Habsi, Group HR & Compliance Manager at Badr Investment Group, said DuroMENA represents the shareholders’ strategic direction towards investing in sustainable, value-adding industrial projects that contribute to Oman’s long-term economic growth.

It is also expected to support downstream and ancillary industries, increase non-oil exports, diversify Oman’s industrial and manufacturing base; and further strengthen Salalah’s role as a regional industrial and logistics hub.

The investment aligns with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, particularly economic diversification, private-sector development, industrial growth, localisation of value chains, job creation and increasing the contribution of non-oil sectors to the national economy, Al Habsi added.

Muscat-headquartered Badr Group, formerly known as Ali & Abdul Karim Group, has more than 35 years of experience across manufacturing, trading and services.

LEGAL RESTRICTIONS

Amazon reinstates binding arbitration



Amazon reinstated binding arbitration for its US customers while also barring them from seeking class-action lawsuits, making it more difficult for users to address grievances in court. In emails, Amazon said the changes are effective immediately and customers agree to the terms by continuing to use the company’s services. Often, companies alert customers to upcoming changes to their terms of service weeks in advance. — Reuters

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

IPO valuation hinges on \$190-200 billion



As Anthropic prepares for what could be one of the biggest IPOs on record, Wall Street is looking further into the future than it commonly does to put a price on the AI company, valuing it based on how much revenue it could generate two years from now. — Reuters

SUSPENDS PERMITS

Crackdown targets Eternal, Swiggy, Zepto



India’s Maharashtra state food safety chief has intensified a crackdown on the food and grocery industries, suspending the permits of 12 warehouses of Indian grocery giants Eternal, Swiggy and Zepto after finding cockroach infestations and other unhygienic conditions. The latest raids targeting the “quick commerce” sector, where companies deliver groceries within minutes. — Reuters

OPINION

Creating value from local content and Khareef Dhofar



DR HILAL AL SAWAI

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert

DURING KHAREEF DHOFAR Season, visitors from across the GCC have the opportunity to experience the green mountainous landscape, cooler climate and vibrant culture brought about by the summer monsoon in Dhofar Governorate. Khareef Dhofar is not only a tourism draw, but also represents the opportunity to develop local content and ensure that Dhofar and the Omani economy benefit from tourism spend.

Local content identifies ways to ensure value from tourism expenditure remains in the country through job, procurement and investment opportunities. Related to Khareef, local content provides an opportunity for the region to transform temporary tourism from economic draw to regional economic development.

FROM VISITOR SPENDING TO LOCAL ECONOMIC VALUE

Khareef attracts thousands of visitors each year. Tourism creates a demand for services that include lodging, meals, entertainment, retail goods and transportation to and from each service. The most crucial of local content questions is: What percentage of this spending remains in Dhofar?

All industries related to tourism including lodging, restaurants, tour operators, shopping centres and government tourism initiatives have the opportunity to increase their local economic value by improving procurement. Examples of local procurement may include

foods, services and goods from Omani agriculture, fishing and other industries.

This approach creates a multiplier effect. Spending by tourists supports local businesses which employ Omanis and buy from other local suppliers, generating additional economic activity.

EMPOWERING DHOFAR SMES

Khareef is a great opportunity for Omani SMEs and entrepreneurs. Setting up temporary markets, festive tourism, food outlets, cultural and adventure tourism, doing guided tours; and offering transportation and digital tourism solutions gives young entrepreneurs a chance to start and grow their businesses.

However, participation of SMEs should extend beyond temporary and seasonal markets. A Khareef Local Content Programme should identify SMEs prior to the season, connect them to major tourism operators and hotels, offer business support and facilitate contracts.

Large companies involved in Khareef activities should establish procurement targets for Omani SMEs, especially businesses based in Dhofar.

PROMOTING MADE IN OMAN

Khareef is a great opportunity to promote Omani products. Frankincense and other products should be available for tourists to purchase along with traditional Omani products, local foods, crafts, agriculture and clothing.

A combination of strategic tourism and

Local content means more than just local procurement. Employment opportunities in hospitality, tourism, management, digital marketing, tour guiding, events, logistics, customer service and entrepreneurship will allow youth employment and skills development.

market placement, “Made in Oman — Khareef”, will bring producers together enhancing domestic and international marketing.

Local content means more than just local procurement. Employment opportunities in hospitality, tourism, management, digital marketing, tour guiding, events, logistics, customer service and entrepreneurship will allow youth employment and skills development.

Seasonal employment could be linked to structured training and certification so that participants develop skills that remain valuable beyond the Khareef Dhofar Season.

MEASURING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT

The next part will be to measure the Khareef, not just with visitor numbers and hotel occupancy, but with its local economic impact. This could mean measuring the number of Omanis employed, SME spending, local procurement, locally manufactured goods purchased, the number of Dhofar businesses participating and the total economic value retained in Oman.

Khareef Dhofar is more than a tourism season. With a strong local content framework, it can become an annual engine for SME development, job creation, local manufacturing, entrepreneurship, regional development and sustainable economic diversification.

The goal is to move from measuring the number of visitors, to the number of sustainable visitors and the value they create for the Dhofar region and Oman.

CAN RENEWABLES TRANSFORM OMAN’S DESALINATION FUTURE?

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

For Oman, the relationship between energy and water is becoming increasingly important. The Sultanate of Oman has limited natural freshwater resources, while a growing population, expanding cities and industrial development continue to increase demand for reliable water supplies. Desalination has therefore become a central part of the country’s water security strategy.

But desalination requires energy. As Oman expands its renewable-energy capacity, a new question is emerging: can abundant solar and wind resources help make the production of desalinated water more efficient and less carbon intensive?

Oman already has an extensive desalination industry. Desalination plants supply a significant proportion of potable water in the country, particularly in areas where conventional freshwater resources are limited. The challenge is that most large-scale desalination technologies require substantial amounts of electricity or thermal energy.

Reverse osmosis, now widely used in modern desalination plants, works by forcing seawater through specialised membranes at high pressure. It is generally more energy efficient than older thermal desalination technologies, but it still requires a continuous supply of electricity.

This creates a natural connection with renewable energy. Solar power is particularly attractive because Oman receives high levels of solar irradiation for much of the year. Wind resources in areas such as Dhofar and parts of the central and southern regions can provide another source of electricity, helping diversify renewable generation.

The opportunity is not simply to power existing desalination plants with renewable electricity. As new water infrastructure is planned, renewable generation and desalination could increasingly be considered together.

One advantage is that desalination does not necessarily have to operate at exactly the same output every hour. Where water storage is available, production can potentially be increased during periods when renewable electricity is abundant and reduced when electricity is more constrained. This creates an opportunity to use desalination as part of a broader energy-management system.

Large water reservoirs can effectively provide a degree of flexibility. Water produced during periods of high renewable generation can be stored and distributed later according to demand. In this way, the water system can help accommodate fluctuations in solar and wind generation without compromising the reliability of water supplies.

Wheat tests Oman’s strategy for food security

AS DHOFAR Governorate moves through the khareef Dhofar Season, figures issued during this year’s wheat harvest deserve a closer look. Officials projected production of about 8,000 tonnes from 6,408 feddans — approximately 2,690 hectares — across 51 farms in the Najd area during the 2025/26 season.

The number is encouraging. It is also not enough, by itself, to answer the more important policy question: what makes wheat, or any other crop, strategic for Oman?

The latest confirmed national result provides useful context. In 2024/25, Oman produced 10,128 tonnes of wheat from 8,327 feddans, with an official market value of about RO 3.04 million. Dhofar supplied 7,723 tonnes, accounting for 76 per cent of national production.

Scale matters. In 2022, the government estimated Oman’s annual wheat consumption at between 320,000 and 350,000 tonnes and set an ambition to produce 10 per cent domestically. Against that demand benchmark, the latest confirmed harvest represents roughly 3 per cent of annual consumption — equivalent, by volume, to about 11 days of demand.

That comparison is not an argument against domestic wheat. It clarifies the job that local production is expected to perform.

The term “strategic crop” is often used as though it simply means a crop grown locally or supported by the state. But a crop can be commercially valuable, nutritionally important or culturally significant without necessarily being strategic.

A crop becomes strategic when disruption to its supply would create a serious national vulnerability and when domestic production can reduce that vulnerability at an acceptable cost.

Wheat makes a strong case. It is a staple, can be stored for long periods and feeds directly into flour and other essential foods. International supplies can also be affected by export restrictions, conflict, shipping



QASIM AL MAASHANI

The author is the head of the Business and Politics department at Oman Observer

A crop becomes strategic when disruption to its supply would create a serious national vulnerability and when domestic production can reduce that vulnerability at an acceptable cost

disruption and sudden price increases.

Yet wheat’s strategic importance does not mean Oman must pursue complete self-sufficiency. Nor does it mean that every additional hectare planted automatically strengthens food security.

A more realistic objective is resilience: diversified overseas suppliers, adequate strategic stocks, reliable ports and mills; and a carefully calibrated level of domestic production. Local wheat should function as part of that portfolio — an insurance policy against disruption, not a replacement for trade.

Insurance, however, has a premium. In agriculture, that premium includes land, groundwater, energy, procurement support, machinery and public administration. The relevant question is therefore not only how many tonnes can be produced, but how much supply risk each tonne removes relative to the resources it consumes.

This is particularly important in the Najd. An official groundwater model published in 2024 estimated that water withdrawals across its study area rose from 19 million cubic metres a year in 1995 to 139 million in 2021. It also identified part of the Umm Er Radhuma aquifer as non-renewable and advised against concentrating pumping and agricultural projects in limited locations.

Those findings do not prove that wheat is the wrong crop for the area. They do mean that groundwater cannot be treated as a free input when deciding what qualifies as strategic.

Before acreage or public support is expanded, every proposed strategic crop should pass the same test.

How vulnerable is Oman to disruption in its imported supply? How much additional stock cover would domestic production provide? How much water, land and public support are required per tonne? Can production be expanded during an emergency? Does the crop

strengthen associated capabilities such as seed development, storage, processing and logistics?

The answers will vary by crop. Wheat may score highly for storability and national importance, while a perishable crop may require investment in processing and cold storage before additional production improves resilience. A high-value export crop may support farmers and diversify income without materially reducing the country’s exposure to shortages of food.

“Strategic” should therefore be a decision reached through evidence, not a prestige label attached permanently to selected crops.

One counterargument is that this approach risks reducing food security to a spreadsheet. Imported wheat may be cheaper in normal conditions, but markets do not remain normal during every crisis. A purely commercial calculation could undervalue the farmers, adapted seeds, machinery and procurement systems that Oman would need if imports were interrupted.

That objection is valid. Domestic production has an insurance value beyond the market price of the harvest. But the answer is to recognise and price that value explicitly, not to exempt strategic agriculture from economic and environmental scrutiny.

If the final percentage points require disproportionate use of non-renewable groundwater, however, the same resources might buy more security through larger reserves, broader import partnerships or improvements to storage and logistics.

With Dhofar now providing most of Oman’s domestic wheat, the next question should not simply be how many more hectares can be planted. It should be what level of production delivers the greatest reduction in national supply risk for every unit of water, land and public support.

Oman should grow strategic crops because they reduce strategic risk — not call them strategic merely because it has chosen to grow them.

CLASSIFIEDS

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Panchakarma, Yoga, Kalari, Massage Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Marma Therapy & Post Delivery Care

Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair Service Road, Near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-King

Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

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

Car Rental & Lease

FOR RENT

10000 sqm plus area of open yard fully blacktop with compound wall, wide gate & CCTV for immediate rent in Jifnain. Contact: 99853040

4 Ready made office space for rent in Bank Melli Iran building MBD area Ruwi, opposite Centre point. Contact: 99011352.

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN male B.Tech Mechanical engineer with 3+ yrs experience as Project engineer in project execution, commissioning, Auto CAD. Currently in Oman seeking job. Contact: +968 75174368

SENIOR Accountant: Indian male 20 years experience in Oman, shipping & logistics, Trading & contracting upto finalisation, cont: 95915852

INDIAN male civil engineer with more than 30 years experience in different ministers, seek immediate suitable position. Contact: 94158080

LOOKING for warehouse manager role. Indian male, 14 years GCC experience with driving licence. Available to join immediately. Please contact: 92991621

SENIOR Logistics Coordinator seeking opportunity. 8 years' experience in Import, Export, Customs Clearance & Freight. PH +968 92267276

SIT. WANTED

SALES professional with 5 yrs Experience in Medical sector. Graduate, Available in Muscat. akhilmanu777@gmail.com Contact: 76323324

OPERATIONS Support / Tendering / Contract Management / Procurement professional with 18+ years' Oil & Gas experience. NOC & driving license available. 96227272, jijilmathew@gmail.com

LOGISTICS Documentation Executive. Indian male, 25 years, BBA, PG Diploma in Logistics & SCM and have 2 years of experience in this field. Seeking a position in Logistics field +968 7506 9882 Mail: shafazhussain18@gmail.com

ACCOUNTS/ SALES Indian male (b com) having 2+ years of experience in India accounts sales looking for suitable placement, join immediately. Contact: 76324360

MECHANICAL engineer with 11+ years experience in projects & marketing in Oman having valid driving licence. Seeking suitable placement. Contact: 91162085

EXPERIENCED Accounts & Finance Candidate Seeking Suitable Opportunity. Expertise in Accounts, Invoicing, Reconciliation & Reporting. Contact: 75177637

15+ experience in building material, project sales & Trade market, deal with corporate project customers, looking for a suitable job. Contact 78384283

INDIAN male MBA Graduate with 15yrs experience in Oman seek suitable senior position in finance office admin., sales DTC. Contact: 94158080

LOOKING for part time or full time Accounts/ Finance job. 20yrs experience in Muscat. Upto finalization & Audit. Please contact: 92065499

LOOKING for part time OR full time Accounts/ Finance job. 20yrs experience in Muscat. Upto finalization & Audit. Please contact: 92065499

SALE OF USED VEHICLES

GRAND i10

PEGAS

Jeep COMPASS

NISSAN SUNNY

SPORTAGE

Offers are invited for the purchase of the above individual vehicles, with preference given to the highest bidder. RFQs available at the Khimji Ramdas Automotive Workshop, Ghala.

*Image shown is only for indicative purpose. Features and Colours may differ.

KEVIN 99230018

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (Cockroaches), Public Health Chemicals, Agriculture Chemicals, Snake Repellent, Rodent Baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

SIT. WANTED

PAKISTANI male, having diploma in mechanical engineering, 10+ years experience as "sales engineer" in UAE and 15 years experience as "operation manager" in Oman with D/L. Looking for job
Contact: 99495131
email: manzoor.Ahmed1997@gmail.com

INDIAN electrical engineer more than 20 years experience in "MEP" construction field in Oman seeks suitable job.
Contact: 92919281

SIT. WANTED

DESKTOP support engineer, 6+ years experience, skilled in Windows/ Server/ Ubuntu, Network configuration, M365 & Google workspace admin. Contact: 99639710, jay.prajapati5655@gmail.ci

Project manager (IT) 4+ years experience seeking opportunities in PMO Project Management or business analysis, MS Engineering Mgt. Experience across IT, Banking. Higher Education & nonprofit sectors. PMP (in progress) currently in Oman. Contact: 95800828

Lost Bill of Lading Notice

Six Construct LLC, registered under Commercial Registration No. (9014276), has lost Bill of Lading No. (GBTJSOH039/056) on 20/7/2026. Whoever finds it should hand it over to the nearest branch of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry or contact the following number: +968 99229518.

SIT. WANTED

LOGISTICS Experienced in Logistics, warehouse & Operation incharge Seeking Suitable position with 15 yrs of experience in Logistics, warehouse Management & Supply chain along with hand on Chemical storage, involvement in project operation handling, Also have sales experience in Mechanical & Instrumentation products. Immediate joiner Valid Oman D/LOL Contact: 95852916

SALES Executive required For working in oil and gas / building materials industry Vehicle Driving license preferred Email: kirit@bustaninternational.com Mobile: 95544641

LOOKING for SUPPLY CHAIN / SALES jobs Indian male 24 years. Commerce graduate, Experience in logistics, procurement and sales in reputed company in Oman. Valid Oman D/L. Contact +96891121694, issacantony2002@gmail.com

PROJECT management professional with 20+ years' experience in tendering, business development, business systemisation, ISO QMS, planning and procurement. Possesses managerial and team lead skills. Seeking an opportunity. Contact: 91799438

INDIAN male, 10 year experience in Oman as Coordinator have Driving licence. Contact: 95645241

Accounts & Finance professional with 7+ years' experience in reporting, revenue assurance, audit, compliance & ERP. Contact: 90159392

INDIAN Male, BSc, 20 years experience seeks suitable position as System Administrator / System Engineer. Contact: 93642216

LOOKING for Pipeline Engineer with 8 Years Experience offer salary: 200 OMR Phone : +96896965333 Email : sultanalhabsi701@gmail.com

To advertise in Ministry of Information channels

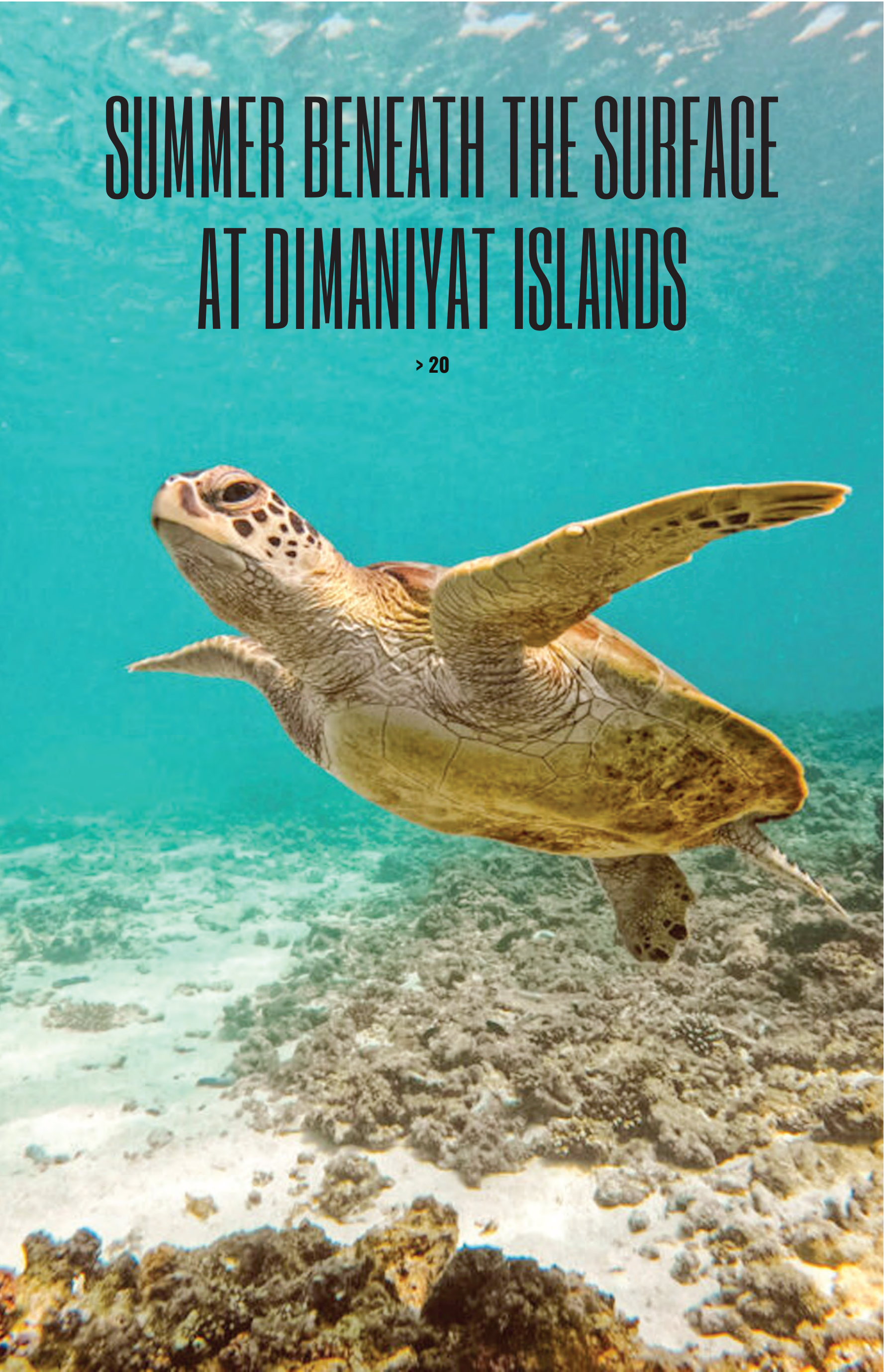


To advertise

71455532- 71455531- 71455530
adv@omaninfo.om
izdihar_info izdihar.info



ART/LIFE



SUMMER BENEATH THE SURFACE AT DIMANIYAT ISLANDS

> 20

LITERARYLEGACY

AUSTRIAN WRITER STEFAN ZWEIG, WHO FLED NAZIS, HONOURED IN LONDON



With its grand facade, the 1930s London mansion block looks like countless others. But flat 71 at 49 Hallam Street once housed one of the most celebrated writers of 20th-century Europe.

Austrian writer Stefan Zweig lived there for three years, from 1936 to 1939, after fleeing his homeland as Adolf Hitler rose to power. Largely forgotten today, Zweig was once the world's most widely translated author and a major literary figure.

Ninety years after he settled in Hallam Street, the address has finally been officially commemorated. A round blue plaque, recently installed on the building, marks Zweig's former home as part of English Heritage's Blue Plaques programme.

"Stefan Zweig 1881-1942, Austrian Writer lived in flat 71, 1936-1939", reads the plaque.

The writer was among those targeted by the Nazis. His address appeared on the secret Sonder fahndungsliste G B, or "Special Search List Great Britain", which contained about 2,820 names of people considered enemies of the regime, including politicians, writers, scientists, journalists and refugees. In the event of a Nazi invasion of Britain, SS units were instructed to detain and "neutralise" those listed.

Zweig's time in London was emotionally complex. English Heritage blue plaques historian Susan Skedd said his letters showed that the city provided comfort, while he was also frustrated by what he saw as Britain's relative detachment from the war.

His growing sense of cultural loss was reflected in his autobiography, *The World of Yesterday*, which recalled the vanished world of his former life in Vienna. He had left the city in 1933.

In September 1939, shortly after war broke out in Europe, Zweig delivered the funeral eulogy for fellow exile and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud at Golders Green Cemetery.

Zweig wrote several notable works while living at Hallam Street, including *Beware of Pity*, published in 1939. His earlier books, *Letter from an Unknown Woman* and *Twenty-Four Hours in the Life of a Woman*, were translated into dozens of languages.

His influence later reached filmmaker Wes Anderson, who said he had drawn inspiration from Zweig's works for his 2014 film *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Anderson said Ralph Fiennes' character was largely modelled on Zweig.

Despite finding refuge in London, Zweig's story ended tragically. He left for New York in 1940 before settling in Brazil. As the situation in Europe deteriorated, he became increasingly depressed.

On February 23, 1942, one day after completing his autobiography, Zweig, 60 and his second wife, Lotte, 33, died by suicide after taking fatal doses of barbiturates. — AFP

QUICK FEATURES



HEATWAVE

A dip in a natural lake at the foot of Mont Blanc — there's nothing quite like it for cooling off when a heatwave is sweeping the country. — AFP



SOLAR ECLIPSE

An artist uses self-made artefacts to observe a solar eclipse before totality near the small village of Castell de Cabres, Spain. — Reuters



TOURISM

Cast member and renowned "How to Train your Dragon" actor Mason Thames attends the premiere for the film "Nimrods" in Los Angeles, California, US. — Reuters

INSTA PICKS



Spellbinding Omani roads cutting through palm trees



A tiny guardian nesting

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

JONAS BROTHERS TO HEADLINE NFL HALFTIME SHOW IN MELBOURNE



The multi-platinum Jonas Brothers will headline the halftime show during the 2026 NFL Melbourne game pitting the San Francisco 49ers against the Los Angeles Rams next month, the NFL announced on Wednesday.

Per the league, the performance by Nick, Joe and Kevin Jonas will be the first of seven halftime shows across the 2026 NFL International Games. The NFL will announce the other artists in the coming weeks.

“We couldn’t be more excited to perform at halftime during the NFL’s first- ever regular season game in Australia”, the Jonas Brothers said in a statement. “Playing at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of such passionate Australian fans is an incredible honour. We can’t wait to be part of this historic moment and celebrate with everyone in the stadium and watching around the world”.

The game will kick off on Friday, September 11 at 10:35 am local time, which will be Thursday, September 10, at 8:35 pm ET in the United States.

The halftime performance will stream live globally on Netflix.

“Bringing the first-ever NFL regular season game to Australia is a landmark moment for the league and we are committed to creating an entertainment experience that reflects the scale and significance of the occasion”, said Tim Tubito, senior director of global game presentation and entertainment at the NFL.

“The Jonas Brothers are global entertainers whose music connects across generations, making them the ideal artists to help us celebrate this historic game in Melbourne. We look forward to delivering a memorable halftime performance for our fans in Australia and those watching around the world”. — Reuters

‘Coyote Vs Acme’ brings Looney Tunes back to big screen



Will Forte and Lana Condor lead the live-action adventure of Coyote vs Acme

DIRECTOR Dave Green said it was a “crazy miracle” that the live-action animated Looney Tunes comedy “Coyote Vs Acme” finally secured a 2026 release date after being shelved in 2023.

“We saw this incredible outpouring of support from friends and other filmmakers and people we had never met, people who were fans of this brand, people who had never even seen Looney Tunes”, Green said.

For the “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows” director, the film’s survival after being dropped by Warner Bros. Discovery and spending years in distribution limbo mirrored the movie’s central message of determination. The film was eventually picked up by Ketchup Entertainment in 2025.

The movie follows Wile E Coyote as he takes the Acme Corporation to court after its products repeatedly fail him in his pursuit of the Road Runner.

Represented by struggling attorney Kevin Avery, played by Will Forte, Wile E seeks justice against the company. The film is based on Ian Frazier’s 1990 The New Yorker article “Coyote Vs Acme”.

“It’s really back to the spirit of resilience of Wiley, the character and because that’s really what our audience did for us”, Green said. “They stood up and they did not stop standing up”.

The cast also includes Lana Condor as Paige Avery, Kevin’s niece and John Cena as Buddy Crane, Acme’s attorney.

Longtime Looney Tunes voice actor Eric Bauza voices several beloved characters, including Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, Tweety Bird and



Promotional poster for the new live-action movie.

For the ‘Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows’ director, the film’s survival after being dropped by Warner Bros. Discovery and spending years in distribution limbo mirrored the movie’s central message of determination

Foghorn Leghorn.

“There’s so many classic characters that we tap upon in this film, that when one is done, you go to the next scene and you’re like, ‘Wait, who’s that in the background?’” Bauza said.

For Forte and Cena, Looney Tunes has been a childhood staple.

“I was born in 1970 and I don’t remember life without Looney Tunes. It was a constant presence in my life”, Forte said.

Cena said that while he grew up with the cartoons, recreating the

childhood experience isn’t a prerequisite for enjoying the film.

“I’m in Will [Forte’s] camp. I grew up... with Looney Tunes. They were on in the morning before I went to school. They were on exactly at the time I got out of school in the afternoon. Network programmers knew what they were up to”, the “Peacemaker” actor said.

Still, he stressed that “Coyote Vs Acme” is not solely for longtime fans. “Coyote Vs Acme” arrives in theatres on August 28.

— Reuters

FEATURES



SANAD AL ZAWAWI

WHILE Salalah takes the spotlight as Oman’s iconic summer escape, Muscat offers a different kind of sanctuary. Beyond the green hills, mist-covered mountains and rain-washed plains of Dhofar lies another refreshing retreat: the underwater world of the Dimaniyat Islands Nature Reserve, where coral reefs, sea turtles and crystal-clear waters offer a glimpse into Oman’s rich marine life.

Located around 18 kilometres off the coast between Barka and Al Seeb, the reserve comprises nine islands. The islands provide important nesting grounds for endangered hawksbill and green turtles, while resident and migratory seabirds, including white-cheeked and bridled terns, return each year to breed. Together, these habitats make the Dimaniyat Islands one of Oman’s most important marine reserves.

The journey begins at Al Seeb Port, where the scent of saltwater and freshly caught fish mingles with the calls of seagulls and the hum of boats preparing to depart. Visitors gather as guides make final preparations and deliver a brief safety briefing, reminding the group of the responsibility that comes with entering a protected natural environment.

As the boat heads into the open waters of the Sea of Oman, Muscat’s skyline gradually fades into the distance, replaced by an endless stretch of blue. After around 30 to 40 minutes, the outline of the nine islands appears on the horizon, signalling the arrival at the nature reserve.

At the designated snorkelling site, the anchor is lowered and preparations begin. Visitors secure their flippers, adjust their masks and make their final checks. Guides remind them not to touch the coral or disturb marine life. Access to parts of the islands is also restricted from May to October to protect nesting seabirds.

With the briefing complete, visitors enter the water one by one. Beneath the surface, the character of Dimaniyat Islands changes completely.

The clear, cool water reveals coral reefs stretching across the seabed, with schools of colourful fish weaving between them. Yet for many visitors, the most memorable encounters are with the reserve’s sea turtles, which can often be spotted moving calmly through the water.

Regular diving enthusiast Saif al Zawawi, who has explored several diving sites across Oman and the region, said the Dimaniyat Islands

Summer beneath the surface at Dimaniyat Islands



While Salalah draws visitors with its lush summer landscapes, Dimaniyat Islands offer a different seasonal escape, where crystal-clear waters, vibrant coral reefs and sea turtles reveal the beauty of Oman’s marine world.



stands out for the cleanliness of its waters, the beauty of its coral reefs and the diversity of its marine life.

“This was not my first visit, yet every time I return, I am struck by its beauty. The stunning clarity of the water and the elegance of the coral never fail to impress”, he said.

For experienced divers and first-time visitors alike, the underwater landscape offers more than an opportunity to observe marine life. It provides a reminder of the importance of protecting one of Oman’s most remarkable natural environments.

As the boat makes its way back to Al Seeb Port, the islands gradually disappear into the horizon. For first-time visitor Omar al Busaidi, however, the experience remains.

“Freediving in Dimaniyat Islands in Muscat Governorate is an enjoyable experience that allows visitors to discover the beauty of our beloved Oman’s marine environment”, he said.

While Salalah remains Oman’s quintessential summer destination, Dimaniyat Islands offers an escape of a different kind, one found beneath the surface of the sea.

