

Times

GOLDEN JUBILEE

OF OMAN



50

YEARS OF LEGACY



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HM STRESSES GROWTH AND SOCIAL PROGRESS UNDER VISION 2040

The Council of Ministers reviewed the preliminary results of the State's General Budget for 2025

SALALAH: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over the meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Maamoura Palace in Salalah on Tuesday.

At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the bounties of prosperity, security and stability that He bestowed on the Sultanate of Oman.

His Majesty prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect this dear nation, its citizens and residents therein under His divine care, to endow all with abundant blessings and to consummate all efforts and endeavours with success.

Then, His Majesty reviewed the local, regional and international developments as stated below:

In response to a briefing to the Council of Ministers about the results and indicators made dur-

ing the 10th Five-Year Development Plan (2021-2025) and the 11th Five-Year Development Plan (2026-2030)'s objectives to achieve balanced social and human development, sustainable economic growth, boost labour market and employment efficiency and furnish proper grounds for education, health and housing—His Majesty the Sultan commended the efforts of all units of the State Administrative Apparatus and the private sector.

His Majesty valued those units' commitment to implement various development programmes and projects, noting that this has enhanced the fiscal position and economic performance of the Sultanate of Oman and the country's advancement in economic indicators.

His Majesty stressed the need to maintain the progress made so far and to press ahead with steps to upgrade Oman's ranking in those indices and to enhance economic and social stability and the competitiveness of the national economy, while at the same time benefiting from the review and assessment of the previous plan—with the prime objective of meeting the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

He pointed out that the positive outcomes achieved during the current plan foster confidence in the pursuit of future development tracks.

His Majesty underscored the

importance of joining hands towards the achievement of the targets of the upcoming development plan and to maintain the drive to achieve higher growth rates, develop appropriate mechanisms to boost the national economy, expand its structure, diversify the sources of income and to find suitable solutions for addressing the challenges posed to the implementation of employment and training initiatives and programmes, with special emphasis on generating new employment opportunities in all sectors.

The Council of Ministers reviewed the preliminary results of the State's General Budget for 2025, in which the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by (3.4%), at constant prices, due to improved added value of non-oil activities.

This budget period saw the launch of projects and programmes in a number of social and economic developmental fields.

Following this briefing, a review was made of articles of the draft State General Budget for Fiscal Year 2026—the first year in the 11th Five-Year Development Plan (2026-2030).

His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to authorities concerned to keep achieving sustainable development goals, supporting economic stability and achieving efficiency in spending within a balanced and sustainable framework. **>A4**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN
Power cut not due to cyber attacks: APSR



1 The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has denied rumours about the sudden power outage that occurred on Monday due to any cyber attacks. The APSR said it was investigating the sudden power failure that occurred in parts of Oman. **>A3**

OMAN
International Day for Ozone Layer protection

2 Represented by the Environment Authority, the Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday joined in celebrating the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer. The day is celebrated annually on 16 September. **>A2**

MARKET
Over 8 million mobile service subscriptions

3 The latest data from the NCSI shows that the total number of mobile service subscriptions reached 8,153,859 by the end of July 2025, a 15.5 percent increase compared to the same period in 2024. **>B1**

WIPO REPORT

Oman advances five places in Global Innovation Index 2025

GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman has made significant progress in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025, advancing 5 places to rank 69th out of 139 economies worldwide.

This achievement is highlighted in the 18th edition of the report published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

The report noted Oman's strong performance, ranking among the top 20 globally in six sub-indicators: 9th in the development of economic cluster environments; 10th in policy stability for doing business; 12th in graduates in science and engineering; 14th in net foreign direct investment inflows



as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP); 15th in access to information and communication technology and 16th in electric-

ity production (kWh per million people).

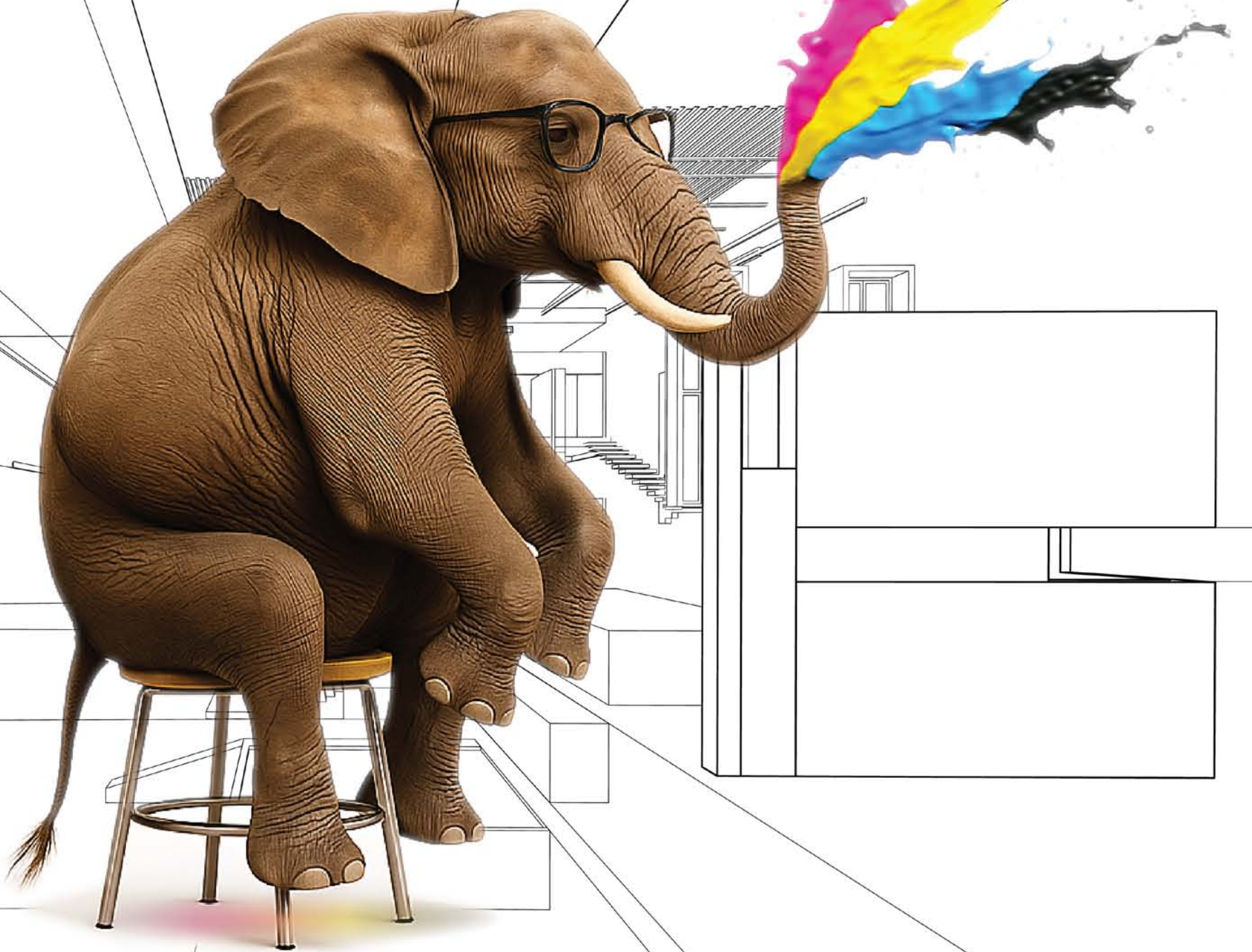
The report also mentioned that Oman improved in three key pil-

lars: It advanced 3 ranks in the Institutions pillar to 40th place; Oman climbed 8 ranks in the Infrastructure pillar to 55th place and it jumped 23 ranks in the Business Sophistication pillar to 63rd place.

Furthermore, Oman achieved qualitative leaps in seven specific sub-indicators, advancing 60 places in patents by origin, 23 places in the business sophistication pillar, 22 places in high-tech manufacturing, and 21 places in both gross capital formation and net foreign direct investment inflows.

It also moved up 20 places in knowledge production and 5 places in research cooperation between the industry and academia. **-OMA**

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OMAN

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Isha.....7:25pm

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STRATEGIC PLANNING

RAO organises Dhofar Race 2025



SALALAH: The Dhofar Race 2025, organised by the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) with participation from its brigades, formations, and units, was held on Tuesday in the Dhofar Governorate.

The event was held under the auspices of Maj. General Matar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman. The RAO Commander was briefed on the race route before



giving the signal to start. The race covered a distance of 21 km, beginning at the Razat Camp and ending at the Sahalnoot Camp. During the race, the Royal Army of Oman's music band performed various musical displays. At the end of the race, Major General Al Balushi presented trophies, shields, and awards to the winners. -ONA

Omani Scouts, Guides take part in Kuwait event



KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Scouts and Guides participated in the "Strategic Planning" programme hosted by the Kuwaiti Scout Association. The programme brought together 50 male and female scout leaders from 13 Arab countries, representing a selection of pioneers and leaders in Arab scouting. The programme's sessions focused on the concepts of strategic thinking, planning, and management to support institutional development and achieve sustainable development goals within scouting organisations. -ONA

FROM 25 SEPTEMBER

Oman named Guest of Honour at Amman Book Fair

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will be the Guest of Honour at the 24th edition of Amman International Book Fair, which will be held in Amman at the Hussein Convention Centre from 25 September to 5 October 2025. At the event, Oman will be represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. Omani establishments and institutions that will participate in the 24th edition of Amman International Book Fair also include

the Ministry of Information; the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs; the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism; Sultan Qaboos University; Oman Society for Writers and Literati, Bait Al Zubair, in addition to libraries and private publishing establishments. **Positive outcome** Oman achieved positive outcome through its participation in recent book fairs held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar,

the Arab Republic of Egypt and South Korea. During the book fairs, Oman underlined its deep-rooted cultural legacy, the support it accords to innovative cultural industries and programmes to showcase various forms of Omani culture, Oman's tourism assets and investment in culture. The pavilions also contributed to highlighting the Sultanate of Oman's status in the international cultural arena. -ONA



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BALANCED DRINKING WATER

Oman marks day for saving of Ozone layer

The day is celebrated annually on 16 September and this year's theme is "From Science to Global Action"

MUSCAT: Represented by the Environment Authority, the Sultanate of Oman yesterday joined in celebrating the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer. The day is celebrated annually on 16 September and this year's theme is "From Science to Global Action." The celebration highlights the crucial role of the Montreal Protocol in protecting the ozone layer, which acts as a shield for Earth against harmful ultraviolet radiation. It also acknowledges the protocol's role in driving broader global climate action initiatives. Oman joined the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that De-

plete the Ozone Layer under Royal Decree No. 73/1998. It later committed to all amendments to the protocol, including the London, Copenhagen, Montreal, Beijing, and Kigali Amendments. In line with its international commitments, Oman has implemented numerous policies, programs, and monitoring procedures since 2001, enabling it to meet compliance requirements for reducing and phasing out key ozone-depleting substances. The consumption of halons and chlorofluorocarbons reached zero at the beginning of 2010, and the use of methyl bromide was phased out starting in 2015.

Regarding hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), for which the Montreal Protocol set a gradual phase-out schedule until 2030, Oman has achieved advanced reduction targets. The country achieved a 10% reduction in 2015 and a 35% reduction in 2020. It is now on track to meet a 67.5% reduction target in 2025. Oman's efforts to protect the ozone layer align with Oman Vision 2040, which prioritizes environmental and climate sustainability issues. These efforts also reflect its commitment to international agreements such as the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, which in 2009 became the first two treaties in UN history to be ratified by all member states. Oman's participation in the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer reaffirms its active role in international efforts to preserve the environment and ensure the sustainability of its resources. The country contributes to achieving global ozone protection goals through diligent work on legislative development, building national capacities, and strengthening international cooperation, which positively impacts human health and the safety of ecosystems worldwide. -ONA

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PROBE ON

APSR denies power outage caused by cyber attacks

Times News Service

MUSCAT : The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has denied rumours about the sudden power outage that occurred on Monday due to any cyber attacks.

The APSR confirmed it is investigating the sudden power failure that occurred in parts of the Sultanate of Oman.

The Authority explained that it has formed a specialised technical team to study the incident and determine its technical and operational details.

The Authority explained that preliminary results indicate that the outage was caused by a technical failure in one of the power plants, while also confirming that rumors circulating about the network being subjected to cyber attacks are false.



It also explained that a technical investigation is underway to determine the causes of the outage and assess the speed with which licensed companies responded to restore service.

The Authority affirmed that it will fulfill its regulatory role stipulated by law by taking the necessary legal and regulatory measures to ensure the reliability of the service and protect the rights of subscribers, in accordance with the regulations and laws governing the electricity sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Authority called on subscribers who may face any challenges or problems with the electricity current to contact the licensed company directly via the call center on number (1011).

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Programme to empower Omani professionals launched

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development on Tuesday launched a protocol programme on interacting with people with disabilities and their families in the Muscat Governorate.

The programme is a collaboration between the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, with 80 specialists participating.

The programme aims to qualify and empower Omani professionals to provide sustainable and inclusive services that respect the rights of people with disabilities and contribute to their effective



integration into society.

It also seeks to spread awareness of proper and professional etiquette when dealing with people with disabilities and their families, and to develop effective communication skills among professionals in the field, ensuring that services are needs-based and adhere to relevant international standards and conventions.

The two-day programme will cover fundamental principles of effective communication, the main challenges faced by people with disabilities and their families, ways to meet their diverse needs, and an overview of international conventions related to their rights.

It will also feature training sessions to foster a culture of communication, respect for diversity, and provide practical skills for interacting according to established protocols. - ONA



Heritage Ministry signs agreement to manage Barka Fort

The project will stimulate tourism by attracting visitors from both within and outside Oman

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Tuesday signed a contract with Bait Al Ghasham Trading to manage, operate, and utilise Barka Fort in the Wilayat of Barka, South Al Batinah Governorate.

Maximise the benefits

The signing of this agreement aims to maximise the benefits of cultural heritage and its contribution to economic growth, as Barka Fort is one of the most important historical landmarks in the governorate, holding significant cultural and heritage value.

The project will stimulate tourism by attracting visitors from both within and outside Oman and will serve as an opportunity to enhance the private sector's role in the management and operation of

heritage sites.

The project will also provide multiple investment opportunities, including tourism activities, cultural events, recreational activities, and craft exhibitions, in addition to creating job opportunities in various sectors.

After its operation and management under modern standards, the fort is expected to become an important contributor to the national economy by increasing tourism spending, encouraging entrepreneurs in hospitality and related services, and strengthening Barka's position as a prominent tourist and cultural destination on the Omani tourism map. -ONA

Tender Announcement



Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG invites Bidders to submit their proposal for the below detailed tender:

Tender No.	Description	Tender Fee (Non refundable) OMR	Tender Purchase deadline	Clarification deadline	Tender Submission Date
TENDER/ 2025/09/ ENG/021	Construction of a Warehouse at Bidbid in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate	200/-	23.09.2025	28.09.2025	01.10.2025
Bank Name & Account Number		Bank Muscat (0423005687760617)			

The Conditions:

- Collection of Tenders:** Interested, specialized companies and establishments registered under grade 3 and above (in C.R) with minimum of 3 years' experience in the same field. Bidders can collect the tender documents from the procurement department by sending a copy of the payment slip to procurement@almaha.com.om
- Offer Submission:** Tender bid should be submitted a sealed envelope and addressed to the **Chairman of Tender Committee**, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG marked with tender number and subject. Other marks or any reference must not be printed outside the envelope. The exterior of the envelope containing the tender document must not reveal the identity of the bidder.
- Submission Location:** The bid should be deposited in the tender box at Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG head office located in Ghala before 01:00 PM on the submission date.
- Any bid received after the specified date or if it does not meet the conditions will not be considered.
- Each bid shall be signed and stamped with the signature of the authorized person.
- Each bid shall be signed and stamped with the signature of the authorized person.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to accept, reject or cancel the tender without giving any reasons.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to add or cancel some of the works mentioned in the tender if necessary.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without giving any reasons.
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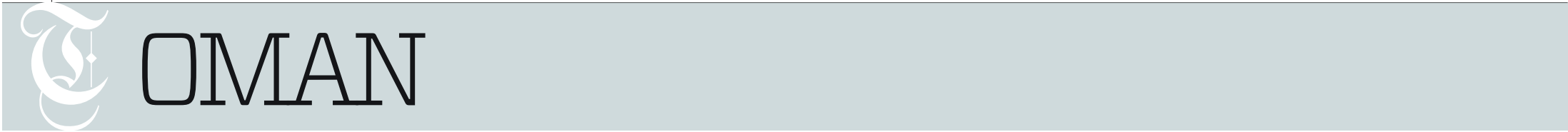
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< FROM A1

Council of Ministers gives full support to Qatar and Palestine

His Majesty the Sultan also stressed the importance of following up the implementation of the National Local Content Policy with the aim of encouraging existing industries, establishing local projects, enhancing productive industries linked to exports and developing economic programmes and policies to motivate the national economic growth.

The Council of Ministers reviewed the achievements of the Government Digital Transformation Programme (2021-2025)—which saw the launch of the National Services Portal, the issuance of the Government Digital Transformation Regulation, the digitisation of 74% of government services and the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) projects designed to make the Sultanate of Oman a regional hub for data processing centres and AI algorithms that indeed enabled Oman to occupy 45th place globally and 5th place among MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region in the AI Readiness Index.

Pursuant to this, the Council underlined the importance of cooperation among all units of the State Administrative Apparatus towards the realisation of the objectives of the National Programme for Digital Economy and its executive regulations and to undertake adequate action to boost readiness in terms of investment, technical, human and legislative spheres, in addition to addressing the obstacles facing this programme and AI projects in the upcoming stage.

After a briefing was presented to the Council of Ministers about the employment file, as well as the executive status of initiatives of the National Employment Programme—and the challenges involved—and, with a view to the Council's keenness to generate more employment opportunities for jobseekers, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to double the sum previously allocated to support the programmes and initiatives for the employment of jobseekers in the private sector, notably the Wage Support Initiative, so that the sum allocated would stand at OMR100 million, due to the substantial uptake to these programmes and initiatives by both the private sector and jobseekers.

It was also noted that the National Employment Platform “Tawteen” was launched in December 2024. The platform provides data on job supply and demand, displays available employment opportunities in the public and private sectors and data on jobseekers.

Emphasis was laid on developing “Tawteen” platform and devising a suitable mechanism to increase the number of registered companies and link the platform



with relevant databases to help use the data it provides in finding jobs for citizens.

The Council of Ministers listened to a briefing about the results of the semi-annual evaluation of government institutions' performance during 2024, as well as a briefing about the results achieved by the National Platform for Suggestions, Complaints, and Reports (Tajawob).

Following these briefings, the Council underlined the need to continue to develop (Tajawob) platform and to encourage the departments concerned to indicate the rate of finalization of reports within the specified period.

The Council also called for responding to the suggestions and complaints, addressing the most notable observations and follow-

ing up the satisfaction of the beneficiaries of government services.

The Council commended the performance of the departments that showed high rates of performance in this respect. It also urged other departments to exert further efforts to raise the levels of their performance.

His Majesty affirmed that, since the beginning of the year (2025), he has approved a mechanism for holding all departments accountable and responsible according to their annual performance results.

Within the context of His Majesty the Sultan's keenness in all that would elevate the services rendered to persons with disabilities, and, following a review of related indicators, and, due to the importance of according proper attention to this segment of soci-

ety, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives for the establishment of a new sector, at the level of a ministry undersecretary within the structure of the Ministry of Social Development.

The new entity will oversee this sector, accord appropriate attention to its affairs, address the challenges of the sector and ensure the empowerment of persons with disabilities and their integration in a more efficient manner that enhances their role in building society and facilitating their education.

The Council also gave its blessings for the launch of the National Initiative for the One Government Team that will be implemented by the Royal Academy of Management (RAM) for all employees of civil units of the State Administrative Apparatus.

The initiative aims to instill a mindset that transcends the boundaries of functional thinking to the supreme goal of joining the One Government Team and contribute to building Oman's future.

In this context, His Majesty stressed the importance of working with the One-Team spirit to elevate the nation to the status it deserves. He observed that “This could only be achieved when each one of us has faith in the importance of the impact his/her daily work would leave on his/her society and his/her country”.

Noting the success of the Khareef Dhofar (monsoon season) 2025, the Council of Ministers commended the efforts made both by the Governorate of Dhofar and the authorities concerned to implement multiple developmental

projects, events and programmes aimed to attract tourists to the Governorate.

On regional and international affairs and, after noting the principles of the Sultanate of Oman's steadfast policy of preserving international peace and security, the Council of Ministers valued the outcomes of the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit and its outcomes.

The Council expressed its condemnation of the Israeli aggression against the State of Qatar, noting that the aggression was in blatant violation of Qatar's sovereignty, as well as all international laws and norms.

The Council affirmed its full solidarity with the State of Qatar and voiced its complete support for all measures that Qatar takes in this regard.

In this context, the Council also reiterated its emphasis on the Sultanate of Oman's unwavering position in support of the Palestinian cause and the situation in the occupied territories and its condemnation of the persistent aggression against the besieged Gaza Strip.

The Council also voiced its absolute rejection of the ongoing practices of deliberately targeting innocent civilians, medical and relief personnel, journalists and infrastructure in the Strip, in addition to the ongoing crimes of starving the Palestinian population, preventing aid from reaching them, and attempts to displace the Palestinians.

The Council termed this as violation of international law and norms, international legitimacy resolutions and humanitarian principles. It affirmed that such acts in this regard undermine all regional and international efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees the Two-State Solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The Council also referred to the recent Royal and high-ranking official visits exchanged with Arab and friendly countries. It stressed the need to leverage from the agreements that were signed and converting those gains into tangible executive programmes that would serve the developmental goals of the country.

The Council also noted the Sultanate of Oman's participation in a number of regional and international meetings and summits aimed at affirming the principles of dialogue and developing joint solutions that bolster cooperation, security and stability—to serve the common interests of all countries.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan prayed to Allah the Almighty to grant all continued success for the welfare and prosperity of this dear homeland and its loyal people. -OMA

INTERACTIVE SESSION

Symposium organised by OCCI highlights importance of developing leadership and management skills



MUSCAT: A symposium on “Leadership and Management Development,” organised by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), affirmed that developing these skills is a fundamental pillar for enhancing the efficiency of the national workforce.

The event emphasised the importance of improving leadership and management capabilities for business owners, CEOs, decision-

makers, and human resources specialists through training, education on new strategies and techniques, and exploring the latest trends in the field.

The symposium was held at the W Hotel Muscat under the auspices of HH Sayyid Loai bin Ghalib Al Said. It was attended by Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rowas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the OCCI.

The symposium's programme, which included papers, a panel discussion, and an interactive session, aimed to develop leadership skills, stimulate innovation, and strengthen economic ties across various sectors.

The symposium also featured a panel discussion titled “Inspirational Leadership in a Rapidly Changing World: Between Self-Empowerment and Crisis

Management.”

Work environment

The discussion explored the impact of inspirational leadership on the work environment in large companies, how the concept of leadership is applied in high-pressure settings, the contribution of institutional and corporate leadership to employee empowerment and innovation, and the global per-

spective on the traits of an inspiring leader in a rapidly changing world.

An interactive session titled “Challenges and Opportunities in a Transforming World” was also held. It examined the challenges business owners face amid international and regional changes and explored the opportunities available.

It also addressed strategies for

balancing challenges and opportunities to enhance business sustainability.

On the sidelines of the symposium, an exhibition was organised for small and medium-sized enterprise owners. They showcased their products, services, innovations, and initiatives, providing a valuable opportunity for networking and exchanging experiences among participants. -OMA





Salalah Airport passenger traffic jumps by 13.2%

Oman Airports reported that Salalah Airport aircraft movements during the Khareef Dhofar season also rose by 10%, with 3,409 flights compared to 3,105 flights last year

MUSCAT: Oman Airports confirmed a remarkable surge in air traffic during the Khareef Dhofar (monsoon) 2025 season, from early June to the end of August. This was driven by the increasing popularity of travel to Dhofar, known for its pleasant weather and diverse recreational and cultural events.

Oman Airports reported that Salalah Airport saw a 13.2% increase in passenger traffic between early June and the end of August this year, reaching 562,561



passengers, compared to 496,936 passengers during the same period in 2024. Aircraft movements also rose by 10%, with 3,409 flights compared to 3,105 flights last year. This highlights the success of efforts to strengthen the airport's position as the main gateway to Dhofar.

Meanwhile, Sohar Airport experienced a notable 80% growth in passenger traffic between July and August 2025, with the number of passengers increasing from 6,495 in July to 11,691 in August.

For the first time, Salalah Airport launched a drive-through check-in service from 15 July to 15 September, allowing passengers

to complete travel procedures directly from their vehicles. Transom also offered its "Marhaba" service in Salalah, enabling passengers to finalise their travel arrangements, including check-in and baggage drop-off, in advance. A home check-in service was also provided.

Additionally, self-service check-in kiosks were introduced during the Khareef season, offering flexible and quick options for travelers. Oman Airports also hosted a FIFA electronic sports championship at the cargo building, attracting young people and e-sports enthusiasts in a competitive atmosphere. — **ONA**

Oman, British foreign ministers discuss strategic bilateral ties

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received a phone call on Tuesday from Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom (UK).

During the call, they reviewed the historic and strategic bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, and ways to enhance them in various fields to serve the common interests of both countries.

The two ministers also exchanged views on several regional and international issues of mutual concern, foremost among them the



developments in Palestine, particularly the ongoing tragedies in the Gaza Strip resulting from the war waged by Israel and its encroachment on the sovereignty of countries in the region.

They affirmed the importance of a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, agreeing on a framework for peace, facilitating the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid, and working to end the suffering of civilians. — **ONA**

EXPANDING ITS PRESENCE

HONOR debuts at COMEX in Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: HONOR, a global leader in smart devices and AI-driven technology, HONOR, in partnership with MHD-ITICS announced its first-ever participation at COMEX Oman's largest technology, communications, and innovation exhibition. MHD-ITICS and HONOR share a strong partnership in Oman, combining MHD-ITICS's deep market expertise and on-ground support with HONOR's innovative technology to deliver premium products and exceptional customer experiences to people of the Sultanate of Oman.

"Oman is one of the most exciting markets in the GCC, with young, tech-savvy consumers and strong government support for digital innovation. By joining COMEX HONOR is deepening its commitment to the country, bringing the latest global innovations closer to Omani consumers and businesses," said Laurance Li, General Manager HONOR GCC.

The debut marks a significant step in HONOR's long-term commitment to the Sultanate of Oman, where the company, in partnership with MHD-ITICS, has been steadily building its presence through trusted retail partners, service centers, and innovative product offerings. With Oman placing technology and digital transformation at the heart of its Vision 2040, HONOR's participation at COMEX reflects the company's



alignment with the nation's ambitions to accelerate innovation and empower communities with advanced digital solutions.

MHD-ITICS supports its partner HONOR's participation at COMEX. The collaboration aims to strengthen HONOR's presence in the Sultanate, showcasing its latest innovations, cutting-edge mobile technology, and customer-centric solutions. With interactive displays, engaging booth experiences, and targeted marketing initiatives, the partnership is designed to boost brand visibility, drive consumer engagement, and expand HONOR's footprint across Oman.

Located at Hall 5, Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre, HONOR highlighted the brand's most advanced product lineup to date. At the forefront is the HONOR Magic V5, the company's new AI-powered foldable smartphone that is smarter, slimmer, and thinner, redefining what consumers expect from a foldable device.

Alongside the Magic V5, HONOR will also present the MagicBook 14, a lightweight AI-driven laptop designed for seamless productivity, and the MagicPad 3, an AI-enhanced tablet built to deliver creativity, entertainment, and multi-device connectivity. Visitors will be invited to interact with HONOR's AI ecosystem of devices, including its flagship Magic Series, alongside a wide range of wearables, laptops, and accessories. The booth has been carefully designed to create an atmosphere where they can explore, test, and understand how different devices fit into their daily lives.

HONOR's presence at COMEX underscores its strategy to expand across the GCC while investing in local partnerships and community engagement in Oman. With a growing base of consumers and partners in the Sultanate, HONOR aims to make cutting-edge technology more accessible and contribute to Oman's fast-growing digital economy.

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND APPLIED SCIENCES

Workshop held to develop annual plan for 2026

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of national efforts to enhance the quality of institutional planning and to achieve the goals of Oman Vision 2040, the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) organised an extensive development workshop to prepare its Annual Plan for 2026. The planning process is guided by the Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Framework Manual issued by the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and based on the university's updated institutional targets card.

Dr. Said Hamad Al Rubaie, Chancellor of the University, emphasised that: "Our aspirations for this workshop go beyond the preparation of a routine annual document. We aim to develop a comprehensive plan that reflects the university's ambitions in academic, research, innovation, and entrepreneurial leadership, and enhances its competitiveness both nationally and internationally. Our annual plan should serve as a model for alignment with national and global performance indicators and translate the university's priorities into impactful initiatives and development-driven projects."

The workshop was attended by a number of academic and administrative leaders, as well as representatives from planning units, quality assurance, and national programmes. Its objective was to build an integrated annual plan that aligns with national and international performance indicators and supports the achievement of the university's strategic goals in alignment with Oman Vision 2040. Abdullah Amer Al-Wahaibi, Head of the Planning Department, stated: "The success of the annual plan depends on the integration of efforts across all university units, as well as the activation of the roles



of task forces and Vision offices for continuous monitoring and evaluation. Ensuring the quality of implementation and flexibility in updates is crucial to meeting the demands of each phase."

He also highlighted the importance of utilising the guiding manual to develop the university's performance indicator card and regularly update targets to stay responsive to evolving challenges and opportunities.

The workshop reviewed the key pillars of the guiding manual, starting with the development of the Institutional Performance Indicator Card. This segment emphasized aligning the university's goals with Oman Vision 2040 and setting annual quantitative targets through the year 2040. These targets span various strategic areas, including investment, the quality of education, scientific research, employment, digital transformation, and governance.

Another major focus was the

preparation of annual plans. The discussion detailed the mechanisms for developing initiatives and projects that directly influence performance indicators. Special attention was given to conducting gap analysis, identifying projects with strategic impact, and creating detailed execution plans that ensure the achievement of both short-term and long-term goals.

The workshop also addressed the governance of monitoring and evaluation. This included the development of internal mechanisms for regular follow-ups, the activation of Vision offices to ensure the quality of implementation, and the preparation of progress reports that align with national evaluation requirements.

Finally, the review and update of performance indicators were discussed. The workshop clarified the procedures involved in revising and updating the performance indicator card. It explained the processes for submitting adjustment

requests and documenting targets regularly, ensuring the continuity of institutional development and enhancement.

During the workshop, the university presented its updated targets card, which outlines several strategic objectives. Among these are increasing the university's revenue growth rate, raising the percentage of academic staff participating in programs focused on critical thinking, creativity, and future skills, and accelerating the annual growth of peer-reviewed scientific publications. Additional goals include boosting private sector contributions to research and development, increasing the proportion of Omani academics within the faculty, expanding digital services, and improving student and academic satisfaction with electronic services.

At the end of the workshop, participants expressed their appreciation for the insightful and enriching discussions. These sessions clearly demonstrated the university's commitment to adopting best practices in annual planning. Moreover, the workshop underscored UTAS's continued efforts to align with national bodies and strategic directions, thereby enhancing its institutional competitiveness and supporting the successful realization of Oman Vision 2040.

UTAS welcomes student delegation from India

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing commitment to fostering global academic collaboration, the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) welcomed a student delegation comprising 49 students from the GNIOT Institute of Management Studies (GIMS), India.

The visit, which spans two days, is part of the GIMS International Immersion Programme, a component of the Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) — a postgraduate programme in management equivalent in academic level to a MBA.

The GIMS International Immersion Programme is an exclusive element of the PGDM curriculum, offering students a unique opportunity to gain global exposure and broaden their perspectives beyond their home country. The programme emphasises cross-cultural understanding, academic excellence, and international insights in management and business fields, contributing to the development of innovation and entrepreneurial thinking.

Dr. Seema bint Faqir Al-Raisi, Dean of Student Affairs at UTAS, praised the visit and highlighted the university's dedication to expanding students' knowledge horizons

and promoting the exchange of experiences and cultures with students from prestigious international academic institutions. She stated: "We view this visit as a significant opportunity to strengthen mutual understanding between both institutions. Such initiatives help build fruitful bridges of collaboration and provide students with global experiences that enhance their academic competence and leadership skills."

Dr. Al-Raisi further noted that this visit contributes to strengthening international partnerships, exploring future collaboration opportunities, and showcasing the university and its programmes to a global audience.

It also provides cross-cultural learning experiences that enrich the academic journey of students, preparing them to become impactful leaders in multicultural work environments. The two-day visit includes a series of specialised workshops focusing on artificial intelligence (AI) and its applications in management and business. These sessions are delivered by UTAS faculty experts and cover topics such as: Marketing in the Age of AI, The Future of Human Resources: Between Human and Artificial Intelligence, Leveraging AI for Business Process Automation.

Trump deploys National Guard troops to Memphis

Trump, who has already deployed troops to the capital, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles this year, said he also planned to take similar action in Chicago and elsewhere in the United States

WASHINGTON, DC: US President Donald Trump signed an order on Monday that will see the National Guard sent to Memphis to combat what his administration says is rampant crime.

Trump, who has already deployed troops to the capital, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles this year, said he also planned to take similar action in Chicago and elsewhere in the United States.

“We think Chicago is going to be



next, and we'll get to St. Louis, and New Orleans,” Trump, a Republican, vowed.

The cities in question are all run by Democrats.

What will the National Guard deployment involve?

The deployment of the National Guard is another major test of the limits of presidential power by using military force in US cities.

In the Oval Office alongside Tennessee Governor Bill Lee, also a Republican, Trump signed the initiative which will deploy a broad coalition of federal agencies — including the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Department of Homeland Security

and US Marshals — alongside the National Guard and local law enforcement.

Attorney General Pam Bondi will head the operation, Trump said.

“Memphis had the highest violent crime rate, the highest property crime rate and the third-highest murder rate of any city in the nation,” Trump said.

He added that the aim was to stamp out crime, the same reason he cited for last month's troop deployment in Washington, D.C, although city authorities strongly disputed his claims.

“This task force will be a replica of our extraordinarily successful efforts here,” Trump said, referring

to the National Guard deployment in the US capital. “And, you'll see it's a lot of the same thing.”

Is Trump pushing the boundaries of authoritarianism?

US National Guard troops were sent to the streets of Washington, D.C. in August and Trump took control of its police force, claiming violent crime was out of control.

Armoured vehicles were spotted at urban centers and tourist sites around the US capital.

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser, a Democrat, who denied crime in the city is out of control, described the troop deployment as an “authoritarian push.” — **dw**



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US, S. Korea, Japan stage drills amid North's rising threat

SEOUL: South Korea and the United States on Monday commenced Iron Mace, a military drill that aims to explore ways to integrate Washington's nuclear and South Korea's conventional capabilities to bolster deterrence against North Korean threats.

The tactical exercise is taking place at Camp Humphreys, the primary base for US forces in South Korea.

It is designed to improve the responses of allied forces and reinforce deterrence against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

“I do not think the timing of Iron Mace is in response to any particular event, but it is an overdue exercise to learn effective ways to prevent and counter a possible North Korean nuclear threat,” said Chun In-bum, a retired lieutenant general in the South Korean army and now a senior fellow with the National Institute for Deterrence Studies.

“And even though we may not be able to link these exercises with a single event in the North, it

is clear that the North is becoming increasingly militarily capable and the alliance needs to be prepared for a possible nuclear scenario on the peninsula in order to prevent it,” he told DW.

How did North Korea react?

The Iron Mace exercise is being held for the third time after drills in August 2024 and April this year, with each version expanding in scale and complexity, although the militaries of both South Korea and the US are keeping the operational details secret.

The drill coincides with another exercise called Freedom Edge 25, a three-way air and maritime exercise involving units from the US, South Korea and Japan in waters off eastern and southern Korea.

The maneuvers will include air defense exercises, medical evacuation, maritime interdiction and stepping up ballistic missile defense capabilities.

The maneuvers have clearly agitated the North Korean government. — **dw**

Gen Z leaders call for corruption-free future

KATHMANDU: The people of Nepal breathed a sigh of relief as former Chief Justice Shushila Karki was sworn in on Friday night as the first woman Prime Minister of the Country.

After nearly three days of strife which led to the death of 72 people and left a large number injured, relative peace has returned to Nepal. Now the Gen Z leaders and people want a corruption free leadership that will usher in change when the general elections are held in March next year.

Signalling openness to global cooperation for economic development, they said that “We want India and other countries to invest



in Nepal.”

“Our fight is against corruption. The common man has no basic amenities. We want to build a new economic system free of corruption,” they said. Gen Z leaders highlighted the lack of local opportunities for study and employ-

ment, which often forces young Nepalese to migrate abroad.

Suman Siwakoti a Kathmandu resident said, “I expect her (Sushila Karki) to start the dawn of a new era in Nepal. The country needs to be preserved further and also development should flourish under her leadership.”

Another local Ram Kumar Simkhada said the interim government must focus on good governance.

“The new government should work on to erase all these wrongdoings in the nation, make the nation corruption free, form a government with cabinet members who are experts in respective fields- be it lawyers, judges, teach-

ers, doctors and should primarily focus on improving the governance and zero corruption. All the works should primarily focus on good governance is what we need,” he said.

Another resident Lila Luitel believes that the former Chief Justice must work towards amending the constitution to eradicate corruption.

“The main expectation we have from her (Sushila Karki) is the amendment in constitution to make the head of state as the executive, eradicate corruption, who so ever in the past is indulged in corruption- be it leader or cadres should be penalized,” he said. — **ANI**

India, US hold positive meeting on trade deal

NEW DELHI: A team of United States officials led by Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia, Brendan Lynch, had “positive and forward-looking” discussions on Tuesday with the officials from India's Department of Commerce and it was decided to intensify efforts to achieve early conclusion of a mutually beneficial trade agreement.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement that team of officials from the office of United States Trade Representative, led by Chief Negotiator, India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement negotiations, Brendan Lynch visited India on September 16, 2025.

“They held discussions with officials from the Department of Commerce, led by the Special Secretary, Department of Commerce on India-US trade ties, including on the India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement,” it said.

“Acknowledging the enduring importance of bilateral trade between India and the U.S., the discussions were positive and forward looking covering various aspects of the trade deal. It was decided to intensify efforts to achieve early conclusion of a mutually beneficial Trade Agreement,” the statement added.

India and the United States have earlier held five rounds of negotiations for a trade deal. The proposed last round of talks with US in August was postponed.

Over the past few months, India and the US have been negotiating for an interim trade deal.

US President Donald Trump announced 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods in July, even as there were hopes of an interim India-US trade deal that would have otherwise helped avoid elevated tariffs. — **ANI**

Why TV weather forecasters are receiving online hate?

DENMARK: One morning, Chris Gloninger opened his emails to find a message from a viewer asking for his home address, saying they wanted to give him a welcome he would remember.

“My heart raced, and I felt paralyzed,” said Gloninger, who at the time was presenting the weather on a TV station in Des Moines, in the Midwestern US state of Iowa.

The email referenced the case of a man who had been arrested for attempted murder of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, after showing up at his house with a gun and zip ties.

For Gloninger, it was the final straw after a string of harassment since taking the job as chief meteorologist. He called the police and rushed to a hotel with his wife.



ning. “It should never be about politics, because this is a science that has the support of 99% of its academic community.”

A long history of misinformation

Today, climate misinformation and conspiracies are rampant online. This is despite overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is causing more extreme weather that will only further escalate as global temperatures continue to rise.

The roots of this can be traced back to the middle of the last century. Despite major fossil fuel companies uncovering the link between burning coal, oil and gas and global heating as early as the 1960s, many pursued an active strategy of denial and playing down the science.

But as glaciers have melted, sea levels have risen and dangerous weather has intensified, that denial has become a harder sell. So instead, experts say misinformation has shape-shifted into a form of “delayism” — either by casting doubt on climate solutions or greenwashing companies to give the false impression that they are environmentally friendly.

Research in 2024 showed how fossil fuel and petrochemical companies spent millions on advertising that included misleading claims about their commitment to renewable energy. The sector actually spends just 1% of global investment on clean power and is actively exploring new oil and gas fields.

Complex web of misinformation actors

The networks behind climate misinformation have become very intricate, said Ece Elbeyi, a researcher at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

It not only involves those with a vested interest in slowing climate action working with lobbyists and think tanks, but can include media outlets, trolls, Russian bot-farms, and influencers amplifying misinformation on social media platforms, where algorithms favour emotionally charged messaging.

Fertile ground for conspiracy theories

Sometimes misinformation can veer into wild conspiracy theories, which can be particularly attractive to people with high levels of paranoia, insecurity or egocen-



tricity, explained Daniel Jolley, an associate professor in psychology at the University of Nottingham.

Jolley said conspiracies can often make people feel more valued or comforted by painting another powerful group as “evil,” adding that they often spike after disasters.

In the wake of deadly flash flooding in Texas this summer, conspiracies surged online accusing scientists and government agencies of causing the disaster by manipulating the weather using cloud seeding.

“People are trying to explain issues that are massive, issues that make us feel uncertain, anxious and perilous,” said Jolley.

Jolley expects that because our climate is changing, misinformation and weather conspiracies will become increasingly prominent.

Meteorologists are among the most visible when it comes to communicators of climate science and therefore often come to bear the brunt of attacks, he said.

What can be done to stop misinformation?

Both Jolley and Elbeyi see education as key to identifying misinformation.

Elbeyi said this must involve vulnerable groups in debates because the misinformation tends to thrive when groups feel decisions are made without, or even against, them. “And this exclusion can directly erode public trust in scientists and science more generally.”

When it comes to conspiracy theories, building trust and being empathetic to why people may have those beliefs is a better tactic than debunking, said Jolley. He said support is also needed for those, like Gloninger, on the receiving end of abuse.

In the aftermath of the death threat, Gloninger sought therapy and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder — or PTSD. He couldn't sleep and his health deteriorated, leading to a skin condition.

The police caught the perpetrator and fined him \$150 (€129). Meanwhile, back at the TV station, Gloninger continued his work. But after management received a flood of emails from what he calls a loud minority, he was told to stop mentioning climate change. — **dw**

Israel has committed genocide in Gaza, says UN commission

The UNHRC report called on the international community to end genocide and take steps to punish those responsible for it

GAZA: An independent inquiry commissioned by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) found that Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. According to the report released on Tuesday, four of the five genocidal acts found in the 1948 UN Genocide Convention have been carried out in Gaza. The report called on the international community to end the genocide and take steps to punish those responsible for it. The Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel was created four



years ago and is headed by former UN rights chief Navi Pillay.

Clear ‘intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza’ — inquiry head
The commission has documented reported human rights abuses and violations in Gaza since the Hamas-led terror attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, in which nearly 1,200 people were killed and about 250 were taken hostage. “The Commission finds that

Israel is responsible for the commission of genocide in Gaza,” Pillay said. “It is clear that there is an intent to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza through acts that meet the criteria set forth in the Genocide Convention.” Pillay said “responsibility for the atrocity crimes lies with Israeli authorities at the highest echelons” over the nearly two-year war. The Commission urged the government of the Israeli entity to comply immediately with its international legal obligations, including to end the genocide in the Gaza Strip and fully implement the provisional measures orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The commission concluded that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Isaac Herzog and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant had incited the commission of genocide. To back up the finding, the report cites the scale of the killings in Gaza, aid blockages, forced dis-

placement and the destruction of a fertility clinic. A leading association of genocide scholars and several rights groups have also reached the same conclusion. **UN: Number of People Facing Catastrophic Hunger in Gaza Could Exceed 640,000**
United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher warned that the number of people facing catastrophic hunger in Gaza could exceed more than half a million this month, fearing the number could exceed to 640,000 by the end of the month. In a press conference, Fletcher stressed that the current man-made famine is preventable and predictable. He noted the UN and its partners are capable of saving lives on a large scale in the Strip if they are allowed to do so, as they did during the ceasefire earlier this year. He explained that the plan to end the famine in Gaza is simple: “a ceasefire, hundreds of trucks a day, full access, safe routes, end the bureaucratic delays, restore power and water, and allow commercial traffic. None of that – none of that – is complicated.” — Agencies

Luxembourg to recognise the State of Palestine

LUXEMBOURG CITY: Luxembourg intends to recognise the State of Palestine, Prime Minister Luc Frieden and Foreign Minister Xavier Bettel told a parliamentary commission on Monday. According to local media, the final decision on recognition is expected to be taken later this month at the UN General Assembly in New York, in coordination with several other countries, including France and Belgium. **Amid growing calls**
The announcement comes after months of hesitation by Luxembourg’s government and amid growing calls by European leaders for an end to Israel’s war in Gaza. Last week, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the EU executive would take a harder stance toward Israel over the war, pausing payments to the country and sanctioning what she called “extremist ministers” and violent settlers. On Friday, the UN General Assembly voted to endorse a declaration that contains “tangible, timebound, and irreversible steps” toward a two-state solution in the region ahead of its meeting on 22nd September. — ANI/WAM

MALICIOUS DEFAMATION CASE

Trump files \$15bn lawsuit against the New York Times

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump has filed a \$15 billion (€12.7 billion) defamation lawsuit against the New York Times, according to court documents published late on Monday. The suit claims that there is a “decades-long pattern by The New York Times of intentional and malicious defamation against President Trump.” In the filing, Trump’s lawyers name four journalists, as well as the newspaper itself. It claims these journalists wrote a series of articles and a book that show a “reckless disregard” for the truth. Last week, the paper once again drew Trump’s ire for publishing a note bearing his signature that appeared in a “birthday book” for the late financier and convicted offender Jeffrey Epstein. The note is sexually suggestive, leading to renewed conversation about how



much the president knew about Epstein’s criminal behaviour. **Series of lawsuits targeting media outlets**
The suit against The New York Times is the latest in a series targeting the US media. In July, he filed a \$10 billion defamation lawsuit against the Wall Street Journal over an article linking him to Epstein. The lawsuit also targeted arch-conservative media mogul Rupert Murdoch, whose conglomerate owns the Journal. He has also sued television networks ABC and CBS, both of which settled with the president for millions of dollars. — DW

FROM HINDI SONGS TO SPEECHES

Saudis embrace Hindi at Riyadh celebration

RIYADH: The Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday said it celebrated Hindi Diwas with a series of cultural programmes organised in partnership with the Indian community in Riyadh. The celebration featured vibrant performances by Indian students and included active participation from Saudi citizens who performed Hindi songs and speeches, the Indian Embassy in Riyadh said. The embassy also noted that many Saudi participants took part in the celebrations and performed Hindi songs and speeches. “On the occasion of Hindi Diwas and Hindi Pakhwada, a comprehensive programme was organised at the Embassy in partnership with the Indian community. Indian students and girls presented various interesting performances. Saudi friends also participated in this program and presented various programs such as Hindi songs and Hindi speeches,” the Embassy stated. India’s Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Suhel Ajaz Khan, inaugurated the program and lauded the



Indian government’s efforts in promoting Hindi worldwide. “We should be proud that we are citizens of a country where a rich language like Hindi is spoken. Today, the popularity of Hindi is now beyond India,” said the Ambassador while addressing the event. He further noted the growing global interest in learning Hindi and how the language is becoming a global thread unifying people

around the world. He also highlighted how the popularity of Bollywood has deepened appreciation for Hindi among Saudi citizens. At the event, Saudi national Sultan Maimani sang the famous Hindi song “Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani.” The Ambassador also awarded winners of various Hindi competitions held by International Indian Schools and the Embassy. As per the embassy, the programme was conceptualised under the supervision of Counsellor Manusmriti and conducted by First Secretary Rishi Tripathi. “Saudi friend Sultan Maimani enchanted everyone with his sweet song. His Excellency, the Ambassador, honoured the winners of various Hindi competitions organised by the International Indian Schools and the Embassy. The concept and supervision of the program were done by Counsellor Ms. Manusmriti, and First Secretary Mr. Rishi Tripathi conducted the programme,” the Embassy wrote in an X post. — ANI

Full story at timesofoman.com/world

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Massive trenches are swallowing homes across the DRC

KINSHASA: Gigantic urban gullies stretch like scars across cities in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A study published by an international group of researchers in August maps these trenches across the DRC for the first time — finding almost 3,000 of them. The scale of the threat is striking. From 2004 through 2023, almost 120,000 people are estimated to have been displaced by urban gullies in the DRC. Scientists warn that hundreds of thousands more could lose their homes in the next decade. With millions of people currently living in potential hazard zones, understanding gullies is crucial. **What are gullies?**
Gullies are an extreme form of erosion. These huge channels are carved by water and can stretch dozens of meters wide and hundreds of metres long. In cities, they are a looming threat that eventually swallows houses, businesses and other infrastructure, such as roads and railways. To track them, researchers combined population densities with satellite images, cross-checking against aerial photographs from the 1950s. They found that more than half of the cities investigated are affected. In almost all cases, gullies have expanded in the past decade. **How do gullies form?**
Both natural and human-made factors drive gully formation. In the DRC, intense rainfall and erod-



ible soils combine with rapid urbanisation and inadequate urban planning, turning water into destructive flows. “The main underlying causes appear to be deficiencies and gaps in urban planning and land-use management,” said Guy Ilombe Mawe, study author and a researcher at the University of Bukavu. The DRC’s rapid urban growth has left communities without sufficient drainage systems. Kinshasa, Africa’s third-biggest metropolis, is especially hard-hit, with more than 800 gullies. In 1950, it had just 200,000 residents. Today, nearly 18 million people live there. “Congo is one of the countries

that is urbanising at an extremely rapid rate,” Matthias Vanmaercke, a study author from KU Leuven in Belgium, told DW. “A lot of this urbanisation is unplanned, rather chaotic,” Vanmaercke said. “If people build houses,” he added, “this is usually without proper infrastructure to capture the water.” With urbanisation comes deforestation. Rooftops, roads and other sealed surfaces replace plants. This leaves less land able to absorb water. The study found that 98% of urban gullies are linked to local road networks. Gullies often occur in areas with sandy soils that erode easily. Heavy rainfalls also have an influence and can expand already formed gullies.

With climate change expected to bring increased rainfall, scientists warn that the risk is only growing. **Are gullies the same as landslides?**
Not quite. While both are destructive, landslides and gullies have some key differences. Gullies are typically found at the edges of plateaus with sandy soils, whereas landslides often occur in steep hilly areas with clay-based soils. Both can be unpredictable. But there’s a crucial difference — once a gully forms, it is permanent and grows with each heavy rainfall. That makes them especially dangerous in cities, where homes are constantly under threat.



“Gullies, they can form very rapidly, within one rainfall event, and then this is often very dangerous because people don’t expect it, and suddenly there’s this huge gap destroying their house,” Vanmaercke said. “But what also happens is that, once a gully is there, it stays there and then you have this huge gap in which new water can run every time there is a rainfall event.” “People living at the edge always become a little bit more threatened 1 meter at a time,” Vanmaercke said. The proximity to gullies takes a psychological toll, he said, as people stay awake in their home “every night that it rains, just hoping it will not be destroyed.” **Can gullies be predicted?**
No, not yet, at least. Scientists say predicting when or where a gully might appear or widen is difficult, but crucial in preventing further destruction. Researchers are working toward a better understanding of how gullies are formed and seeking solutions.

“One of the things we want to achieve is to develop early warning systems and ... send out warnings like: ‘Tonight will be really dangerous, try and find shelter elsewhere,’” Vanmaercke said. **What can be done?**
Stabilising gullies is expensive — fixing just one can cost over \$1 million (€920,000). That leaves local communities to act on their own. “There are local community initiatives aimed at trying to stabilise gully expansion,” Mawe said. These include “planting bamboo and other vegetation to stabilize the soil, placing sandbags at the gully head, and digging pits or sometimes installing water tanks within plots to store runoff water.” But, Mawe said, these efforts often fall short and are not effective in stopping gully expansion. “I think the most worrying and concerning thing: Once you live next to a gully, you basically become trapped ... because also the land value drops dramatically,” Vanmaercke said. — DW

SPORTS



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ASIA CUP

‘We just lack a bit of experience’, says Oman skipper Jatinder after defeat

MUSCAT: Oman captain Jatinder Singh conceded that his side's inexperience proved costly against the UAE in their Asia Cup fixture on Monday in Abu Dhabi but insisted the team is heading in the right direction as it continues to find its feet at the top level.

On Monday, during their Group A match, UAE had scored 172/5 and then bowled Oman out for 130 in 18.4 overs.

Speaking during the post-match presentation, Jatinder said: “Well, I believe credit goes to the UAE batters — the way they started their innings, they had their plans and executed them well.”

“When we started, we were right on target but I think we lost too many wickets. I feel the team is picking up; we just lack a bit of experience. I think in the coming years, we’ll be firing at full throttle.”

Jatinder pointed out that the



surface eased out as the evening progressed, making batting more straightforward for the opposition.

“The track was quite placid, especially in the evening. The ball came nicely onto the bat; we knew a good powerplay was important, but that didn’t happen,” he said.

On his dismissal after he had struck four boundaries, Jatinder said: “I feel he (Junaid Siddique) bowled as per the plan, with a slower one, but I was a bit early in the shot.”

Oman batter Aryan Bisht echoed the skipper's views but underlined



the importance of sticking to strategies at this level. “We failed to execute our plans and UAE had a better game plan,” Bisht admitted in the post-match press conference.

The 20-year-old added: “Asia Cup is a big learning stage and

playing alongside Test-playing nations will give the team a lot of exposure. We are now looking forward to our final game against India and will give our best.”

For the UAE, captain Muhammad Waseem praised his side's aggressive start and the meticulous prepa-

ration that went into the contest.

“As I said, the past is past for us [big India defeat in their opening match]. We wanted to show our calibre and the way we want to play, and we did that. We talked in the meeting, prepared three days before, and executed our plans. We wanted to play aggressively in the powerplay, and we did exactly that,” he said.

Waseem, who also crossed the milestone of 3,000 career runs during the game, called the win “a proud moment” and stressed his desire to continue leading from the front.

With one match left against heavyweights India, Oman's campaign offers another tough test. For Jatinder and Bisht, however, the bigger picture is clear: every outing at this level adds to the team's experience, something they believe will soon turn into consistent results.

Pakistan on the brink as UAE chase Asia Cup shock victory

The winner of the knockout clash will join India in Super Four round from Group A; loser exits the Asia Cup



DUBAI: One team will advance. One will go home. On Wednesday in Dubai, bruised Pakistan face a determined UAE in a knockout clash that will decide who joins India in the Super Four. Both sides have beaten Oman comfortably and lost heavily to India, leaving this Group A encounter as a winner-takes-all showdown.

Pakistan come in as favourites, having beaten UAE twice in the

recent Sharjah tri-series. Yet those wins were far from convincing. The UAE repeatedly threatened, exposing gaps that India ruthlessly exploited last Sunday.

Questions linger over Pakistan's

consistency — have their wins against weaker sides reflected real quality, or simply a kinder schedule? Coach Mike Hesson insists Sunday was just “a bad day,” but Pakistan's inability to handle spin

convincingly has raised eyebrows. Their slow bowling attack — Abrar Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz, Saim Ayub, and Faheem Ashraf — will be key against UAE, and the side that has remained unchanged over the

past three games appears set to see the job through.

For the UAE, this is their biggest opportunity of the year. They have grown in stature after close tri-series clashes with Pakistan and Afghanistan and a dominant win over Oman, which saw them surpass Pakistan's total against the same side.

Their top-heavy batting order, led by captain Muhammad Waseem and opener Alishan Sharafu, provides firepower. Waseem has been in form, scoring 69 off 54 balls against Oman, while Sharafu's promotion to the top has helped share the scoring burden. Asif Khan adds muscle at number three, but he must recapture the destructive form that saw him blast 77 off 35 balls against Pakistan in August.

Spin will again decide the outcome. Pakistan's named quartet has been steady, while UAE's Haider Ali and Dhruv Parashar will need to be near-perfect on a pitch that continues to favour slower bowlers. The conditions — humid and hot — will test both sides, but the team that handles pressure

best is likely to prevail.

Fakhar Zaman could swing the tie for Pakistan. Capable of turning collapses into match-winning innings, he scored an unbeaten 77 in the last encounter with UAE. Yet his recent form has been patchy, contributing just enough in each outing without consistently dominating. UAE will hope to expose that vulnerability at the top of the order.

Pakistan have endured six T20 Asia Cup defeats — second only to Hong Kong — and across all Asia Cup formats have lost 26 matches, behind only Bangladesh. Waseem, meanwhile, recently surpassed 3,000 T20I runs, more than any current Pakistani player, underscoring the personal stakes alongside the team battle.

Wednesday's clash promises drama, skill, and high stakes. Pakistan may have the pedigree, but UAE have the belief and momentum. In a knockout, anything can happen — and in Dubai, the line between triumph and exit will be razor-thin. - **Agencies**

ASIA CUP: SRI LANKA VS HONG KONG

Asalanka: ‘Our heart was in our mouths’

DUBAI: Sri Lanka's chase of 150 against Asia Cup newcomers Hong Kong nearly turned into a heart-stopping moment on Monday. Despite appearing in full control, the side endured a mini-collapse, losing four wickets for just eight runs, before scraping home thanks to Wanindu Hasaranga's rapid cameo (20) and Pathum Nissanka's patient half-century (68).

On Monday, they were against the lowest-ranked side in the tournament. What should have been a straightforward run chase — 32 runs needed off 30 balls with eight wickets in hand — turned tense. Nissanka was run out at the start of the 16th over after attempting a risky second, and Kusal Perera fell off the very next delivery, trapped lbw while trying a slog sweep.

Skipper Charith Asalanka then



sliced a fullish delivery to short third man, and Kamindu Mendis, attempting a release shot, skied one to deep midwicket. Suddenly, Sri Lanka had lost four wickets for eight runs, needing 23 off 17 balls.

“In that moment, I think our heart was in our mouths,” Asalanka ad-

mitted. “There are a few areas I am really disappointed about — our first three overs bowling, the 16th over, and losing my wicket. In the shorter format, these things can happen, but it cannot keep happening consistently. We have to analyse it and improve ourselves.”

“We felt confident of chasing it because the pitch was looking good,” Asalanka said.

“Credit goes to them — they batted really well, and we bowled badly in the first three overs. This is not the way we wanted to play. When we are playing these sides, there is always pressure. But we are professionals, and as professionals, we have to do much better than this.”

Wanindu Hasaranga's blitz — 20 not out off nine balls — finally guided Sri Lanka to 153 for 6, sealing a four-wicket win over Hong Kong.

Brief scores: Hong Kong 149/4 (Nizakat Khan 52*, Anshy Rath 48; Dushmantha Chameera 2-29) lost to Sri Lanka 153/6 in 18.5 overs (Pathum Nissanka 68, Wanindu Hasaranga 20*; Yasim Murtaza 2-37) by four wickets.

RECREATIONAL DRUG

Netherlands bowler Kingma banned after failed drug test

DUBAI: Netherlands fast bowler Vivian Kingma was on Tuesday banned for three months after testing positive for a recreational drug. Kingma, 30, admitted to the offence and demonstrated the substance had been used out-of-competition.

He was found to have Benzoylcgonine, a cocaine metabolite classified as a Substance of Abuse under the ICC Anti-Doping Code, in his sample following Netherlands' ODI against United Arab Emirates in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 competition on May 12 in Utrecht.

The test conducted was from a sample taken after the game and the ban is effective from August 15. The three-month period can be reduced to one month if he



satisfactorily completes an ICC-approved treatment programme.

South Africa's Kagiso Rabada and New Zealand's Doug Bracewell have both served bans for recreational drug use in the last 12 months. Both bans, as in the case with Kingma's, were initially for three months but were reduced to a month after the players completed treatment programmes.

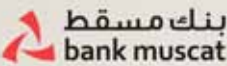
OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by November 2025 reaching \$70.36, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 61 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$70.97. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 5,101.88 points, up by 0.22% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.03% at 471.58 points. Musandam Power, up 7.64%, was the top gainer while Muscat Insurance, down 10.00%, was the top loser.



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Mobile subscriptions in Oman surge to over 8.15mn by July



The statistics reveal that the total number of mobile service subscriptions reached 8,153,859 by the end of July 2025, a 15.5% increase compared to the same period in 2024

MUSCAT: The latest data from the National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI) shows that Oman's telecommunications sector continued to achieve remarkable growth rates by the end of July 2025. The statistics reveal that the total number of mobile service subscriptions reached 8,153,859 by the end of July 2025, a 15.5% increase compared to the same period in 2024. Postpaid mobile subscriptions increased by 3.3% to 1,241,626, while prepaid subscriptions rose by 4.9% to 5,342,870. Internet of Things (IoT) subscriptions saw exceptional growth of 105%, reaching 1,569,363. As for internet services, mobile

broadband subscriptions rose to 5,595,686, while fixed broadband subscriptions increased by 2.9% to 591,972. Fiber optic subscriptions grew by 11.2% to 344,505 and fixed 5G subscriptions increased by 1.8% to 217,657. In contrast, subscriptions for some older technologies declined as fixed 4G subscriptions dropped by 41.2% to 17,261 and Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) subscriptions fell by 47.5% to 11,036. Satellite subscriptions, however, increased by 13% to 754. Meanwhile, other subscriptions (including internet over power lines, Ethernet, and leased lines) decreased by 11.9% to 759 by the end of July 2025. -**ONA**

SETTING NEW BENCHMARK

BankDhofar and Mastercard forge strategic collaboration to transform payment solutions in Oman

MUSCAT: BankDhofar, one of the Sultanate's leading financial institutions, along with Mastercard, is setting a new benchmark in Oman's banking sector. This landmark announcement marks a decisive step in BankDhofar's journey to deliver innovative, secure, and world-class payment solutions that meet the evolving needs of its customers. Under the agreement, Mastercard will bring global expertise, advanced technologies, and international reach to the Bank's card business. The strategic collaboration also extends to Dhofar Islamic, BankDhofar's Sharia-compliant arm, ensuring that customers across both conventional and Islamic banking segments benefit from the enhanced suite of card services and financial solutions. Commenting on the agreement, K. Gopakumar, CEO of BankDhofar, said: "This collaboration with Mastercard is more than a strategic alliance - it is a transformative step in redefining the payment experience for our customers. By bringing world-class innovations to Oman, we are strengthening our commitment to deliver secure, seamless, and future-ready financial solutions that address the needs of our diverse customer base." "At Mastercard, we are dedicated to harnessing the power of



collaboration with leading ecosystem players to power Oman's economy and empower its people. In line with the nation's Vision 2040, we are thrilled to strengthen our presence in Oman through the new collaboration with BankDhofar, marking an important milestone in our efforts to drive payment innovation, advance digital transformation and enhance financial inclusion. We look forward to working together to enrich the bank's customer proposition and support its ambitious growth plans," added Dr. Dimitrios Dosis, president, EEMEA, Mastercard. For BankDhofar customers, the collaboration translates into an upgraded experience at every stage of their payment journey. Mastercard's global acceptance network will allow customers to transact seamlessly whether in-store, online, or while travelling abroad. Cardholders will gain access to a rich portfolio of privileges, ranging from airport lounge access and exclusive travel insurance to lifestyle rewards and dining discounts. Security remains at the heart of the offering. Mastercard's indus-

try-leading technologies in fraud protection, tokenization, and biometric authentication will provide customers with peace of mind while carrying out transactions. The integration of Mastercard's digital solutions will open up new possibilities in mobile wallets, contactless payments, and emerging fintech-driven services—positioning BankDhofar at the forefront of Oman's digital banking landscape. By aligning with Mastercard, BankDhofar is further strengthening its role in advancing Oman's digital transformation agenda, which is central to the Sultanate's Vision 2040. The collaboration provides the Bank with direct access to Mastercard's global innovation ecosystem, encompassing cutting-edge developments in AI, cybersecurity, open banking, and cross-border payments. This will not only accelerate product innovation but also help expand financial inclusion, bringing tailored debit, credit, and prepaid card solutions to youth, small businesses, and underserved communities. BankDhofar is reinforcing its leadership in customer-centric innovation by offering Mastercard payment solutions, while playing a pivotal role in driving digital progress and financial transformation across the Sultanate.

AGREEMENTS



Al Dakhiliyah signs 17 contracts worth over OMR5mn to boost development and investment projects

MUSCAT: Seventeen contracts worth more than OMR 5 million were signed by A'Dakhiliyah Governorate to implement development projects. The contracts included 11 for development and service projects and 6 for investment projects. The step was in pursuance of plans to enhance infrastructure in the governorate's wilayats. The contracts were signed by Sheikh Hilal Said Al Hajri, Governor of A'Dakhiliyah, and the representatives of the companies that will implement the projects. The contracts included the implementation of the first phase of Jabal Shams tourism façade in the Wilayat of Al Hamra (set to cost RO 2.9 million) and the implementation of Al Jabal A'Sharqi Oasis project in the Wilayat of Al Hamra.

The contracts included the design and implementation of streets in the Wilayat of Adam and the Wilayat of Samayil and the restoration of the road leading to Izki Hospital. The contracts also included the supply and installation of lighting pole feeder boxes in the Wilayat of Adam and the lighting of Izki Market and Al Aqaba road in Al Hamra (about RO 710,000). Other contracts provided for digital transformation services and projects to upgrade performance and services in the governorate. In addition, investment contracts were signed with national companies to establish and operate tourism and entertainment projects, including Nizwa public park, as part of a drive to develop tourism facilities in the Wilayat to the tune of RO 530. -**ONA**

BAUSHER MUNICIPALITY

Nama Water showcases wastewater network projects worth OMR123 million



MUSCAT: Nama Water Services held a meeting with Bausher Municipality to review wastewater network projects in wilayat with a total cost exceeding OMR123 million. During the meeting, the company presented the projects, their implementation plans, and various stages of execution. They also discussed challenges facing the project, including its impact on roads and public facilities. The meeting explored avenues of cooperation with Bausher Municipality to overcome these chal-

lenges and ensure a flexible implementation process. This will align with current and future plans, achieve service integration, facilitate coordination with relevant authorities, and strengthen the service infrastructure system. The wastewater network projects in Bausher include main and sub-lines spanning a total length of 311 kilometres, of which 34 kilometres are for a potable water network. Other key components of the project include a pumping station in Bausher and Al Ansab. -**ONA**

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Musandam Power, up 7.64%, was the top gainer while Muscat Insurance, down 10.00%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 5,101.88 points, up by 0.22% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.03% at 471.58 points. Musandam Power, up 7.64%, was the top gainer while Muscat Insurance, down 10.00%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while OQEP were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 3116 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 18.34 million, with more than 84.11 million shares changing hands. Out of 71 traded securities, 21 advanced, 23 declined, and 27 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for RO 139K while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 103K, followed by foreign investors for RO 36K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 8,482.30 points, down -0.09%. Prices of Oman United Insurance, Sohar International Bank,

Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Madina Takaful, Al Anwar Investment were up by 2.13%, 2.08%, 1.45%, 1.18%, 1.14% respectively. Prices of Muscat Insurance, Al Sharqia Investment, Ahli Bank, United Finance, Liva Group were down by 10.00%, 4.49%, 2.67%, 1.56%, 1.15% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,967.46 points, down -0.09%. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Oman Cement were down by 1.49%, 0.21% respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.72% before closing at 2,005.41 points. Prices of Musandam Power, Phoenix Power, Dhofar Generating, National Gas, Muscat Gases were up by 7.64%, 5.46%, 4.82%, 2.47%, 1.85% respectively. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, SMN Power Holding, Oman Telecom, Renaissance Services, Oman Education & Training were down by 0.57%, 0.44%, 0.39%, 0.36%, 0.36% respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	5,109.07	5,083.75	5,101.88	5,090.45	11.43	0.22
FINANCIAL INDEX	8,507.90	8,464.47	8,482.30	8,489.57	-7.27	-0.09
Industry Index	6,977.49	6,939.16	6,967.46	6,974.00	-6.54	-0.09
Services Index	2,016.08	1,989.22	2,005.41	1,991.11	14.29	0.72
MSX Shariah Index	471.85	469.48	471.58	471.42	0.15	0.03
MSX TR INDEX	7,613.23	7,575.49	7,602.52	7,585.48	17.04	0.22
FINANCIAL TR IDX	10,107.68	10,056.09	10,077.27	10,085.90	-8.63	-0.09
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	8,574.29	8,527.19	8,561.96	8,570.00	-8.03	-0.09
SERVICES TR IDX	2,599.20	2,564.57	2,585.44	2,567.02	18.43	0.72
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,204.64	1,204.64	1,204.64	1,204.64	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
84,119,286	18,339,585	3,116	30,074,295,431	21	23	27	71

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

ISIN

SECURITY NAME

VOLUME

TURNOVER

TRADES

OPEN PRICE

HIGH

LOW

CLOSE PR.

PREV. CLOSE

DIFF

DIFF %

LAST PR.

LAST BID

LAST OFFER

PREV. VALUE

MARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	3,559	854	2	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.235	0.005	2.138	0.240	0.235	0.240	0.100	24,000,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	25,205,842	3,676,000	227	0.145	0.147	0.145	0.147	0.144	0.003	2.083	0.147	0.147	0.147	0.100	972,735,302
OM0000004925	AL KHATIM POWER	1,097,076	133,727	55	0.122	0.123	0.120	0.122	0.120	0.002	1.667	0.122	0.121	0.122	0.100	82,336,268
OM0000004798	MADINA TAKAFUL	7,546	649	2	0.085	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.001	1.176	0.086	0.085	0.087	0.100	35,260,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	375,010	39,774	12	0.106	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.106	0.001	0.943	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.100	239,553,974
OM0000004853	AL SUWADI POWER	896,701	97,323	45	0.115	0.121	0.119	0.120	0.119	0.001	0.840	0.120	0.119	0.120	0.100	35,728,701
OM0000003988	QORROO	265,084	64,458	26	0.243	0.244	0.240	0.244	0.242	0.002	0.826	0.244	0.242	0.244	0.100	188,330,392
OM0000004883	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	743,000	247,905	244	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.000	0.000	0.335	0.335	0.335	0.100	54,489,020
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	8,200	13,587	7	2.160	2.200	2.150	2.200	2.200	0.000	0.000	2.200	2.150	2.300	0.100	19,734,000
OM0000002188	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	92,580	16,036	17	0.176	0.176	0.172	0.176	0.176	0.000	0.000	0.176	0.173	0.175	0.100	38,720,000
OM0000002176	LAZERA STEEL PRODUCTS	5,058	2,417	4	0.477	0.478	0.477	0.478	0.478	0.000	0.000	0.478	0.473	0.500	0.100	38,701,225
OM0000002226	AL LAZERA SERVICES	18,346	3,394	7	0.182	0.185	0.182	0.185	0.185	0.000	0.000	0.185	0.167	0.184	0.100	79,255,553
OM0000003225	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	19,000	3,169	3	0.166	0.167	0.166	0.167	0.167	0.000	0.000	0.167	0.167	0.163	0.100	32,400,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	418,964	344,128	13	0.825	0.830	0.816	0.830	0.830	0.000	0.000	0.830	0.825	0.830	0.100	77,988,924
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	273,786	72,207	260	0.277	0.277	0.274	0.276	0.276	0.000	0.000	0.276	0.277	0.276	0.100	212,575,200
OM0000002524	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	365,619	100,688	12	0.277	0.277	0.276	0.279	0.277	-0.001	-0.361	0.276	0.276	0.277	0.100	45,449,160
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	3,063,797	3,185,245	38	1.039	1.039	1.036	1.036	1.040	-0.004	-0.385	1.036	1.036	1.036	0.100	777,000,000
OM0000004553	OMINVEST	48,916	12,694	14	0.259	0.260	0.256	0.258	0.259	-0.001	-0.386	0.258	0.256	0.258	0.100	24,413,582
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	3,557,710	567,389	340	0.161	0.161	0.158	0.159	0.160	-0.001	-0.625	0.159	0.160	0.159	0.100	688,569,203
OM0000002786	BANK MUSCAT	4,708,410	1,486,330	376	0.318	0.318	0.315	0.316	0.318	-0.002	-0.629	0.316	0.318	0.318	0.100	2,372,001,672
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	74,500	4,759	7	0.064	0.064	0.063	0.064	0.064	-0.001	-1.563	0.063	0.062	0.066	0.100	12,346,020
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	20,000	1,700	2	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.089	0.089	-0.004	-4.494	0.085	0.085	0.092	0.100	7,650,000
Total		41,181,584	10,078,621	1,712												

Parallel Market

OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	21,550	6,656	6	0.305	0.310	0.305	0.310	0.288	0.022	7.639	0.310	0.290	0.311	0.100	21,820,900
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	1,696,163	195,011	106	0.110	0.117	0.110	0.116	0.110	0.006	5.455	0.116	0.116	0.117	0.100	169,661,798
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	561,985	49,282	43	0.087	0.089	0.087	0.087	0.083	0.004	4.819	0.087	0.087	0.088	0.100	19,334,880
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	23,044	1,869	7	0.082	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.081	0.002	2.469	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.100	7,055,000
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	2,500	395	2	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.155	0.003	1.935	0.158	0.141	0.000	0.100	5,124,866
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	10,000	1,100	1	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.108	0.002	1.852	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.100	3,300,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INV.	75,500	8,450	9	0.125	0.126	0.125	0.126	0.124	0.002	1.613	0.126	0.125	0.126	0.100	18,900,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	41,523	2,922	8	0.069	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.069	0.001	1.449	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.100	8,531,250
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	45,000	5,184	6	0.140	0.142	0.139	0.141	0.139	0.002	1.390	0.141	0.139	0.141	0.100	85,412,000
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	10,922,659	3,838,292	269	0.352	0.355	0.350	0.355	0.351	0.004	1.140	0.355	0.345	0.355	0.100	2,840,000,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	855,594	22,547	18	0.087	0.089	0.087	0.089	0.088	0.001	1.136	0.089	0.084	0.094	0.100	26,571,211
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	8,670	4,644	5	0.669	0.670	0.620	0.670	0.665	0.005	0.752	0.670	0.650	0.670	0.100	63,630,000
OM0000001509	DHOFAR INTERNATIONAL DEV & INV.	8,800	1,734	2	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.000	0.000	0.225	0.246	0.225	0.100	126,494,318
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	12,000	810	2	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.000	0.000	0.054	0.053	0.054	0.100	14,585,903
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	22,873	932	5	0.041	0.041	0.040	0.041	0.041	0.000	0.000	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.100	3,485,000
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	19,286	1,347	6	0.070	0.071	0.069	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.069	0.072	0.100	1,470,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	2,000	400	2	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.100	3,524,733
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	7,000	875	10	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.000	0.125	0.100	39,427,123
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	47,268	11,108	14	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.000	0.000	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.100	78,744,983
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	12,500	1,600	2	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.128	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.125	0.128	0.100	389,094,212
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	5,100	660	1	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.000	0.000	0.132	0.131	0.000	0.100	78,448,523
OM0000004735	SEMBOCORP SALALAH	311,900	56,462	27	0.182	0.184	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.000	0.180	0.179	0.180	0.100	171,822,961
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	30,000	1,540	2	0.052	0.052	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.050	0.051	0.100	12,570,000
OM0000004847	OMAN CITY DESALINATION	1,000	65	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.100	1,196,880
OM0000008474	OMAN RIFT FUND	7,480	666	2	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.088	0.089	0.100	9,772,538
OM0000008710	BAHKA DESALINATION	5,000	793	2	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.000	0.000	0.136	0.130	0.000	0.100	1,207,992
OM0000001020	ASTAD SHIPPING	5,578,828	77,448	348	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.000	0.000	0.129	0.129	0.131	0.100	1,072,112
OM0000004748	OMAN CEMENT	17,661	8,280	5	0.466	0.466	0.466	0.466	0.467	-0.001	-0.214	0.466	0.465	0.466	0.100	154,156,883
OM0000001490	SEMBOCORP SALALAH & TRAINING	8,860	480	2	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.000	0.000	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.100	9,755,835
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	40,000	9,000	2	0.227	0.227	0.227	0.227	0.228	-0.001	-0.439	0.227	0.233	0.229	0.100	45,371,281
OM0000003141	BAHKA WATER AND POWER	45,886	7,984	7	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.175	0.000	-0.571	0.174	0.173	0.174	0.174	0.100	284,000
OM0000004908	OQ GAS INDUSTRIES (SZO)	23,300	3,169	269	0.144	0.144	0.143	0.144	0.144	-0.001	-0.694	0.143	0.143	0.144	0.100	9,922,000
OM0000000749	LIGA GROUP	821,000	20,274	15	0.259	0.260	0.250	0.257	0.260	-0.003	-1.154	0.257	0.250	0.259	0.100	7,890,000
OM0000000884	AMU BAKRA INVESTATE	1,000	100	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.100	1,000,000
OM0000000888	THE PEARL REIF	2,967	343	2	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.000	0.000	0.131	0.133	0.135	0.100	77,478,231
OM0000002202	AHL BANK	25,838	5,233	4	0.147	0.147	0.146	0.146	0.150	-0.004	-2.667	0.146	0.143	0.148	0.100	395,182,847
OM0000001029	JARAL REIF	26,000	4,049	2	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.100	67,612
OM0000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	1,288	1,090	2	0.846	0.846	0.846	0.846	0.849	-0.004	-10.000	0.846	0.846	0.846	0.100	9,327,189
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FROM PANDAS TO SKYLINES: DISCOVER HONG KONG'S FAMILY WONDERS



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HONG KONG: Skip the ordinary — Hong Kong is calling families who crave adventure, excitement, and unforgettable experiences. From bustling markets and towering skyscrapers to hidden cultural gems, every corner of Asia's World City promises a new story, a new thrill, and memories that last long after the trip ends. Here are some reasons to visit Asia's World City this season.



1 A Muslim-Friendly Destination
CrescentRating, the world's leading authority on halal travel, together with Mastercard, has unveiled the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2025. In a major recognition, Hong Kong has ranked third among non-OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) destinations worldwide and was named "Most Promising Muslim-Friendly Destination of the Year."

This accolade reinforces the city's growing reputation as a welcoming destination for Muslim travellers from the GCC and beyond, who are seeking halal-friendly, family-oriented, and culturally enriching experiences in Asia.

Dr. Peter Lam, Chairman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb), said: "HKTb has worked with the Hong Kong SAR Government and our industry partners to develop the city as a Muslim-



friendly destination through accreditation, education, and promotion. We are delighted by this recognition and remain committed to strengthening ties with the Middle East and ASEAN."

Adding perspective, Mufti Muhammad Arshad, Chief Imam of Kowloon Masjid, told *Times of Oman*: "There are six major mosques in Hong Kong, including the Kowloon Mosque, which can accommodate up to 3,500 worshippers. Around 190 eateries are now halal-certified, up from 100 in early 2024, while more than 60 hotels, attractions, and venues have also been accredited."

2 Pandas of Hong Kong
Animal lovers are in for a treat as Hong Kong celebrated the first birthday of panda twins Jia Jia and De De, born in August 2024 at Ocean Park.

The rare panda twins — offspring of Ying Ying and Le Le — have been hailed as a conservation triumph. Their arrival has boosted the city's "panda economy," drawing tourists from across the globe.



Ocean Park, their official home, offers visitors the Giant Panda Adventure, along with attractions such as the Grand Aquarium, the Ocean Express funicular, hilltop thrill rides with sea views, and the newly expanded Water World.

3 Spectacular Night Views
Hong Kong is world-famous for its skyline, ranked among the "Top Three Cities with the Most Spectacular Night Views" by Japan's Yakei Convention & Visitors Bureau. Whether by the harbour, from the hills, or deep in the city, Hong Kong's nightscape is a breathtaking experience.

4 Victoria Peak
From Lugard Road or the Sky Terrace 428, visitors can admire sweeping views of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the bustling cargo piers. The newly refurbished Peak Tram adds to the experience.

5 Ngong Ping 360
This cable car on Lantau Island offers stunning views of the South China Sea and mountains, leading to the Tian Tan Buddha and Po Lin Monastery. Ngong Ping Village adds culture, shopping, and entertainment to the mix.



6 Seamless Connectivity
Reaching Hong Kong is easy. World class airline, Emirates operates triple-daily flights to the city, with two of them operating directly between Dubai and Hong Kong and one via a short stopover in Bangkok. Passengers flying from Muscat can experience Emirates' recently deployed Airbus A350 between Muscat and Dubai, and connect onwards on either the iconic Airbus A380s or the Boeing 777 to Hong Kong.

So, pack your bags and get ready for a family adventure full of culture, nature, and unforgettable memories in Hong Kong.

Al Zubair and Klingmann eye podium finish in Valencia

Al Manar Racing by Team WRT head into the GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Series finale riding high on Nürburgring success

Times News Service

MUSCAT: For Oman's Al Faisal Al Zubair, the final round of the GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Series in the Spanish city of Valencia is more than just another weekend at the racetrack.

It's the culmination of a season in which he and team-mate Jens Klingmann have shown resilience, speed, and the ability to challenge some of Europe's finest GT racing outfits.

This weekend, at the Circuit Ricardo Tormo, Al Zubair and Klingmann will line up with their BMW M4 GT3 EVO under the Al Manar Racing by Team WRT banner, determined to sign off their Sprint Series campaign on a high note.

The Omani driver arrives in Spain in buoyant mood after a landmark Gold Cup win at the Nürburgring in the Endurance Cup at the end of August. It was a breakthrough result that, in his words, has injected "strong mo-



mentum" into the team as they approach the business end of the season.

"Very excited to get it going again and get to the final round of the Sprint series, the penultimate round of the whole championship," said Al Zubair.

"We are in a solid position now but, coming off the win at the Nürburgring, our momentum heading into the final two rounds is strong.

"Hopefully, we can end the Sprint and the Endurance championships on a high note. The team has been getting stronger and stronger. I hope we can cement in more good results and bring back

more podiums this weekend. That is the goal and to gain as many points as possible."

That Nürburgring victory followed a productive Sprint outing at Magny-Cours, where the duo collected second and fourth-place finishes. Consistency has kept Al Manar Racing in the mix, and they now hold fifth place in both the Teams' and Drivers' Gold Cup standings heading into Valencia.

The Sprint Series finale is finely poised. Emil Frey Racing's pairing of Chris Lulham and Thierry Vermeulen lead the Gold Cup with 90 points, but the margin to second-placed Saintéloc Racing

is slim (87.5pts), while Garage 59 (80pts) and Tresor Attempto Racing (73pts) remain in the hunt.

Al Zubair and Klingmann, on 68.5 points, may sit outside the top four, but a strong weekend could still vault them into podium contention in the final tally.

For Al Zubair, the significance of the weekend goes beyond the mathematics of championship points. His partnership with Klingmann has grown stronger with every round, while Al Manar Racing by Team WRT – already a proven force in GT racing – continues to build momentum.

The backdrop is fitting for a finale. The 4.005km Circuit Ricar-

do Tormo, located in Cheste just outside Valencia, is famous for its compact, amphitheatre-style layout where fans can watch the action unfold almost in its entirety from the grandstands. Traditionally a MotoGP stronghold, it has become a favourite stop for GT teams too, with this year marking the Sprint Series' fourth visit to the Spanish track.

The weekend programme is packed, with the GT2 European Series, Porsche Carrera Cup France, and Clio Cup Series also sharing the bill. For the Sprint Series, the action begins on Friday with free practice and pre-qualifying, before qualifying and the first

one-hour race on Saturday. The schedule repeats on Sunday with Q2 at 09:00hrs and the final Sprint Series race of 2025 going green at 14:00hrs.

As the chequered flag draws closer on the Sprint campaign, Al Zubair is clear about his ambitions. Victory in Valencia may not guarantee silverware in the standings, but it would underline the progress Al Manar Racing has made – and set the stage for an even bigger push in the Endurance Cup finale.

For now, though, the focus is on one goal: finishing the Sprint season the way they know best – fighting for the podium.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Scholes criticises ManU transfer policy

LONDON: Manchester United legend Paul Scholes believes the club messed up badly with their summer transfer strategy and lack the quality needed to fit manager Ruben Amorim's controversial 3-4-3 system.

The Old Trafford side have made their poorest start to a league season since 1992-93 with four points from the opening four games.

United's internal analysis concluded they would get greater improvement for their investment if they targeted the forward positions over the summer.

But despite spending £200m on Matheus Cunha, Bryan Mbeumo and Benjamin Sesko, so far they have only scored four Premier League goals - two of which were own goals.

Despite the growing external unease around Amorim, not helped by United's 3-0 derby defeat by Manchester City on Sunday, senior officials remain fully supportive of the Portuguese.

As was the case after last month's shock Carabao Cup exit at League Two Grimsby, they remain convinced Amorim is the right man to restore the club's fortunes and prefer to look at the long-term picture rather than be swayed by current results.

But Scholes fears the issues are deep rooted and will not be easily solved.

"I don't think the quality is there," he told BBC Radio 5 Live's Monday Night Club.

"Whatever two out of the four or five they have got in [midfield] - Casemiro, Bruno [Fernandes], [Kobbie] Mainoo - whatever combination he seems to try doesn't seem to work.

"That's a big issue. I thought all summer the absolute priority was a centre midfield player with legs,



who can play and can control a game.

"Goalkeeper was [also] a major issue. Did they really need to get to the Grimsby game to realise [Andre] Onana is not good enough?

"If Manchester United were not in the market for Gianluigi Donnarumma when he became avail-

able, that is criminal offence.

"The recruitment side went to buy forwards. That did need addressing, but did it need three of them? I'm not sure it did."

Scholes is not alone in believing United have no chance of reversing their fortunes unless Amorim changes his style, with all-time

leading scorer Wayne Rooney believing his old side have "got worse" under the Portuguese, who replaced the sacked Erik ten Hag last November.

"He cannot carry on playing this way, he just can't," said Scholes, who won 11 Premier League titles and the Champions League twice in a 20-year career with the club.

"At some point there has to be a moment where he thinks, 'I have to change something because what I am doing now is not working and I am not getting results'. The proof is there.

"I like Amorim, with everything he says, he seems to be a likeable man. But unfortunately results paint a picture.

"At this moment in time it isn't good enough. At this moment in time if results don't improve, performances don't really matter that much. He has to win some games or the pressure is going to come on him massively." - Agencies

SIGNING



Former Chelsea star Mata joins Melbourne Victory

MELBOURNE: Former Chelsea and Manchester United midfielder Juan Mata has signed for Australian side Melbourne Victory.

The 37-year-old, who was part of Spain's 2010 World Cup-winning squad, joins after spending last season at A-League rivals Western Sydney Wanderers.

He made just seven starts last season and says he has joined Victory wanting more playing time.

"I'm not somebody that demands game time for just the sake of it," said Mata.

"I really felt the energy in the club. I really felt that they wanted me here. I am driven and motivated to help this team win trophies and to work with the club as part of a longer-term plan to strengthen football in the country."

Mata has had a decorated ca-

reer, also winning the European Championship in 2012 with Spain when he scored in the 4-0 final victory over Italy.

After proving himself as Valencia's talisman, he signed for Chelsea in 2011 where he won the Champions League, Europa League and FA Cup.

He moved to Manchester United in 2014 for a then club record £37.1m fee, helping them win the FA Cup, League Cup and their first Europa League in 2016-17.

Mata made 278 Premier League appearances with Chelsea and Manchester United.

Mata then had spells at Galatasaray and Vissel Kobe before moving to Australia.

Victory were runners-up last season and begin the new campaign at home against Auckland FC on 18 October. - Agencies

WORLD ATHLETICS



Kipyegon wins historic fourth world 1,500m gold

TOKYO: Faith Kipyegon stormed to a historic fourth world 1,500m title on Tuesday as the Kenyan great extended her streak of dominance with a fifth consecutive global gold in the event.

The 31-year-old matched retired men's world record holder Hicham El Guerrouj as the only other athlete in history to amass four 1500m titles at the championships.

After securing her third consecutive Olympic triumph last year,

this was a third straight world gold for Kipyegon, who controlled the final from the start before bursting clear of her rivals on the final lap.

Not only is she unbeaten in the past five global finals but, excluding heats, she has not suffered defeat over the distance for more than four years.

Australia's Olympic silver medalist Jessica Hull faded to bronze after attempting to follow as Kipyegon wound up the pace, with

Dorcus Ewoi securing a Kenyan one-two.

The unstoppable Kipyegon crossed the line in three minutes 52.15 seconds, the chasm separating her from her competitors evidenced by the near three-second wait for Ewoi to follow.

With outstretched arms and a relaxed smile which suggested it had never felt in doubt, Kipyegon celebrated the eighth global gold of her career.

That is level with Jamaican sprint star Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce - the only other woman to win as many as four world titles in the same event - and distance running great Tirunesh Dibaba for the most by a female athlete in individual events.

Kipyegon will now target a second successive world double in the 5,000m, the heats for which begin on Thursday before Saturday's final. - Agencies

IN PICTURES



NEW SEMESTER STARTS IN HAWALLI GOVERNORATE, KUWAIT: Students attend a morning assembly on the first day of a new semester in Hawalli Governorate, Kuwait. – Xinhua

CANADA, BULGARIA REACH ROUND OF 16 AT MEN'S VOLLEYBALL WORLDS: Youssef Oughlaf (right) of Qatar competes during the pool B match between Poland and Qatar at the FIVB Men's World Championship 2025 in Quezon City, the Philippines. – Xinhua



TRADITIONAL CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS EXPERIENCE HANDICRAFT EXCHANGE AT MUSEUM IN XINJIANG: Traditional culture enthusiasts make gourd pyrography works at the Emin County memory museum in Emin County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. While showcasing multi-ethnic culture and local history of the county, the museum has attracted many artisans and traditional culture lovers for handicraft exchange. – Xinhua



IAEA CONFERENCE URGES PROTECTION OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION SCHEME: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi (front, left) visits an exhibition showcasing the development of China's nuclear energy in Vienna, Austria. The 69th General Conference of the IAEA opened here focusing on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology and the urgent need to protect the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. – Xinhua

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY OPENS ITS 10TH ANNUAL DINO FEST: Visitors view exhibits at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County during the 10th annual Dino Fest in Los Angeles, the United States. The museum opened its 10th annual Dino Fest, is drawing dinosaur enthusiasts of all ages with rare fossil exhibits, interactive activities and talks with leading paleontologists. – Xinhua



VIETNAM'S COCONUT FARMERS THRIVE WITH GROWING EXPORT TO CHINA: Workers process coconuts at a processing facility in Vinh Long Province, southern Vietnam. – Xinhua

SUNNY SANSKARI KI TULSI KUMARI CAST APPEARS AT THE TRAILER LAUNCH: Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan and Janhvi Kapoor during the trailer launch of their upcoming film 'Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari' in Mumbai. – ANI Photo



ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat recognised for its leadership in supporting SMEs

Best Bank in Oman for (SMEs) title at the MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards highlights the bank’s ongoing efforts to foster entrepreneurship and its substantial role in the development and growth of SMEs

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has been awarded the Best Bank in Oman for (SMEs) title for 2025 at the prestigious MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards.

This recognition highlights the bank’s ongoing efforts to foster entrepreneurship and its substantial role in the development and growth of SMEs through offering a wide range of banking services and



solutions tailored to meet their evolving financial needs and business goals.

Commenting on this achievement, Ibrahim Khamis Al Balushi, Senior Assistant General Manager, SMEs at Bank Muscat, said: “We take pride in being recognised as the best bank in Oman for SMEs award, a testament to the Bank’s commitment to strategic initiatives that actively support entre-

preneurs and SMEs. These efforts contribute to strengthening the national economy. Bank Muscat offers a variety of banking services and facilities specifically designed to empower these enterprises to expand and succeed in their businesses. Bank Muscat continually launches initiatives aimed at guiding SMEs on how to develop and scale their businesses effectively, and organizes dedicated training

programmes to build the financial, administrative, and marketing capabilities of entrepreneurs and SME owners. This recognition serves as a strong motivator for the Bank to continue playing its pioneering role in supporting and developing the SMEs sector, offering top-tier financial solutions that meet both current and future needs. We would like to extend our gratitude to the Bank’s customers

for their trust and confidence in the services offered to them.”

Bank Muscat’s “Al Wathbah” Programme for SMEs plays a key role in supporting the SMEs by offering an integrated suite of banking solutions tailored to the unique needs of SMEs customers. In addition to financial services, the division provides training opportunities, access to workshops, and networking events for entrepreneurs. The Bank remains steadfast in its collaboration with public and private sector entities to support business growth and SMEs development, particularly focusing on empowering youth and promoting a culture of innovation and sustainability in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

Bank Muscat’s commitment to SMEs development is evident in the wide range of financing services it provides across various sectors, including industry, retail, and hospitality. The Bank also prioritizes micro-enterprises and reinforces its support to these businesses through its “Najahi” Business Banking Unit launched in 2014.

The Bank’s support to the MSMEs underscores its commitment to understanding the needs of this sector and its vital role in driving economic development. The “Najahi” Unit offers unsecured financing options of up to 100,000 OMR, crafted to empower organi-

zations to seize business opportunities that demand cash flow or improved operational efficiency. Customers are also offered other banking solutions such as a specialized current account and debit cards for businesses.

The Bank also actively launches initiatives aimed at developing the businesses of Omani entrepreneurs. Amongst these initiatives is the “Al Wathbah” Academy, which aims to qualify and train the Omani entrepreneurs in the fields of business administration and finance, honing their skills to perform their businesses in a practical and professional manner.

The bank is also keen to hold events and activities with the aim of providing a marketing platform for business owners and small businesses. In this context, the Bank launches the annual “Al Wathbah Souq” in the Holy month of Ramadan. This event offers a platform for entrepreneurs and home-based business owners to showcase their products, reach new customers, and explore marketing opportunities. It also fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing among participants. The market features a variety of locally made products. The annual organization of the “Al Wathbah Souq” underscores Bank Muscat’s commitment to the development of this vital sector as a key pillar of Oman’s national economy.

PARTNERSHIP

Sohar International inks pact with Oman Charitable Organisation to support digital integration and sustainability

MUSCAT: As an institution revered for pioneering innovation and delivering value-driven solutions, Sohar International has recently signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Oman Charitable Organization.

The agreement reflects a shared commitment to develop a unified digital infrastructure, enhance governance through data-driven policies and procedures, and advance sustainable investment initiatives—all in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

The MoU was formalized in the presence of Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Saidi, Minister of Justice & Legal Affairs and Chairman of Oman Charitable Organization, and Abdulwahid Mohamed Al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulwahid Mohamed Al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International said, “True progress is not defined by innovation alone, but by the ability to channel innovation into meaningful purpose. This partnership with the Oman Charitable Organization represents a commitment to shaping an ecosystem where sustainability and technology converge to create enduring value. By strengthening



the digital foundations that underpin future systems, we are helping to ensure transformation that is both lasting and adaptable. In doing so, we are not only accelerating the nation’s digital transition but also ensuring that growth remains inclusive and supportive of a diversified national economy.”

Underlining the significance of the initiative, Bader Mohammed Al Zaabi, Acting CEO of the Authority, stated: “The partner-

ship will focus on strengthening the digital backbone of the Oman Charitable Organization through three interconnected areas that reinforce one another.

“At the core is IT infrastructure development, where modern technology solutions, automated reporting tools, and integrated digital platforms will be deployed to enhance operational resilience and transparency. This will be complemented by the adoption of

data-driven governance models, with digital systems enabling improved financial oversight, more sophisticated monitoring, and real-time analytics to ensure that resources are managed securely and with maximum efficiency. Equally vital is the emphasis on sustainable investment opportunities, supported by the creation of a comprehensive investment and governance policy and strategy that guides portfolio management in line with prudent risk parameters and the organization’s objectives. Together, these areas form a cohesive framework that is both resilient and aligned with national priorities.”

In driving these initiatives, the MoU reflects more than a functional partnership; it highlights a shared determination to apply innovation responsibly and with lasting impact. For Sohar International, this partnership is another step in advancing its broader strategy of contributing to national development while reinforcing trust through meaningful collaboration. By aligning its expertise with the mandates of leading institutions, the bank continues to play a pivotal role in shaping Oman’s journey toward a more digitally empowered and forward-looking economy.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Europcar Oman organises blood donation drive

MUSCAT: Europcar Oman announced the successful conclusion of its blood donation drive, organized in partnership with the Oman Hereditary Blood Disorders Association and held on September 11 at The Diplomatic Club, Muscat.

The initiative, supported by strategic partners—Oman American Business Council (OABC), The Diplomatic Club, the British Business Forum (BBF), the Indo Gulf and Middle East Chamber of Commerce (INMECC), and Crowe—brought together community members, businesses, and volunteers to donate blood and support a cause that saves countless lives.

“Supporting our communities is not just a responsibility; it’s a privilege. By encouraging blood donation, we are fostering a culture of giving that can truly make a difference,” said Nitin Sapre, CEO of Europcar Oman.

Rebecca Olson, CEO, OABC

said: “Community health is a shared responsibility, and we are honored to stand alongside Europcar and our fellow partners in this life-saving initiative. It’s inspiring to see our business community unite for such a meaningful cause.”

Charm Majolica, Director, The Diplomatic Club: “What an incredible event! We are proud and grateful for its success. Initiatives like this truly reflect The Diplomatic Club’s core values. A heartfelt thank you to all participants and partners—and we look forward to the next blood drive helping save even more lives”

Maggie Jeans, Director, British Business Forum (BBF): “This blood drive exemplifies what collaboration between organizations can achieve. We are proud that the BBF and our members could support this initiative and look forward to continuing to build impactful partnerships for the community.”

NEW COLLABORATION

New World Autos and Alves Bandeira Group sign agreement for MatraX tyres distribution in Oman



MUSCAT: New World Autos, a trusted brand in Oman, has recently announced a strategic partnership with MatraX Tyres, a globally respected tyre manufacturer under the Alves Bandeira Group. Through this new collaboration MatraX Tyres will soon be distributed across Oman, giving customers greater access to innovative tyre technology designed for safety, durability, comfort and longer-lasting satisfaction.

MatraX Tyres will give consumers around Oman a broader selection of quality tyres across budget, mid-range and premium segments, backed by professional service and trusted after-sales support.

MatraX Tyres, inspired by over fifty years of expertise from the Alves Bandeira Group, is a fast-growing brand that combines European engineering precision with robust, safety-driven

design. Its product range covers ultra-high-performance and high-performance passenger car tyres, durable SUV and 4x4 options and a comprehensive line-up of truck and bus tyres engineered with advanced tread compounds, reinforced sidewalls and fuel-efficient technologies. Already present in more than 60 countries worldwide, MatraX Tyres has built its reputation on consistent quality, innovation and a commitment to on-road safety, values that align closely with New World Autos own customer-first philosophy.

Sharing his thoughts on the new partnership, Mr. Abdullah Bin Mohammed Saud Bahwan, CEO, Saud Bahwan Group said “Our aim is to deliver trusted automotive solutions that enrich the lives of our customers wherever they may be in Oman. Partnering with MatraX Tyres reflects this commitment.

Their focus on innovation, quality, value and safety perfectly complements our extensive infrastructure and wide-reaching network. Together, we will ensure that customers in Oman can easily access a diverse range of quality tyres that inspire confidence and peace of mind on every journey.”

Andre Bandeira, CEO, Alves Bandeira International also communicated “We are delighted to partner with New World Autos, an organisation that is focused on quality, service and customers’ happiness. Through this partnership, our full range of high-quality tyres will be available across Oman. We are confident that together, we can provide drivers in Oman with superior tyre solutions that prioritise safety, durability and driving comfort, helping ensure confidence on every road.”

He continued, “Our global jour-

ney has always been about combining engineering excellence with customer care. By working alongside a partner like New World Autos, we are taking another important step in bringing our tyres to new markets with the assurance of local expertise, service reliability and long-term trust.”

Through this partnership, customers across Oman will gain access to a broader choice of tyres that meet diverse driving conditions and preferences, from city commuting to off-road exploration and commercial transport. This collaboration not only strengthens the tyre-buying experience by combining quality, convenience and confidence, but also reaffirms the shared commitment of New World Autos and MatraX Tyres to enhance safety, satisfaction and peace of mind for every journey ahead.



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