

O M A N
عُمان
D A I L Y

Observer

12

AL ZUBAIR'S AL MANAR RACING CLINCHES PODIUM IN FRANCE

VOL. 44, NO. 264
PAGES 20 BAISAS 200

SUNRISE 05:38 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR 04:17 AM

DHUHR 12:18 PM

ASR 03:42 PM

MAGHRIB 06:52 PM

ISHA 08:09 PM

INBRIEF

OIL SLIPS AFTER OPEC+ AGREES TO HIKE OUTPUT

Oil prices slipped in early Asian trade after Opec+ agreed to another large production hike in September. Brent crude futures fell 40 cents, or 0.57 per cent, to \$69.27 a barrel while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$66.96 a barrel, down 37 cents, or 0.55 per cent, after both contracts closed about \$2 a barrel lower on Friday. Opec+ agreed on Sunday to raise oil production by 547,000 barrels per day for September, the latest in a series of accelerated output hikes. Oman oil price for October delivery reached \$71.16, comprising a drop by \$2.55 compared to the price of Friday, which stood at \$73.71. The average price of Oman oil for July delivery has stabilised at \$69.37 per barrel, thus \$5.75 per barrel higher than June delivery.

LICENCE MUST FOR OIL AND GAS PROFESSIONALS

The Ministry of Labour announced the implementation of mandatory licensing requirements for individuals practising specific professions in Oman’s Energy and Minerals Sector, effective from September 1, 2025. The move is part of ongoing efforts to regulate the labour market, enhance workforce efficiency and align professional standards with national objectives. According to the ministry, all current employees and new appointees in the listed professions must obtain a professional practice licence through the Oman Energy Association, represented by the Sector Skills Unit for the Energy and Minerals Sector. This licence will be a prerequisite for the issuance or renewal of work permits. **DETAILS ON P2**

MUSIC BANDS WIN TOP PLACES



The band of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) has won first place — overall ranking — in the Infantry and Military Discipline Competition held in Scotland, United Kingdom. The RAO band also merited the award set for the best band from outside the United Kingdom in the Bridge of Allan Championship in Scotland. Members of the RAO band won advanced places at the individual level in the baton-bearing competition. Staff Sergeant Nader bin Jumaan Bait Jabali won the second-place award, while Warrant Officer Mohammed bin Khamis al Amri won the third-place. **SEE P4**

Oman registers 4 historical landmarks in Arab register

BEIRUT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, has registered four historical landmarks in the Arab Register of Architectural and Urban Heritage. These include Al Hamoudah Mosque in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, the historic forts of Sohar and Nizwa, and Al Shawadhna Mosque in the ancient village of Al Aqr in the Wilayat of Nizwa.

The registration took place during Oman’s participation in the 10th meeting of the Observatory of Architectural and Urban Heritage in Arab States, held in the Lebanese Republic with the participation of several Arab countries. The Observatory of Architectural and Urban Heritage is one of the programmes affiliated with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO).



This move aims to establish joint policies to protect this heritage as a vital part of the Arab cultural identity.

It focuses on documenting architectural and urban heritage in Arab states, promoting cooperation in preservation and conservation efforts, and facilitating the exchange of expertise. Additionally, it aims to establish joint policies to protect this heritage as a vital part of the Arab cultural identity. The inclusion of these four Omani landmarks reflects regional recognition of Oman’s standing

in heritage protection and conservation. It also highlights the country’s ongoing efforts to showcase its architectural and historical features at both the Arab and international levels. Al Hamoudah Mosque, locally known as the ‘Domes Mosque’ in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, is one of the oldest mosques in the governorate. — ONA

More Gazans die seeking aid and from hunger

Israeli gunfire kills 40 Palestinians in Gaza

AT least 40 Palestinians were killed by Israeli gunfire and air strikes on Gaza on Monday, including 10 seeking aid, health authorities said, adding another five had died of starvation in what humanitarian agencies say may be an unfolding famine.

The 10 died in two separate incidents near aid sites belonging to the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, in central and southern Gaza, local medics said. The United Nations says more than 1,000 people have been killed trying to receive aid in the enclave since the GHF began operating in May 2025, most of them shot by Israeli forces operating near GHF sites.

“Everyone who goes there comes back either with a bag of flour or carried back (on a wooden stretcher) as a martyr, or injured. No one comes back safe,” said 40-year-old Palestinian Bilal Thari.

He was among mourners at Gaza City’s Al Shifa Hospital on Monday who had gathered to collect the bodies of their loved ones killed a day earlier by Israeli fire as they sought aid, according to Gaza’s health officials.

At least 13 Palestinians were killed on Sunday while waiting for the arrival of UN aid trucks at the Zikim crossing on the Israeli border with the northern Gaza Strip, the officials said.

At the hospital, some bodies were wrapped in thick patterned blankets because white shrouds, which hold special significance in Islamic burials, were in short supply due to continued Israeli border restrictions and the mounting number of daily deaths, Palestinians said.



Palestinians wait to receive food from a charity kitchen, amid a hunger crisis, in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, on Monday. — Reuters

Five more people died of starvation or malnutrition over the past 24 hours, Gaza’s health ministry said on Monday. The new deaths raised the toll of those dying from hunger to 180, including 93 children, since the war began

“We don’t want war, we want peace, we want this misery to end. We are out on the streets, we all are hungry, we are all in bad shape, women are out there on the streets, we have nothing available for us to live a normal life like all human beings, there’s no life,” Thari said. There was no immediate comment by Israel on Sunday’s incident. The Israeli military said in a statement that it had not fired earlier on Monday in the vicinity of the aid distribution centre in the southern Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, five more people died of starvation or malnutrition

over the past 24 hours, Gaza’s health ministry said on Monday. The new deaths raised the toll of those dying from hunger to 180, including 93 children, since the war began. UN agencies have said that airdrops of food are insufficient and that Israel must let in far more aid by land and quickly ease access to it. COGAT, the Israeli military agency that coordinates aid, said that during the past week, over 23,000 tonnes of aid in 1,200 trucks had entered Gaza but that hundreds had yet to be driven to aid distribution hubs by UN and other organisations. **SEE ALSO P6**

British summer storm sows travel chaos

LONDON: High-speed winds disrupted trains and blew over trees in Scotland and northern England where residents were advised against travelling as an “unusually” fierce summer storm hit the UK on Monday.

Meteorologists warned that gusts could reach a record-breaking 145 km per hour as Storm Floris made landfall overnight.

The second-most serious amber wind warning was in place across

swathes of Scotland as officials sought to minimise damage. “Storm Floris is an unusually strong storm for the time of year,” the UK’s Meteorological Office said in a statement. The Met Office said it was only the third time an amber wind warning had been issued in August since the system launched in 2011, adding some gusts in Scotland were “likely” to beat records. Scientists say human-induced

climate change is driving more intense and frequent extreme weather events around the globe, as the planet continues to warm. Several train operators in northern England and Scotland cancelled services, warning passengers not to make their journeys. A tree was removed after it fell onto overhead railway wires in Glasgow, causing a fire, according to Network Rail Scotland. Multiple trees were also blown over

in the northeastern Scottish region of Aberdeenshire, blocking roads. In Scotland’s capital, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo marching parade was cancelled and Edinburgh Zoo said it would be closed for the day. Storm Floris is the second named storm to hit the UK this year, and the sixth one this storm season, which will run from early September 2024 to late August 2025. — AFP

OMAN



Experience Better

Their future starts today!

Change to AWASR, Fastest Internet In Oman

Get Ashel Educational Platform for free!

Unlimited data for all plans





SUBSCRIBE NOW !
WhatsApp
80001000
Website: [awasr.om](#)

SHORT TAKES



The licence will be a prerequisite for the issuance or renewal of work permits.

Licence must for oil and gas professionals

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour announced the implementation of mandatory licensing requirements for individuals practising specific professions in Oman’s Energy and Minerals Sector, effective from September 1, 2025.

The move is part of ongoing efforts to regulate the labour market, enhance workforce efficiency and align professional standards with national objectives.

According to the ministry, all current employees and new appointees in the listed professions must obtain a professional practice licence through the Oman Energy Association, represented by the Sector Skills Unit for the Energy and Minerals Sector.

This licence will be a prerequisite for the issuance or renewal of work permits. The ministry has clarified that it will not grant work permits for these professions unless a valid professional practice licence is submitted. Establishments employing individuals in these roles are urged to take necessary measures to ensure compliance with the new regulations. The list of affected professions includes roles such as HSE Advisers, Crane Operators, Forklift Operators, Excavator Operators, Mechanical and Electrical Technicians, Drillers, Welders and other specialised technical positions.

A total of 43 job titles are specified under the professional licensing requirement. This initiative aims to enhance the qualifications of the national workforce, uphold safety standards and ensure that all professionals operating in key sectors possess the necessary certifications to perform their duties.

Meeting discusses efforts to mitigate disasters



The meeting highlighted the importance of building capacities to address natural disasters. — ONA

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority, during a joint meeting with a delegation from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), reviewed efforts to strengthen national measures in reducing the impact of environmental disasters and climate change.

The meeting highlighted the importance of enhancing national preparedness and building capacities to address environmental and natural disasters. It also examined Oman’s ongoing efforts in environmental and natural resource conservation, as well as its approach to integrating risk reduction concepts into environmental policies, urban planning and sustainable development.

Both sides emphasised the need to establish strategic partnerships, exchange expertise and successful experiences, and develop joint action plans to enhance the resilience of ecological, social and economic systems in facing future challenges.

NEW HEALTH CENTRE OPENS IN NIYABAT OF AL RAWDHA

HUMAID AL MANDHARI
AL BURAIMI, AUG 4

The Al Fay Health Centre in the Wilayat of Mahadha in Al Buraimi Governorate was opened on Monday.

The health centre includes vaccination rooms, nursing departments, a laboratory, a pharmacy, maternal and child health facilities, in addition to health education and awareness halls.

The centre provides a range of basic health services including general medicine, women’s and children’s health, community health, expanded immunisation, treatment of communicable and



The centre provides a range of basic health services including general medicine, women’s and children’s health.

non-communicable diseases, early detection of breast cancer and health promotion programmes. The opening ceremony was held

under the auspices of Sayyid Dr Hamad bin Ahmed al Busaidy, Governor of Al Buraimi in the presence of Dr Said bin Harib al Lamki, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs.

Dr Hilal bin Saud al Hatmi, Deputy Wali of Mahadha, said that the opening of the health centre is a testament to the commitment of the relevant authorities to improve the quality of health services.

Dr Majid bin Rashid al Muqbali, Director-General of Health Services in Al Buraimi Governorate, stressed the importance of the new health centre in serving citizens of the Niyabat of Al Rawdha.

With licensed smart apps, Oman’s taxis are secure

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 4

THE Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology launched the campaign called ‘It Makes a Difference’ based on the results of a consultation conducted on the experiences of licensed taxi apps.

The campaign aims to encourage taxi drivers to join licensed apps as part of efforts to regulate the sector and improve service quality and passenger safety through secure and transparent digital solutions.

The transportation sector in the Sultanate of Oman is undergoing a significant transformation with the increased use of licensed smart apps, aligning with national trends towards digitisation and technology in vital sectors. Within this framework, the ministry continues its efforts to regulate the sector and ensure its sustainability.

To contribute to the development of taxi apps that meet aspirations, enhance community participation and advance digital transportation services in Oman, the ministry evaluated the experiences of licensed taxi apps from June 22 to July 22 of this year.

The ministry aims to regulate taxi activity in Oman and has announced that



The transportation sector in the Sultanate of Oman is undergoing a significant transformation with the increased use of licensed smart apps.

taxi applications licensed by the ministry are available on demand, whether through instant or pre-booking, after meeting the requirements and provisions of the Land Transport Law’s regulations.

Studies conducted by the ministry have shown that regulating the taxi sector has directly improved drivers’ incomes by providing them with more stable employment opportunities. It has also led to more efficient and convenient

transportation services for users. Passengers can now benefit from advantages such as tracking their journey, knowing fares in advance, and easily accessing taxis at any time and place, increasing safety and transparency in this vital sector.

The smart on-demand applications provide a system for tracking and monitoring the journey’s route, with fixed prices determined before the trip, while ensuring user privacy and security.

The applications also allow users to message the driver through the app and cancel requests with ease. They also offer various services, including basic trips, economical trips, monthly contracts and an independent system for processing taxi requests for institutions and companies.

Starting in early April of this year, all white and orange taxis are required to join electronic platforms, register and operate through approved vehicle booking applications to improve service quality and provide secure digital solutions. This initiative aims to modernise the public transportation system, improve taxi services and enhance transparency in fare pricing. Additionally, this transformation will increase passenger access to taxis through digital platforms, ushering Omani taxis into a new era of digital transformation.

Third Edition of Youth Ambassadors project in Oct

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth has launched the third edition of the ‘Youth Ambassadors’ project for 2025, in collaboration with the Foreign Ministry and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

The programme will take place in Muscat next October, aiming to enhance youth participation and develop their skills and capabilities in line with the objectives of the Tenth Five-Year Plan concerning youth priorities.

The continuation of the project into its third edition follows the success and engagement achieved in its second edition in 2024. The programme has met its goals of qualifying 100 young men and women in leadership and diplomacy, strengthening their presence in regional and international forums, and familiarising them with the foundational principles of the



This year’s edition targets 120 participants, including 21 allocated for Gulf and Arab countries

United Nations, its affiliated councils and their operational mechanisms. This contributes to connecting youth with the global community and international and regional organisations. Hilal bin Saif al Siyabi,

Director-General of Youth at the Ministry, stated: “The Youth Ambassadors project is one of the initiatives the ministry is keen to implement annually, given its successes in the 2023 and 2024 editions and the positive engagement we

observed from participating youth. This has amplified its impact and highlighted its added value, especially with the growing demand for participation each year. The first edition saw 75 participants, while the second edition increased to 100 participants.”

He noted that this year’s edition targets 120 participants, including 21 seats allocated for Gulf and Arab countries, most of which have given preliminary approval to join the project. The project encompasses several key themes, most notably meetings between participating youth and diplomatic leaders, as well as training workshops in collaboration with UNITAR. Additionally, it includes a Model United Nations (MUN) simulation session and opportunities for youth to participate in regional and international engagements.

— ONA

UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND FOR AZURA BEACH RESIDENCES SIGNALS STRONG MARKET MOMENTUM



*Al Mouj Muscat secured a record-breaking sales of Azura Beach Residences
Phase two set to launch as long waitlist builds for
Oman's most sought-after beachfront living experience*



“The overwhelming response to the launch of Azura Beach Residences is a clear reflection of the market’s trust in Al Mouj Muscat as Oman’s most compelling and established lifestyle destination. We are proud to see our vision for Azura Beach Residences resonate strongly with our customers from the architectural elegance to its harmony and integration with the natural coastline and the vibrant life of Al Mouj Marina. Azura is more than just a residence it represents the next chapter in oceanfront living in Oman, where its design fosters a genuine sense of belonging and elevates everyday quality of life. It is testament to what’s possible when exceptional design, a stunning setting, and enriching lifestyle experiences come together”
Nasser Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat

With 309 residences claimed within two weeks, Al Mouj Muscat is now preparing to launch phase two in response to strong market demand and a growing waitlist. Azura Beach Residences comprising 286 apartments, and 23 beach chalets drew exceptional interest that far surpassed expectations.

Located within the prestigious Marsa District, Azura Beach Residences captured the attention of discerning buyers for its rare dual-frontage offering uninterrupted views of both the beach and the marina and its contemporary design centered around wellness, light, and space.

Due to the significant number of buyers waitlisted, Al Mouj Muscat is now preparing to launch the second phase of Azura Beach Residences. The upcoming release will build on the success of phase one and deliver the same uncompromising design ethos, connectivity, and lifestyle that define this new oceanfront icon.

This milestone reinforces Al Mouj Muscat’s standing as Oman’s most

established oceanfront destination and its continued success in shaping the future of lifestyle-driven destination.

Designed with a flowing connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, residents at Azura Beach Residences will enjoy an elevated resort style living experience, with access to a pristine beach, infinity pool, co-working lounge, and a vibrant marina promenade all within walking distance. With freehold ownership open to all nationalities, the project attracted a healthy mix of Omani and international buyers, underscoring the project’s cross-border appeal.



“We anticipated strong interest, but the depth of demand has surpassed our expectations,” said **Saleh Al Siyabi, VP of Sales.**

“This success affirms the strength of our product and go-to-market strategy and reflects the growing appeal of Al Mouj Muscat as a truly multinational lifestyle destination.”



“Azura was designed with insight into the evolving preferences of buyers,” added **Salma Al Hashmi, VP of Marketing.**

“The result is a product that goes beyond filling a market gap, it fosters a deeply meaningful connection to place, lifestyle, and legacy.”

Tourism & Hospitality



7 Hotels

Kempinski Hotel
Muscat
SULTANATE OF OMAN
فندق كمبينسكي مسقط

ST REGIS
AL MOUJ • MUSCAT

mysk
by SHAZA

VOCO
— BY IHG —

Hotel Okura

Diverse lifestyle amenities



18-hole
Championship
Golf Course



400
Berth Marina



90
& Oceanfront
Culinary
Experiences



6km
Community
Beach



3.5km
Cycling Trail



3.5
Jogging Track



14
Swimming
Pool



19
Parks



4
Indoor Kids Play
Hub



5
Gym



3
Spa



Urban
farm



Multiple
Sports
Courts



Sailing
School and
Water Sport
Centre



Diving
Centre



Yoga
Studio



Padel
and Tennis
Court



Cosmic
Bowling

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



By July 2025, the number of licensed hotels and lodging facilities has risen to 55 establishments

HOTEL OCCUPANCY IN IBRI SOARS TO 100PC AMID KHAREEF TRAVEL BOOM

IBRI: The Wilayat of Ibri in Al Dhahirah Governorate experiences increasing tourist and commercial activity every July and August. As a transit and rest stop for visitors from GCC countries travelling through land ports to Dhofar Governorate, this contributes to a rise in occupancy rates at the wilayat’s hotel and lodging establishments.

Ali bin Khamis al Sidairi, Assistant Director at the Directorate of Heritage and Tourism in Al Dhahirah Governorate, explained that the governorate sees a notable increase in the hospitality sector during the Khareef Dhofar Season. Occupancy rates in a number of establishments range from 85 to 100 per cent, reflecting the growing demand during this time of year.

Al Sidairi added that the number of licensed hotels and lodging facilities in Al Dhahirah Governorate has risen to 55 establishments by the end of July 2025, compared to 48 at the end of 2024, a growth rate of 14.5 per cent. He noted that this number is expected to increase further by the end of the current year.

He pointed out that the Rub al Khali border crossing in Al Dhahirah Governorate, which connects Oman to Saudi Arabia, undertakes a pivotal role in facilitating overland tourism. This has created promising investment opportunities on both sides of the road, including fuel stations and quick service centres, as well as a number of hotels and rest stops, thereby enhancing the governorate’s added value.

Markets, commercial centres, restaurants, cafes and various other commercial projects in the wilayat are experiencing increased activity during this period, along with a noticeable rise in traffic. This signals promising investment opportunities for young Omanis and provides seasonal and permanent job opportunities in several vital sectors. — ONA

OMAN AIR HOLIDAYS LAUNCHES NEW PLATFORM POWERED BY TUI



The go-live was announced during a press conference in Muscat.

MUSCAT: Oman Air has officially launched its new digital platform, Oman Air Holidays, powered by TUI, one of the world’s leading tourism groups.

The go-live was announced during a press conference in Muscat, marking a major milestone in the airline’s efforts to enhance the travel experience and promote inbound tourism to Oman.

Oman Air Holidays allows guests from Oman to explore more than 20 countries worldwide, while also enabling international travellers to discover Oman as a unique and accessible destination.

The new platform complements the airline’s wider strategy to support inbound tourism, which includes its stopover programme with Visit Oman, efforts to increase point-to-point traffic, and a growing network with Amsterdam and Rome, most recently added.

MUSIC BANDS OF RAO, RAFO WIN TOP PLACES IN UK COMPETITIONS

EDINBURGH: The band of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) has won first place — overall ranking — in the Infantry and Military Discipline Competition held in Scotland, United Kingdom. The RAO band also merited the award set for the best band from outside the United Kingdom in the Bridge of Allan Championship in Scotland.

Members of the RAO band won advanced places at the individual level in the baton-bearing competition. Staff Sergeant Nader



RAO band has won first place in the Infantry, Military Discipline contest held in Scotland

bin Jumaan Bait Jabali won the second-place award, while Warrant Officer Mohammed bin Khamis al Amri won the third-place award in the 3rd stage of the competitions, which were held in the Scottish town of Bridge of Allan. Meanwhile, the band of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) maintained its leading record in the bagpipes and drums competition held in the Bridge of Allan town as part of the activities of the Grade Four category of the World Music Competition. — ONA

MoH calls for visitors to stay safe during khareef

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, AUG 4

AS the mist flows over the mountains and the Khareef Dhofar Season reaches its peak, thousands of visitors continue to arrive from within Oman and abroad to experience the lush greenery, waterfalls and cool weather.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has once again called on the public to enjoy the season safely and responsibly.

The ministry has urged all visitors to follow basic preventive guidelines to avoid health issues and accidents during the season, including wearing appropriate footwear in slippery areas, using sunscreen to protect the skin, and ensuring that individuals who take regular medication or use medical devices carry them at all times.

The advisory also stressed the importance of maintaining hygiene, avoiding uncovered food and being cautious while using public restrooms and facilities. The ministry specifically warned of increased risk of slipping in elevated areas and near water springs, advising visitors to walk carefully in these locations.

Due to continuous drizzle, the terrain in Dhofar during khareef



The ministry has urged all visitors to follow basic preventive guidelines to avoid health issues and accidents during the season.

The advisory stresses the importance of maintaining hygiene, avoiding uncovered food and being cautious while using public restrooms

becomes wet and slippery, increasing the chance of injuries that can range from mild sprains to more serious fractures. Walking in mountainous areas, highlands and coastal regions requires extra caution, as does engaging in water activities, which can become more dangerous due to rising waves.

The ministry emphasised the role of first aid as an essential aspect of public healthcare that can save lives and minimise complications in case

of accidents. It cited sprains and fractures as common injuries during the season and explained how to identify and manage them. In the case of sprains, which involve injury to tissues and ligaments caused by falls or impact, symptoms may include swelling, bruising, muscle spasms and difficulty walking.

Regarding fractures, the ministry explained that they can occur due to strong force or trauma, such as falling or slipping, and may also be linked to health conditions like osteoporosis.

First aid instructions included stopping any bleeding with a clean cloth, avoiding movement of the injured area — especially if the injury involves the neck or spine — applying ice wrapped in a cloth to control swelling, and monitoring for symptoms of shock such as fainting or shortness of breath.

In such cases, the patient should be placed in a position that supports breathing or have their legs elevated while waiting for emergency services.

The ministry concluded by emphasising that the joy of the khareef season can only be fully experienced by adhering to safety measures, demonstrating health awareness, and acting with a sense of shared responsibility to ensure a safe and enjoyable time for all.

Over 400 join Oman REFCO Esports Championship, fuelling digital ambitions

MUSCAT: The Oman REFCO Esports Championship concluded on August 1, bringing together over 400 participants in the largest esports event of its kind in Oman.

Organised by Oman REFCO and the Omani Gaming & Esports Committee, in partnership with Active Oman, E-sports Arena, and the Oman Automobile Association (OAA), the championship marked a milestone in advancing youth engagement and digital innovation. The event served as a vibrant platform to foster digital skills, inspire innovation and fuel the aspirations of a new generation of tech-savvy Omanis.

The championship underscored Oman’s growing commitment to creating a knowledge-based economy by nurturing digital competencies and fostering high-potential sectors such as esports and gaming.

“Public-private partnerships are vital to nurturing young talent and developing their skills across diverse sectors,” said Saba al Busaidy, Head of the Omani Gaming & Esports Committee.

“This collaboration stands as a model for empowering



The championship marked a milestone in advancing youth engagement and digital innovation

Omani youth. Through the Oman REFCO Esports Championship, we are creating meaningful opportunities for young individuals to sharpen their competitive edge while contributing to the larger vision of building a resilient, digitally empowered society.”

The championship featured competitions in FIFA 25, Tekken and Assetto Corsa, with each category drawing large crowds, fierce competition and enthusiastic support. Beyond the games, the participants engaged in motivational workshops designed to deepen their understanding of the global esports industry,

potential career paths and digital entrepreneurship.

Suleiman bin Abdullah al Salmi, Head of Human Resources and Corporate Services at Oman REFCO, commented: “At Oman REFCO, we see youth as the cornerstone of Oman’s future. Supporting this championship is part of our broader mission to elevate the gaming sector from a recreational pastime into a viable professional and economic contributor. Through sustained collaboration with the Omani Gaming & Esports Committee, we’re building momentum towards a dynamic digital ecosystem where youth can thrive and lead.”

The event was sponsored by Brig Jamal bin Said al Tai, Chairman, OAA and Active Oman. A long-time advocate for youth engagement, Brig Al Tai praised the initiative for channelling youthful energy into positive, forward-looking pursuits.

“The OAA and Active Oman are proud to back an event that promotes digital readiness among our youth. As esports continues to grow globally, it is vital that Omani youth are equipped to participate, compete and represent our country on international platforms,” he said.

In addition to sponsoring the event, the OAA and Active Oman played a key role in ensuring seamless event execution by supporting logistics, promotions and technical infrastructure. The Oman REFCO Esports Championship was a launchpad for emerging local talent, many of whom are now being considered for inclusion in Oman’s national esports team.

As the esports sector continues to evolve globally, Oman REFCO reaffirmed its commitment to investing in youth and positioning digital innovation as a central pillar of the country’s future.

SHORT TAKES



The camp programme includes training workshops and specialised scouting courses

350 SCOUTS, LEADERS AT GULF SUMMER SCOUT CAMP

SALALAH: The Gulf Summer Scout Camp for advanced scouts was inaugurated on Monday at the permanent scout camp in Jabal Ashur Plain, Dhofar Governorate. Organised by the General Directorate of Scouts and Guides at the Ministry of Education, the camp runs until August 9 under the theme ‘Community Partnership: Leadership and Leadership to Build the Future.’

The event brings together 350 scouts and leaders from across Oman and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, with each nation represented by 8 participants. The camp programme includes training workshops and specialised scouting courses designed to prepare a generation capable of serving their community and nation with awareness and dedication.

In his opening address, Camp Commander-in-Chief Ahmed bin Abdullah al Humaimi highlighted the camp’s role in building a future-ready generation. He emphasised that the activities aim to develop self-reliance, promote national values and encourage volunteerism — instilling a deep-rooted sense of cooperation and commitment to nation-building. The camp also focuses on raising community awareness and fostering values of good citizenship, loyalty and belonging. It further aims to nurture a sense of responsibility among youth, encouraging them to preserve public property, the environment and cultural heritage. — ONA

Maqshin welcomes visitors with traditional hospitality

MAQSHIN: The Wilayat of Maqshin organised a vibrant event on Monday to welcome visitors to the Dhofar Khareef Season 2025. Held in cooperation with the Dhofar Governor’s Office and various government institutions, the initiative aimed to stimulate domestic tourism and showcase the diverse tourism potential of the governorate’s wilayats.

Organised by the Office of the Wali of Maqshin, the event reflected the authentic spirit of Omani hospitality and underscored the role of local communities in enriching the



The event underscored the role of local communities in enriching tourism experience

tourism experience during the much-anticipated khareef season, which draws thousands of visitors from across

Oman and beyond.

Shaikh Madin bin Ali Ghawas, Deputy Wali of Maqshin, highlighted the wilayat’s commitment to leveraging the khareef season to strengthen community participation and foster collaboration with key partners.

“Our goal is to ensure that the khareef season becomes a platform for social and economic engagement,” he said. “Welcoming visitors with warmth and enthusiasm not only enhances their experience, but also reinforces the wilayat’s image as a key contributor to Oman’s tourism landscape.” — ONA

Ittin’s Cultural Street spotlights books

SALALAH: The Cultural and Literary Street, established this year by Dhofar Municipality as part of the Ittin Square events in the Wilayat of Salalah, is a highlight of the Khareef Dhofar Season 2025. It aims to showcase the governorate’s diverse cultural scene through interactive events that attract visitors of all ages.

The Cultural Street features a range of accompanying activities, including musical performances, storytelling, plastic arts, poetry evenings and a ‘postman’ event. It also hosts a wide participation from publishing houses and libraries, which are displaying literary and cultural publications that cater to the interests of various community segments.

Salim bin Mohammed al Yafai, Director of the Cultural and Literary Street and Chairman of the Khareef Dhofar Book Fair 2025, explains that the fair is an annual event during the khareef season.

He noted that the fair includes 27 publishing houses from various Gulf and Arab countries. He added that Dhofar Municipality has prepared a cultural programme with diverse stops to enrich visitors’ cultural experiences, expressing his hope that the fair will boost local and international attendance.



The fair includes 27 publishing houses from various Gulf and Arab countries.

Awadh bin Salim al Shukaili, owner of ‘Bain Al Suttoor’ (Between the Lines) publishing house, said his company is participating in the fair for the fourth consecutive year. He highlighted that the publishing house is a key supporter of Omani writers.

He added that the idea of establishing the library was to empower Omani writers to have a presence on regional and international stages. Adel Metwally, a representative from Egypt’s ‘Boursat Al Kotob’ (Book Exchange) publishing

house, confirmed their continuous participation in the Khareef Dhofar Book Fair since 2015. He explained that this year’s participation focuses on displaying Omani books, particularly those on history, as well as supporting young Omani writers and providing children’s and scientific books.

Metwally praised the Cultural and Literary Street experience, calling it ‘exceptional’, especially with the aesthetic appeal of its location at Ittin Square. — ONA

Forum discusses impact of tech on jobs and skills

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, AUG 4

OMAN has officially launched the ‘Future of the World of Work Forum’ in Salalah, marking a major milestone in national and regional efforts to prepare for fast-evolving changes in the labour market.

Organised by the Ministry of Labour as part of the broader Labour Forum, the event is taking place over two days in Dhofar Governorate and brings together a wide range of experts, policymakers and academics from across Oman and the Gulf.

Held at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment, the forum serves as a strategic platform to explore how economic and technological transformations are reshaping jobs, skills and employment systems. The goal is to anticipate future shifts and develop policies that equip Oman’s workforce — and those across the GCC — with the tools to remain competitive in a rapidly changing world.

On its first day, the forum featured two major dialogue sessions addressing pressing issues facing today’s labour markets. The first session, titled ‘Major Transformations and the Sustainability of Labour Markets’, presented three policy-driven working papers on economic



The forum aims to generate actionable recommendations that enhance national employment strategies

The forum serves as a platform to explore how economic and technological transformations are reshaping jobs, skills and employment systems

transformations, employment policies focused on continuous learning, and GCC approaches to labour market sustainability.

The second session focused on education and skills under the theme ‘Economic Transformations and the Future of Skills: The GCC Context.’ Speakers shared insights on leading the employment ecosystem through governance models, forecasting skills needs to meet development goals and the evolving role of education policy.

The forum’s themes align with Oman Vision 2040 and the broader Gulf vision for inclusive, sustainable and knowledge-based economic growth. It aims to generate actionable recommendations that enhance national employment strategies and ensure regional human capital can adapt to future

challenges.

Running alongside the main forum is an exhibition titled ‘Future Talents... Thought and Action’, featuring innovative student projects from vocational colleges across Oman. This space provides young Omanis a platform to showcase their creativity and readiness for the future workforce. A special session held as part of the exhibition discussed vocational training and entrepreneurship to empower youth to take an active role in sustainable development.

The ‘Future of the World of Work Forum’ underlines Oman’s proactive commitment to preparing a resilient and future-ready workforce, capable of navigating global shifts while driving national and regional prosperity.



MUSCAT GOVERNORATE
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY
Advertisement No. (26/2025)

In reference to Advertisement No (20/2025), Muscat Municipality informs you of the modification of the dates related to the Bids as follows:

Serial	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Document Fee	Deadline for obtaining bidding docs.	Deadline for inquires submission	Deadline for submission
1	5/2025	Construction, implementation and Operation of a Cafe on Plot No. (1542), Block (M/1), in Sur Al-Hadeed, Wilayat Al-Seeb.	25/- OMR	14/8/2025	18/8/2025	21/8/2025
2	6/2025	Investment of Plot No. (590), Block (M/1), in the Al-Khoud area, Wilayat Al-Seeb, with an area of (16,279 m²).	35/- OMR	14/8/2025	18/8/2025	21/8/2025
3	7/2025	Investment of Plot No. (787), Block (M/4), in the Al-Khoud area, Wilayat Al-Seeb, with an area of (80,000 m²).	90/- OMR	14/8/2025	18/8/2025	21/8/2025
4	8/2025	Investment of Plot No. (2137) in the Bimmah area, Wilayat Quriyat, with an area of (3,373 m²).	25/- OMR	14/8/2025	18/8/2025	21/8/2025
5	9/2025	Establishment, Management and Operation of a Cafe at Al-Rabea Walkway in Wilayat Al-Amerat.	25/- OMR	14/8/2025	18/8/2025	21/8/2025
6	10/2025	Establishment, Management and Operation of a Slaughterhouse on Plot No. (967), Block (M/2), in the Al-Misfah area, Wilayat Bousher.	650/- OMR	14/8/2025	18/8/2025	21/8/2025
7	11/2025	Investment of Plot No. (1578), Block (M/3), in the Al-Misfah area, Wilayat Bousher, Designated for Truck Parking.	228/- OMR	14/8/2025	18/8/2025	21/8/2025

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

- Company registration with Muscat Municipality must be valid to obtain the bid document.
- Pay the specified document fee for the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality's Bank account as follows:

Bank Muscat 0423010702710024
- A copy of the transaction's receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (SQ.QS@mm.gov.om), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name,office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commercial registration number of the company).
- The tender document will be provided to the company via email.
- 2:00 PM** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents.
- Documents must be enclosed in a plain closed envelope (without any company information) and place in the box located in bulding (A) in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsat.

NOTES:

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

Website: www.mm.gov.om

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



A crew member stands in front of the Indian Navy guided-missile destroyer, at the international port of Manila. — AFP

PHILIPPINE, INDIAN NAVIES BEGIN FIRST JOINT PATROLS

MANILA: Indian Navy warships have begun patrolling areas of the disputed South China Sea with their Philippine counterparts for the first time, Manila’s military said on Monday, as President Ferdinand Marcos departed for a state visit to New Delhi. The two-day sail includes three Indian vessels and started on Sunday, a day before Marcos left on a trip that will include talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India’s naval vessels, including the guided missile destroyer INS Delhi, arrived in Manila for a port visit late last week. The patrol “started yesterday afternoon, then it’s ongoing up to this moment... the activity at the moment is replenishment at sea,” Lieutenant Colonel John Paul Salgado said. The joint patrol “undermines regional peace and stability”, said Senior Colonel Tian Junli, spokesperson of the Chinese military’s Southern Theater Command.

While in India, Marcos is expected to sign pacts in such fields as law, culture and technology, according to foreign affairs assistant secretary Evangeline Ong Jimenez-Ducrocq, but all eyes will be on any potential defence agreements. Before departing on Monday, Marcos praised the two countries’ “steadfastness in upholding international maritime law, including the UNCLOS”, the UN treaty granting an exclusive economic zone within 370 kilometres of a country’s shores. — AFP

76 DEAD AFTER MIGRANT BOAT SINKS OFF YEMEN

DUBAI: At least 76 people have been killed and dozens are missing after a boat carrying mostly Ethiopian migrants sank off Yemen, in the latest tragedy on the perilous sea route, officials said on Monday. Yemeni security officials said 76 bodies had been recovered and 32 people rescued from the shipwreck in the Gulf of Aden. The UN’s migration agency said 157 people were on board.

The accident occurred off Abyan governorate in southern Yemen, a frequent destination for boats smuggling African migrants hoping to reach the wealthy Gulf states. Some of those rescued have been transferred to Yemen’s Aden, near Abyan, a security official said. UN agency the International Organization for Migration earlier gave a toll of at least 68 dead. The IOM’s country chief of mission, Abdusattor Esoev, said that “the fate of the missing is still unknown.”

On their way to the Gulf, migrants cross the Bab Al Mandab Strait, the narrow waterway at the mouth of the Red Sea that is a major route for international trade, as well as for migration and human trafficking. — AFP

DEFENDANTS AT COURT

Suspects on trial over Moscow venue attack



Nineteen people went on trial in Moscow over an attack on a city concert hall that killed 149 people in one of the deadliest strikes in Russia. The four suspected attackers, all from Tajikistan and another 15 people accused of being accomplices have gone on trial. Reporter at the courtroom saw some of the defendants in glass cages, their hands cuffed behind their backs. Around 30 survivors were also present. — AFP

IRAN STRESSES US ATTACKS ON NUCLEAR SITES AS PART OF ANY FUTURE TALKS

TEHRAN: Iran said on Monday it would hold the United States accountable for attacks on its nuclear sites in any future negotiations, while ruling out direct talks with Washington. “In any potential negotiation... the issue of holding the United States accountable and demanding compensation for committing military aggression against Iran’s peaceful nuclear facilities will be one of the topics on the agenda,” foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil

Baqaei told a press briefing on Monday. Asked whether Iran would engage in direct talks with the United States, Baqaei said: “No.” Baqaei said on Monday that Iran was committed to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, but criticised what he described as the “politicised and unprofessional approach” of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The foreign ministry spokesman said that the IAEA’s deputy chief is expected in Iran “in less than 10 days”.

The head of the Iranian parliament’s national security commission, Ebrahim Azizi, said the visiting delegation from the IAEA “will be strictly and exclusively authorised to conduct technical and expert-level discussions with Iranian officials and experts”. “Under no circumstances will physical access to Iran’s nuclear facilities be granted, and no inspections by this any entity will be permitted at the country’s nuclear sites.” — AFP

Gaza dire water shortages compound displacement

ATOP air strikes, displacement and hunger, an unprecedented water crisis is unfolding across Gaza, heaping further misery on the Palestinian territory’s residents. Gaza was already suffering a water crisis before nearly 22 months of war damaged more than 80 per cent of the territory’s water infrastructure. “Sometimes, I feel like my body is drying from the inside, thirst is stealing all my energy and that of my children,” Um Nidal Abu Nahl, a mother of four living in Gaza City, said. Water trucks sometimes reach residents and NGOs install taps in camps for a lucky few, but it is far from sufficient.

Israel connected some water mains in north Gaza to the Israeli water company Mekorot, after cutting off supplies early in the war, but residents said that water still wasn’t flowing. Local authorities said this was due to war damage to Gaza’s water distribution network, with many mains pipes destroyed.

Gaza City spokesman Assem al Nabih said that the municipality’s part of the network supplied by Mekorot had not functioned in nearly two weeks. Wells that supplied some needs before the war have also been damaged, with some contaminated by sewage which goes untreated because of the conflict.

Many wells in Gaza are simply not accessible, because they are inside active combat zones, too close to Israeli military installations or in areas subject to evacuation orders. At any rate, wells usually run on electric pumps and energy has been



A boy fills up containers with water from the remaining water still left in underground pipes, in Beit Lahia. — AFP

Israel connected some water mains in north Gaza, after cutting off supplies early in the war, but residents said that water still wasn’t flowing. Local authorities said this was due to war damage to Gaza’s water distribution network, with many mains pipes destroyed

scarce since Israel turned off Gaza’s power as part of its war effort. Generators could power the pumps, but hospitals are prioritised for the limited fuel deliveries. Lastly, Gaza’s desalination plants are down, save for a single site reopened last week after Israel restored its electricity supply.

Nabih, from the Gaza City municipality, said the infrastructure situation was bleak. More than 75 per cent of wells are out of service, 85 per cent of public works equipment destroyed, 100,000 metres of water mains damaged and 200,000 metres of sewers unusable. Pumping stations are down and 250,000 tonnes of rubbish is clogging the streets. “Sewage floods the areas where people live due to the destruction of infrastructure,” says Mohammed Abu Sukhayla from the northern city of Jabalia.

In order to find water, hundreds

of thousands of people are still trying to extract groundwater directly from wells. But coastal Gaza’s aquifer is naturally brackish and far exceeds salinity standards for potable water. In 2021, the UN children’s agency Unicef warned that nearly 100 per cent of Gaza’s groundwater was unfit for consumption.

With clean water nearly impossible to find, some Gazans falsely believe brackish water to be free of bacteria. Aid workers in Gaza have had to warn repeatedly that even if residents can get used to the taste, their kidneys will inevitably suffer.

Though Gaza’s water crisis has received less media attention than the ongoing hunger one, its effects are just as deadly. “Just like food, water should never be used for political ends,” Unicef spokeswoman Rosalia Bollen said. — AFP

SUDAN CIVILIANS FLEE BESIEGED CITY

KHARTOUM: Sudanese paramilitary fighters have killed at least 14 civilians trying to flee a besieged city in Darfur, a rights group said on Monday. The attack in a village on the outskirts of El Fasher came just two days after the administration installed by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had called on civilians to evacuate the besieged city and promised they would be safe.

The Emergency Lawyers, a rights group which has documented atrocities in the war between the RSF and the Sudanese army, said that 14 people had been killed in the Saturday attack, “dozens more were injured and an unknown number of civilians detained”. “The victims had left El Fasher in an attempt to escape the siege and escalating battles,” the group said. — AFP



WILDLIFE SMUGGLERS

Spanish police seize illegal ivory carvings



Spanish police said on Monday they had seized dozens of carvings made from the ivory tusks of endangered African and Asian elephants as part of a smuggling and environmental crimes investigation. Officers with the Guardia Civil confiscated 126 ivory carvings of various sizes from a trading company in the eastern region of Valencia. They also seized a 1.77-metre tusk weighing 22 kilogrammes, believed to date back to the 19th century. — AFP

UNREST SURGE

Northwest Nigeria reports mass abductions



Armed men on motorbikes killed 11 people and kidnapped at least 70 others, including women and children, in a village in northwest Nigeria, witnesses said. The men opened fire as they rode into Sabongarin Damri in Zamfara State. Groups known locally as “bandits” have killed hundreds of people and seized thousands across the state in recent years. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES



South Korean soldiers dismantle loudspeakers, in Paju. — Reuters

S KOREA STARTS REMOVING ANTI-NORTH LOUDSPEAKERS

SEOUL: South Korean authorities began removing on Monday loudspeakers blaring anti-North Korea broadcasts along the country’s border, Seoul’s defence ministry said, as the new government of President Lee Jae Myung seeks to ease tensions with Pyongyang. Shortly after he took office in June, Lee’s administration switched off propaganda broadcasts criticising the North Korean regime as it looks to revive stalled dialogue with its neighbour.

But North Korea recently rebuffed the overtures and said it had no interest in talking to South Korea.

South Korea’s dismantling of the loudspeakers from Monday is just a “practical measure to help ease tensions between the South and the North,” the ministry said in a statement on Monday. Soldiers could be seen unplugging loudspeakers, mounted together like a wall, and taking them down, photographs provided by the defence ministry show.

Propaganda broadcast through loudspeakers across the border has been used by both sides as relations between South and North Korea have ebbed and flowed over the years. Since Seoul suspended its own loudspeaker broadcasts in June, North Korea appears to have stopped its broadcasts, which had disturbed South Korean border residents for months, officials in the South say. — Reuters

LITHUANIA SADZIUS TO LEAD GOVT



Lithuania’s President Gitanas Nausėda appointed Finance Minister Rimantas Šadėius as acting prime minister on Monday until a new cabinet has been sworn in, following the resignation of Prime Minister Gintautas Paluckas. The prime minister formally handed in his government’s resignation, after announcing on Thursday. — Reuters

CAMBODIA, THAILAND BEGIN TALKS IN MALAYSIA AMID FRAGILE CEASEFIRE

BANGKOK: Preliminary talks between Thailand and Cambodia defence officials started on Monday in Malaysia ahead of a key ministerial level meeting on Thursday, as a fragile truce continues to hold a week after the two sides agreed on a ceasefire. The worst fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours in over a decade included exchanges of artillery fire and jet fighter sorties, claiming at least 43 lives and leaving over 300,000 people

displaced on both sides of the border. The ministers of defence of both countries are due to hold a meeting of the General Border Committee to discuss how to maintain the ceasefire, authorities on both sides said. The Thursday meeting will be observed by representatives from the United States, China and Malaysia. Mistrust between the two neighbours has lingered, with the Cambodian defence ministry accusing Thailand in a statement of violating the ceasefire agreement by

using excavators and laying barbed wire in a contested border area. Thailand said both sides are maintaining their position without any significant movements. But “there are reports that the Cambodian side has modified their positions and reinforced their troops in key areas... to replace personnel lost in each area,” said Rear Admiral Surasant Kongsiri, a Thai spokesperson. Cambodia also demanded that Thailand release 18 of its captured soldiers. — Reuters

Russia urges caution after Trump comments

RUSSIA urged caution on Monday after US President Donald Trump said he would deploy two nuclear submarines following an online row with former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev. Trump said he had ordered the deployment in response to what he alleged were highly provocative comments by Medvedev, saying the submarines would be positioned in “appropriate regions”. Trump did not say whether he meant nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed submarines. He also did not elaborate on the locations, which are kept secret by the US military.

“Russia is very attentive to the topic of nuclear non-proliferation. And we believe that everyone should be very, very cautious with nuclear rhetoric,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Monday. The row between Medvedev and Trump erupted against the backdrop of the US leader’s ultimatum for Russia to end its military offensive in Ukraine or face fresh economic sanctions, including on its remaining trading partners.

Medvedev — one of Russia’s most prominent anti-Western hawks — accused Trump of “playing the ultimatum game” and said that Trump “should remember” that Russia was a formidable force. “Each new ultimatum is a threat and a step towards war. Not between Russia and Ukraine, but with his own country,” he said. Medvedev is currently deputy chairman of Russia’s Security Council. He served one term as president between 2008-2012, effectively acting as a placeholder for Putin, who was able to circumvent constitutional term limits and remain in de facto power.

The Kremlin said on Monday it was anticipating “important” talks with Donald Trump’s special envoy, Steve Witkoff, later this week, ahead of the US president’s looming deadline to impose fresh sanctions on Moscow if it does not make progress towards a peace deal with Ukraine. Trump confirmed on Sunday that special envoy Steve Witkoff will visit Russia, likely on “Wednesday or Thursday”, where he is expected to meet President Vladimir Putin. The nuclear saber-rattling came against



A woman carrying a child walks at a memorial for fallen soldiers in Kyiv. — AFP

the backdrop of a deadline set by Trump at the end of next week for Russia to take steps towards ending the Ukraine war or face unspecified new sanctions. The Republican leader said Witkoff would visit “I think next week, Wednesday or Thursday”.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has already met Witkoff multiple times in Moscow, before Trump’s efforts to mend ties with the Kremlin came to a grinding halt. When reporters asked what Witkoff’s message would be to Moscow, and if there was anything Russia could do to avoid the sanctions, Trump replied: “Yeah, get a deal where people stop getting killed.” The Kremlin said another meeting with Putin was possible and that it considered talks with Witkoff to be “important, substantial and helpful”.

Trump has previously threatened that new measures could mean “secondary tariffs” targeting Russia’s remaining trade partners, such as China and India. This would further stifle Russia, but would risk significant international disruption. Despite the pressure from Washington, Russia has continued its onslaught against its pro-Western neighbour.

Putin, who has consistently rejected calls for a ceasefire, said that he wants peace but that his demands for ending his nearly

three-and-a-half-year war were “unchanged”. “We need a lasting and stable peace on solid foundations that would satisfy both Russia and Ukraine, and would ensure the security of both countries,” Putin told reporters. But he added that “the conditions (from the Russian side) certainly remain the same”.

Russia has frequently called on Ukraine to effectively cede control of four regions Moscow claims to have annexed, a demand Kyiv has called unacceptable. Putin also wants Ukraine to drop its ambitions to join Nato.

Ukraine launched a drone attack on Sunday which sparked a fire at an oil depot in Sochi, the host city of the 2014 Winter Olympics.

Kyiv has said it will intensify its air strikes against Russia in response to an increase in Russian attacks on its territory in recent weeks, which have killed dozens of civilians. Russia’s Ministry of Defence said on Monday its air defences intercepted 61 Ukrainian drones overnight. One person was killed by Russian shelling in the southern Kherson region, Ukrainian military authorities said in a Telegram post early on Monday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also said that the two sides were preparing a prisoner exchange that would see 1,200 Ukrainian troops return home. — AFP

Beijing evacuates residents, expands storm alert over floods

BEIJING: Beijing had evacuated more than 70,000 residents by Monday afternoon and warned others to brace for a new round of heavy rainfall, a week after catastrophic floods killed dozens in the deadliest deluge to hit the Chinese capital since 2012. Up to 200mm of rain hit parts of Beijing over a six-hour period from midday, weather forecasters warned. The city of 22 million people receives on average 600mm of rainfall each year. The warning comes as authorities rush to reinforce ageing flood defences, fine-tune weather forecasts and update evacuation plans amid reports of bodies being pulled from raging flood waters across the country, including at least three at a wellness camp in Hebei province.

At least 44 people died in Beijing after heavy rains from July 23 to 29. Most of the dead were people unexpectedly trapped by rapidly

rising waters at a nursing home in Miyun district on the city’s northeastern outskirts. The fatalities led authorities to admit to shortcomings in their contingency plans for extreme weather.

By noon on Monday, Beijing had placed all of its 16 districts on the highest level of preparedness, in the first citywide state of readiness since July 28, shutting parts of the Great Wall and other outdoor leisure venues and halting operations of below-ground businesses. The risk of flash floods and landslides is “extremely high”, authorities said. By 2 pm, the capital had relocated more than 70,000 residents — nearly 14,000 of them from the hilly Mentougou district in the city’s west, the state broadcaster reported.

In the summer of 2012, 79 people died in Beijing in the city’s deadliest flooding in living memory, with the Fangshan district the worst-hit. Beijing’s topography has been



Rescue workers ride on a front loader as they make their way through a flooded road, in Beijing. — Reuters file photo

described by some as a rain “trap”, with its mountains to the west and north capturing moist air and amplifying any ensuing rainfall as a result.

Torrential rains that swept through “Beijing Valley”, a riverside wellness retreat in the Hebei city of Chengde adjacent to Beijing, had claimed three lives, with four still

missing, China’s state news agency Xinhua reported. Around 40 people had gathered on July 27 for an event at the site, where organisers directed them into tents pitched on low-lying land next to a river bend, Caixin Media reported. Floodwaters had risen to knee height, forcing attendees to scramble towards the camp’s only exit.

The site bore similarities to Camp Mystic in Texas, where at least 28 children were swept to their deaths last month by floodwaters after the Guadalupe River burst its banks amid torrential rain. In China’s southern Guangdong province over the weekend, the bodies of five people were recovered after a large-scale search operation involving more than 1,300 rescuers.

The five people, who went missing on Friday night, were swept away by water following heavy rainfall in recent days, Xinhua reported. — Reuters

OPINION

Oman has great roads but also some irresponsible drivers



DESPITE Oman's world-class road infrastructure, the number of traffic fatalities continues to rise alarmingly, which is difficult to grasp. According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) report, 586 people died and 1,936 were injured in 1,854 road accidents across the Sultanate of Oman in 2024.

Behind these numbers lies a troubling fact: it is the behaviour of those using the roads that endangers lives. One of the most disturbing figures in the report is the 99 deaths attributed to driver misbehaviour in 2024 — up from 80 in 2023 and 63 the year before.

While the data does not detail specific actions, the use of mobile phones while driving remains a visible threat. Research shows that drivers on their phones — even hands-free — spend roughly 10 per cent of their time outside their designated lane. This seemingly small lapse can unleash chaos, risking the lives of fellow motorists, passengers and pedestrians.

Recklessness behind the wheel takes many forms: speeding, fatigue, intoxication, aggressive overtaking and vehicle defects. Each is a choice — and each is avoidable. Accidents resulting from vehicle collisions (806 cases), run-overs (389) and crashes into fixed objects (338) signal a worrying pattern

of negligence.

Among the victims were 235 male drivers, 125 passengers, 131 pedestrians and 95 women — lives lost not in war or calamity, but on everyday roads.

In today's digitally-linked world, staying offline, even momentarily, seems inconvenient. However, convenience must never come before safety. The compulsion to reply to office chats or social messages while driving is symptomatic of a fast-paced culture — one that must slow down when it hits the highway.

Oman's law enforcement agencies, particularly the Royal Oman Police (ROP), have embraced technology, deploying AI-powered surveillance to identify violations. Yet, technology alone is not a cure.

True change comes from within — from a driver's personal resolve to value life over haste.

The conversation around road safety must shift from fear of penalties to a culture of responsibility. Every driver must recognise that the privilege of driving comes with a duty — not just to passengers, but to society and the nation.

Driver behaviour is a primary factor contributing to the rise in road accidents in Oman, with young drivers, in particular, exhibiting a higher propensity for risky actions and overrepresentation in crash statistics. This is influenced by a complex

Technology alone is not a cure. True change comes from within — from a driver's personal resolve to value life over haste.

interplay of personal, behavioural and environmental dimensions, including the significant role of peer and parental influence.

On our greatly blessed roads, there should be no room for reckless driving. It's time for motorists to steer the course with conscience and commitment. Road traffic injuries are currently estimated to be the 8th leading cause of death across all age groups globally and are predicted to become the seventh leading cause of death by 2030.

Road traffic injuries can be prevented. Governments need to take action to address road safety in a holistic manner. This requires involvement from multiple sectors such as transport, police, health, education and actions that address the safety of roads, vehicles and road users.

Effective interventions include designing safer infrastructure and incorporating road safety features into land-use and transport planning, improving the safety features of vehicles, improving post-crash care for victims of road crashes, setting and enforcing laws relating to key risks and raising public awareness.

This requires involvement from multiple sectors such as transport, police, health and education, as well as the private sector and civil society organisations. It requires actions that address the safety of roads, vehicles and all road users.

Australia ups foreign student cap to 295,000, prioritises SE Asia

CHRISTINE CHEN

Australia will raise its cap on foreign students by 9 per cent to 295,000 next year and prioritise applicants from Southeast Asia, the government said. Limits on places were announced last year as a way to rein in record migration that had contributed to a surge in housing prices, with 270,000 places made available for 2025.

An additional 25,000 places were being granted in 2026 as the policy was successfully bringing down “out of control” international student numbers, the government said.

“This is about making sure international education grows in a way that supports students, universities and the national interest”, Education Minister Jason Clare said in a statement.

Australia granted nearly 600,000 student visas in the 2023 financial year, as international students returned to the country in record numbers following Covid-19. Australia's largest cohorts of students come from China and India.

As well as introducing the cap on numbers, the government also more than doubled the visa fee for foreign students in 2024 and pledged to close loopholes in rules that allowed them to continuously extend their stay.

The government's measures to curb migration were “bearing fruit” and allowed for a modest increase in the cap in 2026, International Education Assistant Minister Julian Hill said.

“The numbers were growing out of control”, Hill told national broadcaster ABC. “The government has taken tough decisions over the last 12 months, not always loved by the sector, to get the numbers down and get them to a more sustainable footing”.

Roughly two-thirds of places will be allocated to universities and one-third to the vocational skills training sector. Larger, public universities would need to demonstrate domestic and international students had “access to safe and secure housing” and recruit more students from Southeast Asia to increase their individual allocations, the government said. It was important “for Australia's future soft power that we continue to bring the best and brightest from our (Southeast Asian) neighbours to have a bit of Australia with them for the rest of their life”, Hill said.

Relations with Southeast Asia have been a focus of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's Labour government as it looks to reduce Australia's economic dependence on China. — Reuters

All is well: The Omani way of lightness and faith

In Oman, three simple words carry the weight of centuries of wisdom: El Amoor Tayba — all is well. Whether spoken in as a soft murmur of reassurance during grief or worry, the phrase is more than just a linguistic or cultural habit. It is a philosophy. An Omani way of being in the world.

A quiet, graceful lens through which life's troubles are softened — not by denial, but by faith, patience and spiritual lightness. Though often expressed casually, this philosophy is a centuries-old spiritual compass that allows Omanis to face life's uncertainties with a calm, open heart.

“All is well” is not only said at moments of pain, though those are the times when its power is most felt. It is also uttered in everyday life: when someone is stressed about a decision, worried about a future event, or burdened with too much responsibility.

An Omani might respond gently: El Amoor Tayba. Take it easy. Don't worry. Life will unfold as it should. In this sense, the phrase serves both as a balm and a bridge — soothing distress and reminding the speaker and listener alike that worry changes little, but trust changes everything.

This approach to life is rooted deeply in Islamic spirituality. In the Quran, believers are reminded that with every hardship comes ease (Quran 94:6) and that God is the best of planners (Quran 8:30). In Oman, these verses are not just recited — they are lived. The phrase ‘El Amoor Tayba’ reflects the Islamic concept of tawakkul, or trust in divine will. After doing what one can, one leaves the rest to God. For Omanis, this trust is not heavy or rigid; it is serene, light and often accompanied by a smile. It



Life will unfold as it should. In this sense, the phrase serves both as a balm and a bridge



DR NAJMA AL ZIDJALY

The writer is Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University

is a quiet confidence that things are — and will be — okay.

There is something uniquely Omani about this expression. It reflects the temperament of a people who have long lived between mountains and sea, who understand the unpredictability of life, yet choose to meet it with grace. All is well is not loud or performative. It carries no urgency.

It arrives gently, like the scent of frankincense in the air, offering ease, dignity and space to breathe. Even in mourning, when the heart is raw, Omanis often whisper El Amoor Tayba — not to erase sorrow, but to contain it within a larger, more merciful frame. Death, like life, is not the end of the story.

The beauty of this phrase lies in its subtlety. It does not promise miracles, nor does it pretend that life is free of hardship. Rather, it gently shifts perspective. Things may be

difficult, but they are not falling apart. You may feel alone, but you are being held by something greater. In this way, All is Well becomes a kind of spiritual shorthand for resilience. For letting go. For trusting the tide.

To live by El Amoor Tayba is to embody lightness — not carelessness, but a lightness of being. Omanis who use this phrase are not avoiding life's weight but choosing how to carry it. They know, instinctively and spiritually, that worry cannot add a single hour to one's life. What can? Faith. Presence. A smile. And perhaps, the quiet confidence that — even when things appear otherwise — all is, somehow, well.

So, the next time an Omani tells you, “all is well”, listen closely. It is not just a phrase. It is an inheritance, a shield and a quiet prayer. And perhaps, if you let it, it can become your philosophy too.

We have a choice, or do we?



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

The writer is senior editor of Observer

WE have a choice in how we lead our lives. We have a choice in taking a career path. Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, throughout his life gave some impactful, thought-provoking quotes. Some of his most famous include: “Stay hungry. Stay foolish”, encouraging a mindset of continuous learning and open-mindedness; and “Think different”, emphasising the importance of unconventional thinking. He also famously said, “Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life”, highlighting the value of authenticity and pursuing one’s passions. He also famously said this: “The only way to do great work is to love what you do”, emphasising that satisfaction and high-quality output stem from genuine passion for one’s work.

Now here comes the choice part — can we afford to choose any particular profession you like, just because you have an aptitude for it?

We have to understand the job market too. What are the jobs that are in demand? Once we understand that, we can shape ourselves to the requirements of the job market.

This is where another quote from Jobs, author of ‘Make Something Wonderful’, makes us think — a pioneer of innovation

who encouraged people to think boldly is often quoted for this line, “Innovation distinguishes leaders from followers”. But the fact is that everyone needs a platform to prove themselves. The youth often begin with new ideas, having a strong belief that they know it better than the others who have been working before them. We have all been there. But time also teaches us the value of experience. We learn eventually how to respect methods that work well and are foolproof. So we learn from them, the seniors and still think of new ways to improve and move forward. There are challenges, however; there is a need for more jobs and would-be entrepreneurs need capital to start their venture. So they ask, “Do you want to make others dreams come true, or do you want to make yours a reality?” After all time is limited. Finance is something not all of us think about until we reach the crunch. Would it not be nice if the concept were thought of very much like science and social studies? How much should a person save in a month? I had asked a finance expert and he replied, “At least 30 per cent of your monthly earnings”. You can only shop or enjoy your retail

The only way to do great work is to love what you do; and satisfaction and high-quality output stem from genuine passion for one’s work

therapy after saving. Shopping, that is a place where we regularly practice our choice. We are so hands-on when we are shopping, knowing exactly what we want. Yet we are not that focused when it comes to other aspects of our lives. It is all about knowing what we want as well as practicing. But going back to our challenges in finding jobs and fulfilling the dream of entrepreneurship, it goes without saying that we must not give up, but we have to keep in mind the alternatives that could be available. If plans A, B and C did not work, do not lose hope because there are so many more alphabets. We must learn from each experience, though. There are times when we might feel tired and that we have run out of resources, especially energy. But that is when we must realise time is the most precious resource. And if we have come this far, we must surely understand that we have been blessed with time. We are encouraged to count our blessings daily because that leads us to practicing gratitude. The human tendency, however, is to complain about what we perceive are our lackings. And to understand better, all we have to do is to look around and see what others are going through as well.

Korea, US prepare for summit with details of trade deal unresolved

HYUNJOO JIN AND JIHOON LEE

As South Korea and the United States prepare for a summit of their leaders, topics left unresolved by a recent trade deal provide scope for more disputes between the key allies and trade partners, six former negotiators and experts said.

President Donald Trump may use the summit with counterpart Lee Jae Myung to seek more concessions on defence costs and corporate investments, left out of the deal, while non-tariff barriers and currency could prove thorny issues, experts said.

No official summit date has been disclosed, though Trump last week gave a timeframe of two weeks.

The absence of a written agreement underpinning last week’s talks could open the way for disputes, with some differences already emerging in the two sides’ accounts of the deal.

Key among these was Sunday’s denial by a South Korean presidential adviser of US claims that it would take 90 per cent of the profit from project investments of \$350 billion by South Korea, which also agreed to open up its domestic rice market.

“Even a binding deal like the FTA has been efficiently scrapped”, warned Choi Seok-young, a former chief negotiator for the Korea-US free trade deal, signed in 2007. “And this is just promise”.

Last week’s pact was scaled down from South Korea’s previous plans for a package deal on trade, security and investment envisioned in the run-up to the summit between Trump and the newly-elected Lee. But Japan struck a deal with the United States sooner than expected, spurring South Korea into a scramble for a trade-focused pact, leaving issues of security and investment for the coming summit, presidential adviser Kim Yong-beom said.

Uncertainty clouds plans for \$350 billion in funds Trump has said South Korea would invest in the United States in projects “owned and controlled by the United States” and selected by him, though he gave few details of the plan’s structure or timing. The allies face challenges in ironing out details of the fund at upcoming working-level talks, South Korean Finance Minister Koo Yun-cheol told reporters on Friday.

“People say the devil is in the details”, he added. In a social media post, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick gave an assurance of “90 per cent of the profits going to the American people”, while White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said part would go to the US government to help repay debt.

But Kim, the presidential adviser, said the two sides did not discuss profit distribution during talks and South Korea expected the profit to be “reinvested” in the United States. The idea of the United States potentially taking most of the profit is “hard to understand in a civilised country”, he added, while dismissing as “political rhetoric” Washington’s claim that it would make all decisions about the fund. — Reuters

The US-India relationship is changing again

INDIA’S relationship with the US has long been a careful balancing act between shared democratic values and sometimes diverging national interests. But recent diplomatic tremors have unsettled India, prompting it to question whether the partnership has reached a turning point.

In what Indian officials view as an unsettling display of geopolitical grandstanding, US President Donald Trump has taken credit for halting recent hostilities between India and Pakistan by threatening to disrupt trade ties. India has bristled at Trump’s claims, not only because it is fiercely protective of its sovereignty, but also because they lack merit. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar have noted, Trump did not even call them during the conflict. Bilateral trade was not mentioned by any US official while the fighting was under way. Trump may well have pressed Pakistan to end the violence, but India did not need persuading. As a status-quo power focused on its own economic development, the last thing India wanted was a protracted conflict. So, after terrorists slaughtered Indian civilians in Pahalgam in April, India devised a sharp, swift and measured response. It was always clear that “Operation Sindoor” was retribution against the terrorists who had targeted Indian tourists, not the opening salvo in a war against Pakistan.

When Pakistan retaliated with indiscriminate attacks, India initiated another decisive but carefully calibrated strike — this time, on 11 air bases. It was this manoeuvre — possibly coupled with US pressure on Pakistan’s government — that prompted Pakistan to seek a cessation of hostilities.

India is proud of its independence and it will not tolerate the implication that it succumbed to Trumpian threats or blandishments. This is not Trump’s only action that is giving India pause. In June, he hosted Pakistan’s army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir. Pakistan’s civilian leadership was not at the table.

Trump’s unpredictability vis-



India always upheld its foreign-policy doctrine of strategic autonomy.

à-vis China is similarly troubling. Whereas he took a reliably hardline approach to the country during his first presidency, Trump 2.0 blows hot and cold. One minute, he is imposing extreme tariffs against China; the next, he is seeking to negotiate a trade truce and saying that he might visit Beijing at Chinese President Xi Jinping’s invitation.

Where India fits into these calculations — if it factors into them at all — is a mystery. During Trump’s first term — as well as during Joe Biden’s presidency — the US regarded India as a vital partner in the Indo-Pacific. While India upheld its foreign-policy doctrine of strategic autonomy and avoided committing to any confrontation with China, it welcomed US engagement in the region and supported the revitalisation of the Quad, which includes Australia, Japan and the US, in 2017. After all, India has its own quarrels with China.

Indian officials and businesses see China as a threat. But it is difficult to know where the US stands, especially after Trump opted not to rebuke China publicly for offering intelligence assistance to Pakistan. When it comes to trade, moreover, Trump has often been tougher on partners than adversaries. On July 30, Trump announced a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods, effective August 1, together with an unspecified

“penalty” — probably an additional 10 per cent — for India’s ongoing purchases of energy and military equipment from Russia. If trade can be weaponised, defence ties could be, too. Trump’s capriciousness has heightened India’s strategic anxieties. The US has proved to be an unreliable partner before. For example, during the 1999 Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan, the US denied India access to vital GPS data, leading the country to develop its own. Now, Indian decision-makers are split: Should India decouple from China, trusting the US to have its back, or pragmatically engage with it, for fear that the US will do the same? This raises an even more fundamental question: What is the value of a partnership that is subject to the whims of an outside ego?

India will not panic, but it might pivot. Given its lack of treaty obligations, it has greater leeway to act independently than formal US allies like Japan or South Korea. It might use this manoeuvring room to adjust its foreign-policy orientation. Jaishankar’s July visit to Beijing pointed to a desire to broaden communication with China. While India is not downgrading its ties with the US, it is emphasising self-reliance. This may lead to a more transactional bilateral relationship, shaped less by ideals than interests.

@Project Syndicate, 2025

SPORTS

JUNIOR HOCKEY



The Seeb team squad.

SEEB THRASH AL NAHDA TO SECURE SPOT IN LEAGUE FINALS

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, AUG 4

Seeb confirmed their qualification to the Junior Hockey League Finals after a resounding 7-2 victory over Al Nahda in the decisive play-off match held at the hockey field in Sohar Sports Complex, clinching the fourth and final ticket to the finals. Seeb entered the match with early attacking pressure and opened the scoring in the seventh minute through Laith al Nabhani after a series of precise passes. The first quarter ended with Seeb leading 1-0 despite Al Nahda's attempts to equalise.

In the second quarter, Seeb continued their attacking surge, as Hussein al Balushi capitalised on a quick counter-attack to net the second goal in the 16th minute. Despite Al Nahda's efforts to absorb Seeb's pressure and find a goal to reduce the deficit, Seeb exploited the disorganisation in Al Nahda's ranks. Hussein al Balushi struck again before the end of the quarter to score the third goal, ending the period with Seeb comfortably ahead 3-0 in a well-organised team display.

At the start of the third quarter, Al Nahda adopted an aggressive approach in hopes of a comeback, pressing Seeb's defence which retreated to protect their lead. However, Walid al Raisi took advantage of Al Nahda's forward push,

scoring Seeb's fourth goal in the 35th minute from a swift counter-attack. Al Nahda refused to give up, as Ayham al Araimi pulled one back, followed by Mansour al Alawi, who added a second, ending the quarter at 4-2 and restoring some hope for his team.

In the final quarter, Seeb sealed the result early. Yazen al Balushi extended the lead with the fifth goal, and Mohannad al Balushi joined the scoring spree with the sixth. Mohannad then struck again from a perfectly executed penalty corner to make it 7-2, giving Seeb victory and a place in the finals.

In the final quarter, Seeb sealed the result early. Yazen al Balushi extended the lead with the fifth goal, and Mohannad al Balushi joined the scoring spree with the sixth. Mohannad then struck again from a penalty corner to make it 7-2, giving Seeb a place in the finals.

QUALIFIED TEAMS FOR THE FINALS

The line-up for the 2025 Junior Hockey League Finals is now complete: Ahli Sidab from Group One, Masirah from Group Two, Al Ittihad from Group Three, and Seeb.

The finals will be played in a single round-robin format, with each team facing the others. After the completion of the round, the first-place team will face the fourth-place team in one semifinal, while the second-place team will face the third-place team in the other semifinal. The winners will advance to the final to determine the champion and runner-up, while the losing teams will play for third place.

This season's finals look evenly matched in terms of technical level, as each team has players capable of turning games around. Ahli Sidab enter the finals with the advantage of experienced players and an unbeaten record, having won all their matches and scored 24 goals without conceding. Masirah rely on cohesion and attacking speed, also winning all their matches, scoring 23 goals and conceding just one.

Al Ittihad's strength lies in their solid defence, winning one match and drawing another, scoring four goals and conceding one. Meanwhile, Seeb aim to continue their upward trajectory shown in the qualifiers, despite losing two matches and winning three, scoring 20 goals and conceding six.

Al Nahda edge Olympic team to claim Khareef Cup

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, AUG 4

AL NAHDA were crowned champions of the Kahreef Football Tournament after defeating the Oman Olympic national team on penalties in the final match, held at Al Saada Sports Complex in Salalah under the auspices of Sayyid Nadir bin Al Julanda al Said, Secretary-General at the Diwan of Royal Court.

The final began with clear tactical caution from both sides, as each team spent the opening minutes reading the opponent's movements and attempting to control the midfield. Al Nahda looked more active in attack through the movements of Mohammed al Ghafri, while the Olympic team relied on short passes and quick runs from Masoud al Bahri and Mohammed Bait Subeea.

In the ninth minute, Al Nahda thought they had opened the scoring through Al Ghafri, who followed up a cross and slotted it into the net. However, after a VAR review, the goal was disallowed for a foul on the striker. This decision fired up Al Nahda, who continued pressing, while the Olympic team relied on counter-attacks, exploiting the speed on the wings.

The match continued with alternating control until the 29th minute, when Al Nahda broke the deadlock through Al Ghafri, who capitalised on a precise cross that slipped past the Olympic defenders and placed it into goalkeeper Ibrahim al Kindi's net. After the goal, the game's tempo increased, and the Olympic team sought a quick reply. In the 35th minute, Majid al Mashaikhi unleashed a powerful shot that Al Rashidi saved superbly. The final minutes of the first half saw sustained pressure from the Olympic team, but Al Nahda's defence stood firm, ending the half 1-0 in Al Nahda's favour.

At the start of the second half, Al Nahda's coach made a tactical change, bringing on Ali al Hinai for Al Azhar al Balushi to strengthen the midfield and control play. Meanwhile, the Olympic team increased their attacking push. In the 52nd minute, Mohammed Bait Subeea fired a powerful shot just over the bar, followed by sustained pressure on Al Nahda's flanks.



Al Nahda's players receive the trophy.

Al Nahda sought to exploit the spaces left behind and nearly doubled their lead in the 60th minute when Al Ghafri's counter-attack strike went just wide of the post. The Olympic team continued their pressure, prompting coach Badr al Maimani to make attacking changes in the 68th minute by bringing on Abdulhakim al Rawahi and Said al Ghanbousi to energise the frontline.

LATE EQUALISER

In the 70th minute, Luqman al Hadidi launched a fierce strike that Al Rashidi brilliantly saved.

Al Nahda did not sit back and tried to secure the win in the 75th minute when Al Ghafri headed a cross narrowly wide. The pressure persisted until the 83rd minute when Olympic team captain Mohammed

Bait Subeea equalised after a scramble in the penalty area, slotting the ball into the net.

The score remained 1-1 at the end of regular time, sending the match to penalties. Al Nahda triumphed 4-3 in the shoot-out. Ahmed al Kaabi, Jumaa al Zaabi, Al Faraj al Kiyoumi and Harib al Saadi scored for Al Nahda, while Nasser al Saqri, Mohammed Bait Subeea and Said al Ghanbousi scored for the Olympic team.

After the match, the guest of honour presented Al Nahda with the tournament trophy and gold medals, while the Olympic team received silver medals. The refereeing and administrative teams were also honoured, and the chairman of the Oman Football Association presented a commemorative gift to the guest of honour.

Royal Cavalry secure top two spots in French race

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, AUG 4

The Royal Court Affairs, represented by the Royal Cavalry, continues to demonstrate their international calibre in the world of equestrian sports. The most recent accomplishment came at the prestigious Royan Racecourse in France on Sunday, where the Royal Cavalry clinched both the first and second places in the third race dedicated to purebred Arabian horses over a distance of 1,600 metres.

The mare 'Al Muhasin' crossed the finish line first, brilliantly ridden by jockey Michael Forest and trained by Waterjan, exhibiting speed, tactical prowess and composure. Close behind was 'Akif', also representing the Royal Cavalry, who secured second place under jockey Martin Brouty and the expert guidance of trainer Elisabeth Bernard.



Royal Cavalry's 'Al Muhasin' and 'Akif' claimed the first and second spots in the 1,600-metre race.

The Royan event, which brought together elite stables from Europe and the Gulf, reaffirmed the Omani team's rising presence on the international racing stage. The success highlights the quality of the Royal Cavalry's breeding, training and international preparation programmes.

This double victory is the latest in a string of remarkable performances by the Royal Cavalry of Oman in France. Earlier this season, the mare 'Al Marjanah' finished second in the sixth race at Toulouse Racecourse over 2,100 metres, competing against some of the region's top stables. The race featured entries from Oman,

Qatar, France and Spain, reflecting the growing global prestige of Arabian horse racing.

In Bordeaux, the mare 'Al Rasha' brought home a first-place win in the eighth race over 1,600 metres, again under jockey Michael Forest and trainer Elisabeth Bernard. Similarly, at Montauban Racecourse, the Royal Cavalry's 'Al Ghanim' claimed victory in the seventh race over 2,250 metres, ridden by jockey Sami Lecoleus and trained by Bernard.

These successive achievements underscore the Royal Cavalry's strategy of combining disciplined training with world-class equine management.

By participating in high-calibre European events, Oman not only celebrates its rich equestrian heritage, but also enhances its presence in international sport through performance and professionalism.

200PLAYERS



SMASH SERIES
BADMINTON
CONCLUDES WITH
THRILLING
FINALE AT OCEC

MUSCAT: The Smash Series Badminton Tournament, organised by ProEdge Sports as part of the Sports Spark initiative at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), came to an electrifying close, offering a refreshing escape for sports lovers during the scorching summer. Over four days, more than 200 badminton players competed across nine categories, drawing hundreds of enthusiastic spectators who filled the air-conditioned courts with energy and excitement.

In the Under-11 Girls' Singles, Vamika Vinod emerged champion while Diya Balaji was runner-up. The Boys' Under-11 saw Shazil Mohammed claim the title, with Aditya Singhal as runner-up. In the Under-15 Girls' category, Shenelly Louis triumphed over runner-up Pallavi Abhilash Nair. Aman D'Costa won the Boys' Under-15, with Ian George as runner-up.

The Under-19 Girls' title went to Uttara Abhilash Nair, with Ameenah Sehr as runner-up, while Himnesh Shahalot won the Boys' Under-19 against Vaibhav Ramdas. In the Mixed Doubles, Beetha Mansoori and Vaishakh Nair took the crown. The Men's 'B' Doubles title went to the duo of Jebin Jacob and Sandeep, while Anis Lal and Nithesh emerged as champions in the highly competitive Men's 'A' Doubles category.

The prize distribution ceremony was graced by Oman Racket Sports Committee Vice-Chairman Tahir al Barwani, Sabco Sports Deputy General Manager Alistair, OCEC Operations Manager Safiya Hassan Sal al Abri, We Network Solutions Managing Director Yogendra Katyar, and Mohammed Ghulum Fajwani, Chairman of MBC. Match officials and referees from the Morning Star Badminton Group were also honoured for their role in ensuring the smooth conduct of the tournament. Sabco Sports officials commended ProEdge Sports for organising such a dynamic event and emphasised the value of sporting activities in providing both recreation and wellness, even during peak summer.

Chairman of ProEdge Sports, Nasar Abdullah al Harthy, expressed his delight at the overwhelming response received for the tournament, despite the summer vacation season and many families being away. He emphasised how events like this promote not only sporting enthusiasm but also a healthier lifestyle, and confirmed that the tournament will be organised on an even larger scale in the coming years.

Sports Spark at OCEC remains open daily until August 16, offering more opportunities for families and fitness enthusiasts to engage in exciting indoor sports and recreational activities.



India's Mohammed Siraj celebrates taking the wicket of England's Jamie Overton with teammates. — Reuters

Siraj stars as India beat
England by six runs

MOHAMMED SIRAJ was the hero as India beat England by just six runs in a thrilling fifth Test at the Oval on Monday to end a dramatic series level at 2-2.

England arrived on the final day of the series needing just 35 runs with four wickets in hand to complete a remarkable chase of 374. But they were blown away on a morning of unbearable tension, with Siraj taking three wickets for nine runs to finish with figures of 5-104.

The dramatic ending was a fitting finale to a series played out in less than seven weeks packed with drama from the first ball.

"It just shows that both the teams came with their A-game and I am very happy to get over the line in this one," India captain Shubman Gill told Sky Sports.

"When you have got bowlers bowling a spell like Siraj, captaincy seems easy."

The series was also a personal triumph for Gill, who scored 754 runs, including four hundreds. England, who had been seemingly cruising to victory on Sunday when they were 301-3, were still favourites to win when play started under gloomy skies on Monday.

Jamie Overton hit the first two balls of the day off Prasidh Krishna for four to immediately ease the pressure but England were soon reduced to 354-8 after Siraj struck

twice to remove Jamie Smith and Overton.

Josh Tongue was next to go and when injured last man Chris Woakes came in to bat with his left arm strapped up owing to an injured shoulder, England still needed 17 more runs for victory.

Gus Atkinson hit a six off Siraj before England got the target down to single figures.

But the paceman clean bowled Atkinson (17) to spark delirious scenes among the India team and their supporters.

NON-STOP DRAMA

The series started with England successfully chasing down a target of 371 to win at Headingley — the 10th highest fourth-innings run chase in Test history. India won the second Test at Edgbaston by a huge margin of 336 runs before England bounced back to win at Lord's, taking a 2-1 series lead.

England's time-wasting tactics during the third Test sparked the first of several flashpoints in an increasingly fiery series.

In a drawn fourth Test at Old Trafford, memorable for an astonishing Indian rearguard action, England were angered by the tourists' refusal to agree a draw at the first opportunity. Both sides were hampered by fitness issues at the Oval decider, with England missing inspirational captain Ben Stokes because of a shoulder injury.

"I'm bitterly disappointed we couldn't get over the line here, but I'm incredibly proud

of my team and everything they've thrown into it," said Stokes.

India were without Jasprit Bumrah after deciding to stick to their decision to only play the world's top-ranked Test bowler in three games of the series.

But the lion-hearted Siraj, who featured in every match, seized his moment, ending the series as the leading bowler on either side with 23 wickets at 32.43.

The paceman struck with his third ball on Monday to have a nervous Smith caught behind, leaving England 347-7.

Overton fell next, lbw for nine to a Siraj delivery that angled into the batsman.

Tailender Tongue was bowled by Krishna to leave India on the brink of victory before Siraj, appropriately, wrapped up the match, India's narrowest winning margin in a Test match. "From day one to here, everyone fought so hard so we are very happy," Siraj said. "I just wanted to make sure I hit the right areas, the wickets would fall, and anything else would be a bonus. When I woke up I believed I could do it."

England will be bitterly disappointed not to have got over the line after Harry Brook (111) and Joe Root (105) took the game by the scruff of the neck on Sunday. Brook's reckless dismissal was the beginning of a collapse, which ultimately proved decisive, with the home side losing their final seven wickets for just 66 runs. — AFP

Pakistan beat West Indies by 13 runs to capture T20 series

MIAMI: Sahibzada Farhan and Saim Ayub combined for a 138 opening partnership and Pakistan defeated the West Indies by 13 runs on Sunday to capture their T20 International Series.

Pakistan won the series opener by 14 runs but dropped the second match by two wickets to set up a Sunday night decider at Lauderhill, Florida. After winning the toss and choosing to bat first, Pakistan were rewarded with a powerhouse performance by Farhan and Ayub.

Pakistan went 189 for four as Farhan hammered the hosts for 74 runs on 53 balls, smashing five sixes and three fours, while Ayub lasted 19 overs, finishing on 66 from 49 balls with two sixes and four fours.

Farhan was caught by West Indies captain Shai Hope at long off from a delivery by Shamar Joseph on the second ball of the 17th over.



Pakistan players pose with the trophy after their team won the third Twenty20 international, sealing a 2-1 series victory over West Indies, at Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium in Lauderhill, Florida, US. — AFP

Hasan Nawaz entered but was retired after only 15 runs, caught by Romario Shepherd at long off from a delivery by Roston Chase on the penultimate ball of the 18th over.

Mohammad Haris was run out for only two runs by Gudakesh Motie to start the 19th over and Ayub finally exited on the last ball of the penultimate over, Jason Holder's

delivery grabbed by Sherfane Rutherford at sweeper cover.

Set 190 to win, West Indies struck for 30 runs on the first 10 balls from Hasan Ali and Mohammad Nawaz.

Jewel Andrew was caught by Hasan Ali at long on, bowled by Haris Rauf for 24, the first West Indies wicket falling at 44. Ayub caught Hope bowled out by Nawaz for seven in the ninth over with the hosts still 116 runs from victory.

Alick Athanaze lasted 13 overs before being taken for 60, caught by Khushdil Shah bowled by Ayub with West Indies on 110, needing 80 runs off the last 42 deliveries.

Chase was retired on the last ball of the 17th over and his replacement, last-ball hero Holder from the win a night earlier, was bowled out by Sufiyan Mugeem two balls later for a duck, leaving the hosts 41 runs shy with 16 balls remaining. Rutherford smashed a six to reach a half-century with seven balls remaining before exiting on 51 as West Indies couldn't pull off another last-over comeback. — AFP

SPORTS

ROAD TO 2026



QUEIROZ UNVEILS RED WARRIORS’ SQUAD FOR DOMESTIC CAMP

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUG 4

The new head coach of Oman’s national football team, Carlos Queiroz, officially announced his first squad on Monday since taking charge of the coaching staff.

The short preparatory domestic training camp is set to take place in Muscat from Wednesday until August 9. This initial gathering will mark the beginning of Oman’s crucial build-up towards the decisive AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 2026 campaign.

The announced list featured some of the emerging young faces, with several players making their senior team debut after impressive performances with the Olympic squad. The squad excluded players from Seeb as they are underway in their participation for the AFC Champions League Two to ensure they remain focused on continental club duties.

Queiroz’s squad announcement followed his active attendance during recent domestic competitions in Salalah. The experienced Portuguese coach closely observed the Salalah four-team tournament, where Al Nahda lifted the trophy after a penalty shootout (4-3) following a 1-1 draw in regular time. Furthermore, he attended the Super Cup clash between Al Shabab and Seeb, which ended 5-4 in favour of Al Shabab after a goalless draw.

This domestic camp will represent a vital phase in Queiroz’s broader strategic plan as he will lead Oman into the fourth and final stage of the AFC Asian Qualifiers for the Fifa World Cup 2026. Oman are placed in Group A alongside hosts Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. All matches in this group are scheduled to be held in Doha from October 8 to 14. Meanwhile, Group B featured Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Indonesia, with their matches to be held in Jeddah.

Coach Queiroz has already expressed his intention to establish a high-performance culture focused on tactical discipline, smart planning and strong team chemistry. Speaking in a recent interview, he described his role as a “great honour” and emphasised the importance of “ambitious preparation, smart goals, and discipline from everyone involved.”

A press conference is scheduled on Tuesday as Coach Queiroz will share further details on his roadmap for Oman’s World Cup ambitions.

OMAN SQUAD:
Ibrahim al Mukhaini, Fayez al Rushaidi, Abdulmalik al Badri, Ghanim al Habshi, Ahmed al Kaabi, Thani al Rushaidi, Turki Bait Subaih, Amjad al Harthy, Juma al Habsi, Nayef Bait Subaih, Mahmood al Mushefiri, Sameer al Hatmi, Ahed al Mashakeyhi, Harib al Saadi, Hatim al Roushdi, Sultan al Marzooqi, Musab al Mamari, Hussain al Shahri, Jameel al Yahmadi, Mohammed al Ghafri, Osama Majdi, Mohammed Bait Subaih, Ahmed al Riyami, Al Mundher al Alawi and Hamed al Nuaimi.

AL ZUBAIR’S AL MANAR RACING CLINCH PODIUM IN FRANCE

AL MANAR Racing by Team WRT’s Al Faisal al Zubair and Jens Klingmann followed up a superb second place in the Gold Cup category in the first Sprint race with fourth position in race two at the latest round of the GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Sprint Series at Magny-Cours in France.

The BMW M4 GT3 EVO duo initially finished third in race one and were promoted to second after a post-race penalty was applied to one of their Gold Cup rivals. The duo started at the rear of the Gold Cup grid for race two but managed to move up two positions to take points for fourth place.

Oman-based Al Zubair said, “It was a tough weekend. It was difficult. I think we maximised what we had with the BMW.”

“P2 was good yesterday. I don’t think we could have done any better. We were slower than the other cars. In Sprint we are fourth now in the championship. We were strong in testing here and we got 30kg more (weight penalty) and 30mm more. It depends on what we get for the final round.”

The result now means that Emil Frey Racing’s Chris Lulham and Thierry Vermeulen lead the series on 90 points from Sainteloc Racing (87.5 points) and the Garage 59 Team (80 pts). Tresor Attempto Racing (73 pts) and Al Manar Racing by Team WRT remain fifth with 68.5 points.

Emil Frey Racing topped the times in free practice on Friday morning with a best lap of 1min 37.472sec in a session where Al Manar Racing by Team WRT struggled a little down in sixth place with a best lap of 1min 38.559sec.

Pre-qualifying followed on Friday evening and the Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini topping the times with a 1min 44.691sec run. Al Manar Racing by Team WRT used the session to dial in the BMW and find the optimum setting for first qualifying on Saturday afternoon.



Klingmann took part in the first qualifying session and a best run of 1min 36.921sec gave the German fourth place on the grid behind the pole-winning Chris Lulham of Emil Frey Racing, the Garage 59 McLaren and Sainteloc Racing’s Audi.

Klingmann took the wheel for the first stint in Sprint race one and made good progress with the car well-placed in third after the driver changeover with Al Zubair taking the wheel. Lulham’s start from pole position came to nothing after the Emil Frey Racing driver was the innocent victim of a collision at the Adelaide hairpin on the opening lap of the race.

Al Zubair went on to put in a superb stint behind the wheel of the BMW under the lights and was rewarded with second place in the final results of the race behind Louis Prette in the Garage 59 McLaren after a post-race penalty had been applied to one of his rivals that lifted the BMW in the rankings. The Tresor Attempto Racing Audi rounded off the podium places. The result also lifted Al Manar Racing by Team WRT back into title contention.

Al Zubair carded a best lap of 1min 37.269sec in the second qualifying session for Sprint race two and that

put the Al Manar Racing BMW in sixth place on the starting grid for the Gold Cup runners. Pole position went to the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari with a time of 1min 36.107sec.

Al Zubair made a strong start, quickly passed Sebastian Ogaard in the Tresor Attempto Racing Audi to snatch fifth place and set his sights on the Garage 59 McLaren. But the Omani was repassed by the Audi and had to come back from sixth place again.

The driver changeover ran smoothly and Klingmann settled into fifth position with just under half an hour remaining. He managed to pass Bijoy Garg in the Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini and set his sights on third-placed Leonardo Moncini in the Tresor Attempto Racing Audi.

A full course yellow hampered any thoughts of progress towards the end of the race but action did resume with a few minutes remaining on the clock. Klingmann retained fourth place to the chequered flag with the win falling to Sainteloc Racing from the Garage 59 team and Tresor Attempto Racing.

Al Manar Racing by Team WRT returns to action for the next round of the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup at the Nurburgring in Germany on August 29-31.

TEAMS – LATEST GOLD CUP STANDINGS
1. Emil Frey Racing 90 pts
2. Sainteloc Racing 87.5 pts
3. Garage 59 80 pts
4. Tresor Attempto Racing 73 pts
5. Al Manar Racing by Team WRT 68.5 pts
6. Barwell Motorsport 15 pts
7. CSA Racing 9 pts

DRIVERS – LATEST GOLD CUP STANDINGS
1. Chris Lulham/Thierry Vermeulen 90 pts
2. Gilles Magnus/Paul Evrard 87.5 pts
3. Louis Prette 80 pts
4. Sebastian Ogaard/Leonardo Moncini 73 pts
5. Al Faisal al Zubair/Jens Klingmann 68.5 pts
6. Thomas Fleming 54.5 pts
7. Adam Smalley 25.5 pts
8. Bijoy Garg/Ricky Collard 15 pts
9. Arthur Rougier/James Kell 9 pts



BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$71.16
BRENT \$68.52
LIGHT \$66.10

Solutions as
advanced
as you are

Innovation
inspired by you

بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

Visit [bankdhofar.com](#)

MoU signed for green hydrogen equipment project in Oman



The UES-Sungrow partnership will focus on manufacturing electrolyzers and other key hardware for Oman’s green hydrogen industry. Image for illustration only.

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, AUG 4

OMAN tech specialist United Engineering Services (UES) has announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China’s Sungrow Hydrogen Sci & Tech Co for the establishment of a manufacturing facility in the Sultanate of Oman dedicated to producing key equipment for the country’s green hydrogen industry.

Muscat-based UES, a member of the well-diversified MB Holding Group, specialises in the provision of high-tech engineering services to the local and international oil & gas, marine and defence industries.

In a post on Monday, August 4, 2025, UES CEO Dr Salim al Harthy stated: “This partnership is a strategic step in expanding our renewable energy footprint and positioning Oman as a regional hub for advanced hydrogen technologies”. The manufacturing facility will focus on producing and assembling electrolyzers, gas separation and purification systems; and related infrastructure for both local use and regional export, he added.

Xiaowei Duan, Head of the AMEA Region and

Earlier this year, Sungrow Hydrogen announced that it had secured a contract for the supply of water electrolysis hydrogen production equipment for Oman’s first green ammonia project, currently under implementation at Al Duqm.

Key Account Director at Sungrow Hydrogen, commented: “We are proud to join forces with a respected Omani industrial leader. Together, we aim to bring cutting-edge hydrogen solutions to Oman”. The pact marks UES’s first foray into Oman’s pivotal green hydrogen industry.

Its Chinese partner, Sungrow Hydrogen, is a major manufacturer of key hardware for the global green hydrogen and clean energy sector.

The company designs and manufactures alkaline (ALK) and PEM electrolyzers, power systems, gas-liquid separators, intelligent hydrogen controls and purification systems.

It operates China’s first automated assembly line

for ALK electrolyzers at its Intelligent Manufacturing Centre, with an annual production capacity of 3 GW.

Earlier this year, Sungrow Hydrogen announced that it had secured a contract for the supply of water electrolysis hydrogen production equipment for Oman’s first green ammonia project, currently under implementation at Al Duqm.

Green Hydrogen and Chemicals Company SAOC (GHC), a wholly owned subsidiary of India-based renewable energy developer ACME Group, is developing the 100,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) green ammonia plant at the Duqm Special Economic Zone. This capacity is envisioned to expand to 900,000 tpa over multiple phases.

Sungrow Hydrogen stated that it had been awarded the “biggest share” of a contract to supply electrolyser equipment for ACME’s 320 MW-capacity green ammonia project in Oman.

Under the contract, Sungrow Hydrogen will provide multiple sets of 1,000 Nm³/h (normal cubic metres per hour) alkaline-type hydrogen production equipment and flexible green hydrogen production solutions.

Delivery is scheduled to be completed within 2025, the company added in a post.

Oman, Mongolia strengthen investment ties

ULAANBAATAR: Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, led a delegation to Ulaanbaatar for high-level discussions with Gombojav Zandanshatar, Prime Minister of Mongolia.

During the meeting, the Mongolian Prime Minister welcomed the opportunity to bolster ties with the Sultanate of Oman, underlining Mongolia’s keenness to forge a practical partnership grounded in mutual benefit, particularly in facilitating investments across priority sectors.

Al Murshidi highlighted the importance of enhancing bilateral cooperation not only in investments but also in all areas of shared interest.

Discussions focused on investment prospects in mining, energy, agriculture and food production.

Both sides examined possibilities for joint



The two parties also agreed to intensify technical-level dialogue in the near future.

projects, trade facilitation and the creation of a conducive environment for long-term investment.

The two parties also agreed to intensify technical-level dialogue in the near future, aiming to establish executive frameworks for bilateral cooperation. — ONA

البنك الوطني العماني
لدول مجلس التعاون الخليجي
National Bank of Oman GCC Fund

ملووقا

National Bank of Oman GCC Fund

Investment Manager Report
For Quarter 2 2025

The GCC equity markets ended Q2 FY2025 on a broadly flat note, with the S&P GCC Price Index down 0.49%, reflecting a divergence in performance across the region. While Saudi Arabia faced headwinds from volatile crude oil prices and associated fiscal concerns, other GCC markets benefited from value buying, regulatory reforms, and strong corporate earnings, particularly in the banking and real estate sectors.

During the period, country-wise highlights revealed varied market performances across the region. In Saudi Arabia, the Tadawul Index saw a decrease of 7.16%. The market underperformed due to persistent pressure from falling oil prices, which raised fiscal concerns. Additionally, the government’s capital expenditure cuts and sustained foreign institutional investor (FI) outflows weighed heavily on investor sentiment. In the United Arab Emirates, Dubai was the best-performing market with an increase of 11.96%, reaching a 17-year high in late June. The gains were driven by a continued rally in real estate and a rebound in banking stocks, supported by robust credit growth. Kuwait posted an increase of 4.72%, continuing its upward trajectory. This was aided by the passage of the mortgage law and the government’s borrowing capacity following the implementation of the debt law. These factors contributed to a pick-up in credit growth and improved market sentiment. Qatar recorded an increase of 5.05%, recovering strongly from Q1FY25 lows. The recovery was led by positive banking sector results and broad-based value buying. Oman also experienced a recovery with a 3.06% increase, bouncing back from Q1 lows. The rebound was driven by value-driven interest and improved confidence in local fundamentals.

Index-level performance during the period showed mixed results. The S&P GCC Total Return Index rose by 0.76%, reflecting robust dividend distributions across the region. In contrast, the S&P GCC Price Index posted a modest decline of 0.49%, underscoring the limited capital gains during the quarter.

Brent crude experienced a sharp 11% decline in Q2 FY2025. It started the quarter at a high of \$74.77 per barrel, but dropped to a low of \$60.24 in May 2025 amid rising global supply and muted demand sentiment, partly driven by U.S. tariff threats and OPEC+ output normalization.

A brief mid-June rally saw prices spike 12–13%, reaching \$74 per barrel, following escalations in Israel-Iran tensions and strike-related disruptions. However, with the Strait of Hormuz remaining open and tensions easing, prices retreated below \$70 by the end of the quarter.

Sectoral performance during the quarter was mixed. The top-gaining sectors included Communication Services, Industrials, and Information Technology, while Consumer Staples and Materials were among the laggards.

In terms of notable stock performers, the Industrials sector saw strong contributions from Al Babtain, Electrical Industries, and Al Anwar Ceramics. In the UAE market, Presight AI emerged as one of the standout performers.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD
ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	30 June 2025	30 June 2024	31 Dec 2024
	RO	RO	RO
ASSETS			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	11,048,677	10,599,254	11,585,847
Cash and cash equivalents	681,967	1,286,039	559,493
Dividends receivable	14	5,098	—
Total assets	11,730,658	11,890,391	12,125,340
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Dividend payable	695	2,771	—
Accruals and other payables	241,823	47,477	49,991
Total liabilities	242,518	50,248	49,991
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	11,488,140	11,840,143	12,075,349
Net asset value per unit	1.042	1.045	1.094

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	30 June 2025	30 June 2024	31 Dec 2024
	RO	RO	RO
	(6 months)	(6 months)	(12 months)
INCOME			
Dividend income	239,711	221,128	337,636
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	17,819	565,661	1,133,688
Net realised loss on investments at fair value through profit or loss	(30,004)	(118,740)	(127,353)
Interest income	581	271	646
	228,107	668,320	1,344,617
EXPENSE			
Management fees	65,493	70,129	140,216
Fund Management Body fees	33,753	26,849	35,000
Brokerage expenses	14,932	21,729	45,951
Administrator fees	8,931	9,563	19,120
General and administration	10,756	11,401	24,443
Custodian fees	5,404	5,588	11,577
Foreign exchange loss	232	6,792	8,346
	139,501	152,051	284,653
Net profit and			
total comprehensive income for the period / year	88,606	516,269	1,059,964
Net profit per unit	0.008	0.046	0.094

Investment Manager & Administrator

البنك الوطني العماني
NBO

Note: The complete accounts, in Arabic or English as requested, will be sent by mail to any shareholder within 7 days of a written request addressed to the Administrator, Investment Banking Operations, National Bank of Oman, P.O.Box 751, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman. Tel: 24778757, Fax: 24778993 Email: [GCCFund@nbo.com](#)

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Valid for three months from the date of issuance, the vouchers are designed to offer flexibility and convenience.

NBO introduces Shell fuel vouchers for infinite credit card customers

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has launched an exclusive reward for Infinite credit card holders, further enhancing the appeal of its premium offering.

Under this feature, cardholders who spend RO 1,500 or more in a calendar month on point-of-sale and e-commerce transactions will receive a Shell V-Power e-voucher worth RO 10.

Customers can redeem the voucher through the Shell Asia App and enjoy complimentary V-Power fuel at Shell stations across Oman. Valid for three months from the date of issuance, the vouchers are designed to offer flexibility and convenience.

Faisal al Wahaibi, General Manager & Chief Retail & Digital Banking Officer, said, “At NBO, our approach to innovation is driven by a deep understanding of our customers’ evolving lifestyles. With the Infinite Credit Card, we aim to offer more than financial utility; we create everyday moments of convenience, recognition and ease.

This collaboration with Shell is part of our broader strategy to transform banking into a more personalised, experience-led journey. By aligning with trusted partners, we continue to deliver meaningful enhancements that resonate with the needs of our most valued clients”.

Suresh Nair, General Manager, Mobility & Convenience at Shell Oman added, “Shell Oman is committed to building and growing meaningful partnerships that ensure the best for our customers.

This initiative with NBO enables us to directly engage with cardholders through a platform they already trust and continue rewarding them in ways that are relevant and impactful with the best fuel we have to offer. We believe innovation is not only about technology but about creating shared value that add value to people’s lives. This collaboration reflects that mindset”.

This partnership with Shell Oman strengthens NBO’s portfolio of lifestyle-led features tailored to premium cardholders. As part of its ongoing digital strategy, the bank continues to enhance everyday banking by embedding practical, high-impact experiences through well-matched partnerships.

MSX INDEX CLOSES 0.62 PER CENT UP

MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) 30 Index closed on Monday at 4,799.87 points, up 29.4 points, or 0.62 per cent, compared to the last trading session’s close of 4,770.45 points.

Trading value reached RO 34,559,970, an increase of 88.7 per cent compared to the last trading session’s value of RO 18,314,195.

A report issued by the MSX indicated that market capitalisation increased by 0.231 per cent compared to the last trading day, reaching approximately RO 29.17 billion. — ONA

OOREDOO APPOINTS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



SAOUD AL RIYAMI
CEO of Ooredoo
Oman

MUSCAT: Ooredoo is delighted to announce the appointment of Saoud al Riyami as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Saoud brings a wealth of experience in business strategy, leadership and transformation. With more than 20 years of experience in the commercial area including sales, marketing and business development, Saoud has a track record of working in diverse sectors. Throughout his career, he has played a pivotal role in expanding the B2B and wholesale operations at

Ooredoo, driving ICT innovation and fostering strong strategic partnerships.

His deep understanding of the business and his proven leadership will continue to have a significant impact on Ooredoo’s growth and transformation journey, as well as further strengthening market position, driving innovation and delivering exceptional value to customers and stakeholders

Saoud is the first Omani to be appointed as CEO of Ooredoo Oman; a milestone that reflects the company’s commitment to empowering local talent and leadership. Ooredoo Oman’s Board of Directors, Executive Management and employees take this opportunity to officially welcome Saoud in what is set to be an exciting new chapter for the company.

iCAUR debuts two new heavyweight models

GLOBAL cool automotive brand iCAUR recently hosted its grand brand night in Dubai, UAE, marking the Global debut of two heavyweight new models — the rugged mid-to-large SUV iCAUR V27 REEV and the smart boxy SUV iCAUR 03T REEV.

The event represented a key milestone in iCAUR’s deepening global market presence and boldly declared its unique identity and innovation strength as the “global cool player” with segment-leading golden range-extender technology and ground-breaking cool store design.

The launch instantly ignited excitement among users worldwide, with the cool store design establishing the brand as a new offline hotspot for the young and young at heart.

As a key pillar of Chery’s global NEV strategy, the iCAUR brand leverages the group’s worldwide resources to build a fully digitalised system covering both R&D and manufacturing.

Entering the market as a cool player for the young and young at heart, iCAUR is bringing fresh energy to the global NEV landscape.



iCAUR is brought to Oman by New World Autos, a Saud Bahwan Group company.

ICAUR is brought to Oman by New World Autos, a Saud Bahwan Group company.

Introduced as a deliberate response to evolving customer expectations, this partnership reflects New World Autos and Saud Bahwan Group’s passion for customer satisfaction and their ongoing commitment to delivering the finest ownership experiences. More than just a new name on the road, iCAUR represents a clear shift towards thoughtful, purpose-driven mobility in Oman.

As iCAUR’s first rugged mid-to-large SUV, the V27 REEV represents a significant step forward in the brand’s commitment to category innovation. Rooted in the J-style design philosophy, the V27 blends retro aesthetics with modern technology, creating a striking visual identity defined by rugged character.

The vehicle’s bold body lines, wide horizontal front grille, pronounced bumper and squared wheel arches convey a firm stance. Meanwhile, the round daytime running lights add a retro charm, making the V27 REEV stand out from conventional SUVs.

With its bold proportions, the V27 REEV delivers a striking visual presence that far exceeds expectations in its segment, measuring over 5 metres in length and nearly 2 metres in both width and height.

Whether it is family camping with full gear, comfortable journeys for multiple

passengers, or carrying essential equipment for off-road adventures, the V27 is built to meet diverse mobility needs with ease.

It fully embodies the growing demand for practical space, positioning itself as a true all-scenario leader set to redefine the value benchmark in the mid-to-large SUV segment. The V27 also offers exceptional range performance, eliminating anxiety on long journeys.

Its golden REEV powertrain ensures stable, consistent power delivery, even in complex terrain conditions. From effortless daily commutes to long-distance explorations, the V27 REEV adapts seamlessly, making every drive smooth, confident and worry-free.

OQ ADVANCES ITS DIGITAL FINANCIAL TRANSFORMATION

MUSCAT: OQ has officially joined the SWIFT network, the global financial messaging system operated by the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication.

This strategic move enables OQ to receive electronic bank statements directly via its own SWIFT address, without intermediaries. The integration empowers OQ to manage its financial operations with greater transparency, accuracy and real-time access to banking data from both local and international institutions.

This enhances investor confidence and strengthens the Group’s global appeal. “This achievement marks a major milestone in OQ’s digital transformation journey and reflects our ongoing commitment to



This move enables OQ to receive electronic bank statements directly via its own SWIFT address, without intermediaries.

implementing international best practices”, said Sabrina al Bakri, Chief Financial Officer at OQ.

“By adopting advanced financial infrastructure and streamlining institutional financing processes, OQ continues to position itself as a future-focused energy leader rooted in operational excellence”, she added. Direct integration with SWIFT significantly streamlines bank reconciliation cycles, enhances the accuracy and timeliness of financial reporting; and reinforces the integrity of daily transactional accounting.

This advancement supports OQ’s broader strategy to modernise its financial architecture and implement digital solutions that drive operational agility and fiscal discipline across the Group.

Over 75 SMEs showcase products at Dhofar exhibition

SALALAH: The “Tamkeen and Sumou” exhibition opens today in Dhofar Governorate, with more than 75 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) participating. Organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), represented by its Small and Medium Enterprises Committee, the event runs until August 20.

The opening ceremony is under the auspices of HH Sayyid Harib bin Thuwaini al Said, Assistant

Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers for Conferences.

The exhibition seeks to promote the products of local SMEs, enhance their competitiveness in domestic markets and create opportunities for engagement with private sector institutions.

Shaikh Ahmed bin Amer al Musalhi, Chairman of the Small and Medium Enterprises Committee at OCCI, stated that the “Tamkeen and Sumou” exhibition reaffirms



Organised by the OCCI, the event runs until August 20.

the Chamber’s commitment to empowering SMEs by nurturing a supportive business environment and enabling their sustainability.

He emphasised that the exhibition is a key platform for boosting entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman and for fostering innovation and economic diversification throughout the governorates. This initiative aligns with the Committee’s broader efforts to support the private sector and

empower Omani entrepreneurs.

Al Musalhi noted that the participating SMEs represent nine economic sectors, with the goal of presenting Omani products to local consumers while positioning them for entry into Gulf markets. Key sectors represented include light manufacturing, technology and innovation, institutions supporting people with disabilities, tourism, Omani crafts, honey and dates, among others. — ONA

BUSINESS

SELECTIVEGROWTH



Data from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning showed the total value of property transactions reached RO 1.36 billion by June 2025.

MUSCAT’S PROPERTY MARKET HOLDS STEADY AMIDST ECONOMIC GROWTH

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, AUG 4

OMAN’S REAL ESTATE market is showing signs of resilience and selective growth in Q2 2025, driven by solid economic fundamentals and consistent demand in premium segments, despite a notable drop in foreign direct investment (FDI) in real estate.

According to Savills’ Oman Property Market in Minutes — Q2 2025 report Oman’s GDP reached RO 10.5 billion at the end of Q1 2025, marking a 4.7% year-on-year rise, fuelled by robust performance in the oil and gas sector and an 8% annual increase in the construction sector, which contributed RO 666 million. The report adds that inflation remained modest, at 0.82% as of June 2025.

However, the positive macroeconomic indicators did not translate into a proportional rise in real estate FDI, which fell by 36.8% year-on-year to RO 653 million in Q1.

Additionally, data from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning showed the total value of property transactions reached RO 1.36 billion by June 2025 — a 3.5% drop compared to the same period last year.

While the number of contracts declined by 2.3%, the number of mortgages increased by 6.2%, suggesting greater reliance on home financing solutions, particularly in the mid-market segment.

In the residential rental market, Al Mouj retained its dominance among 2-bedroom apartments, with rents averaging RO 709 per month. Al Qurum and Al Khuwair saw average rents decline to RO 393 (-13%) and RO 475 (-7%) respectively.

EOR share of PDO’s crude oil output to spike to 28%

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, AUG 4

CRUDE oil output based on Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) technologies is projected to account for a significant 28% of Petroleum Development Oman’s (PDO) total annual crude oil production by 2031, up from 19% currently, according to the majority state-owned energy company.

The projected increase underscores the growing importance of EOR — a set of advanced techniques used to boost oil recovery from reservoirs after primary and secondary methods become less effective — in PDO’s long-term production strategy. EOR methods typically help maximise recovery by 30–50% from some of Oman’s maturing oilfields.

Notably, the contribution of EOR to PDO’s overall crude production has been steadily rising over the past decade, climbing from 5% in 2014 to 12% in 2020 and further to 19% in 2025.

“In 2024, PDO continued its efforts to boost the future contribution of Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) to oil production. It is projected that by 2031, EOR projects will account for approximately 28% of our total output. We currently operate a variety of commercial-scale EOR schemes, including thermal applications, miscible gas injection (MGI) and chemical EOR.

Additionally, further portfolio optimisation and the introduction of new opportunities into the hydrocarbon maturation funnel have increased production contributions from primary



The contribution of EOR to PDO’s overall crude production has been steadily rising over the past decade, climbing from 5% in 2014 to 12% in 2020 and further to 19% in 2025.

and secondary processes”, the company stated in its 2024 Sustainability Report.

In 2024, PDO advanced the rollout of EOR technologies across a number of assets in its Oil South portfolio. A Final Investment Decision (FID) was taken on a polymer flooding project in the Haima West field (Mahwis reservoir) within the Marmul cluster. The project is expected to recover an additional 36 million barrels of oil by 2045, with an on-stream date set for 2026.

Also targeted for extensive polymer flooding is Nimr, which hosts oilfields deemed “well-suited” for this type of EOR technology. Last year, PDO approved two FIDs for polymer flood projects in the Nimr-A and Nimr-E oil fields — forming Wave 1 of polymer projects.

“The Nimr-A project is projected to recover 20 million barrels, while Nimr-E is expected to add 22 million barrels, both slated to be onstream by 2026. These projects will require the construction of new injection facilities and polymer injector wells.

A new chemical EOR (cEOR) Category Management framework will be applied to expedite contract awards and reduce costs”, PDO stated.

In other updates during the year, the Harweel 2AB Project (Zalzala Field) increased its gas injection rate from 3 million to 4 million cubic metres per day (m³/d), improving cumulative incremental oil recovery to 54 million barrels to date.

Similarly, under the RHIP Tranche 1 Projects, the SAK A2C produced 43 million barrels of additional oil — up from previous estimates of 29 million barrels. Incremental recovery from SAK A3C also rose, from 8.7 million barrels to 12.6 million barrels.

However, the Al Noor Phase 3A MGI Project saw a downward revision in its incremental recovery estimate, with only 3 million barrels expected — significantly lower than the earlier projection of 12.1 million barrels, the company noted.

Production from steam-based EOR projects also dipped in 2024. The Amal Steam Project reported an average oil production of 2,285 m³/d (13,400 bpd) in 2024, down from 2,626 m³/d (16,500 bpd) in 2023. Likewise, Qarn Alam Steam production declined to 3,302 m³/d (20,768 bpd) in 2024, compared to 3,703 m³/d (23,291 bpd) the previous year.

Nama PWP launches RfQ phase for Oman’s first Waste-to-Energy project

MUSCAT: As part of the Sultanate of Oman’s strategic direction towards sustainable waste management and the adoption of cleaner energy solutions, Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP) has announced the commencement of the Request for Qualification (RfQ) process for the country’s first utility-scale Waste-to-Energy Project (WTE Project), located in Barka.

With a projected capacity of 95–100 MW and an expected Scheduled Commercial Operation Date (SCOD) in the second quarter of 2031, the WTE Project represents a major milestone in fuel diversification for the electricity sector.

The project is being developed under the leadership of PWP, as nominated by the Authority for Public Services Regulation, in close collaboration with Oman



The landmark project supports Oman’s national objectives to reduce, treat and manage waste volumes effectively while transitioning towards a low-carbon economy.

Environmental Services Holding Company (be’ah).

This landmark project supports Oman’s national objectives to reduce, treat and manage waste volumes effectively while transitioning towards a low-carbon economy.

The WTE Project is expected to contribute approximately 760 GWh of renewable energy annually, starting in 2031, further strengthening the country’s commitment to its Net-Zero targets.

“The Waste-to-Energy project represents a strategic leap towards achieving the Sultanate of Oman’s vision for sustainable energy and responsible waste management”, said Ahmed bin Salim al Abri, CEO of Nama Power and Water Procurement.

“We are proud to lead this

pioneering initiative in collaboration with be’ah and the Authority for Public Services Regulation. This project not only supports our national Net-Zero ambitions but also reinforces our commitment to delivering innovative and resilient power solutions for the future of Sultanate of Oman”.

“The Waste-to-Energy Project is a landmark initiative in Sultanate of Oman’s transition towards a more diversified and sustainable energy mix”, said Abdullah Rashid al Sawafi, Chief Energy Transition Officer at Nama Power and Water Procurement.

“By utilising advanced thermal conversion technologies, the project will enable the safe and efficient processing of municipal solid waste into reliable baseload electricity. This not only significantly reduces

the volume of waste directed to landfills but also plays a critical role in decarbonising the power sector.

From a grid operations standpoint, introducing a stable and dispatchable energy source will enhance system reliability and support the broader integration of variable renewable resources such as solar and wind. This project exemplifies our commitment to pioneering environmentally responsible solutions that contribute meaningfully to Oman’s Net-Zero aspirations and its shift towards a circular economy”.

For further information and updates on the RFQ process, interested parties are encouraged to visit PWP’s official channels. For queries and information, please contact: prj.wte.ipp@omanpwp.nama.om.

REMAINED WARY

Oil falls as Opec+ proceeds with output hike



Oil prices dropped on Monday after Opec+ agreed to another large output hike in September, the latest in a series of accelerated output hikes to regain market share, though traders remained wary of further sanctions on Russia.

Brent crude futures fell 85 cents, or 1.2%, to \$68.52 a barrel by 08:46 GMT and US West Texas Intermediate crude declined 82 cents, or 1.2%, to \$66.10 a barrel. — Reuters

FOSSIL BUSINESS

BP makes largest oil, gas discovery off Brazil



Britain’s BP announced on Monday it made its biggest oil and gas discovery in 25 years off the coast of Brazil, as it shifts back to its fossil fuel business.

The discovery comes as a boost to the firm as it undergoes a major overhaul to focus on its more profitable oil and gas business. It had located oil and gas at the Bumerangue prospect, 404 kilometres from Rio de Janeiro, in a water depth of 2,372 metres. — AFP

EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION

S Africa eyes new markets after US tariffs



South Africa is seeking new markets in Africa and Asia as it negotiates with the United States over looming 30-per cent trade tariffs, which could cost around 30,000 jobs, officials said on Monday.

Ministers expressed frustration with the US on the tariffs — among those due to take effect this week — saying South African exports do not compete with US industry and were only a fraction of that country’s total imports. — AFP

OPINION

Should AI be banned in schools?



TARIQ
AL BARWANI

The writer is the founder of Knowledge Oman.

STUDENTS have started to find academic work, be it for school, college, or a university, super easy. In fact, educators such as teachers in schools, as well as professors in colleges and universities, along with knowledge workers, such as the administrative staff in these academic institutions, have recently started to write and post creative/intelligent topics on social media platforms like never before.

The question is, however, what has really changed? In simple words, the rise and utilisation of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) apps. What is literally the problem?

Unfortunately, the machines do the majority of that beautiful work/content that we see produced and delivered.

This is serious in my humble opinion and I see a disaster in terms of the quality of graduates whom we expect to be leading the nation tomorrow.

My article this week is about the danger and the negative impact that AI is having on the education sector and whether a ban on AI must be made at schools in order to save students and related teachers/educators from becoming obsolete.

Today, homework is literally solved easily and submitted instantly. A presentation is generated and delivered flawlessly. Academicians and the administrative staff working for the institutions continuously publish interesting and thought-provoking articles on the social media networks as opposed to the pre-generative AI era.

Some of those administrative staff had

never been so engaged on social media or similar publications before. However, a dangerous truth lies under this polished surface.

Virtually none of the academic stakeholders (students, teachers, professors, and/or administrative staff) are learning or originally producing the content, but the machines (powered by AI) are doing the job for them.

Being a technologist myself and someone that has promoted the use of technology since a very young age, I would not deny the positive transformation that AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini (previously known as Bard), Co-pilot, Claude and Perplexity have been doing for all the industries and sectors, including education per se.

However, the reliance on these technologies, especially the generative AI consumer apps, is very dangerous. Why? Because there will be no quality work or growth from the students and the generation that we would depend on to run our nation tomorrow.

Simply logging into one of the generative AI apps, keying in a prompt (a smart question) and then generating an essay or a report in seconds involves no serious thinking nor creative work being produced, but rather a copy-and-paste approach that even a savvy toddler would probably be able to do in the very near future. I am not against using AI apps as a helper, but not relying entirely on the same.

What should therefore be done to save humanity? My suggestion is simply to ban

Academicians and the administrative staff working for the institutions continuously publish interesting and thought-provoking articles on the social media networks as opposed to the pre-generative AI era.

AI, especially in schools, until a proper framework and policies are created/available in place. Why? Because the cost of doing nothing (and continuing as it is today) may result in having students who can no longer think, write, or solve problems without the use of generative AI apps.

I know some would argue the same about calculators, yet this has matured now and the same would most probably happen with AI generative apps too in the future (as they get bigger in scope and the kind of things they can generate and do as machines too).

A 2024 survey by Turnitin showed that over 67% of students have used AI to complete assignments, many without fully understanding the content. Teachers report students submitting work well above their ability, then failing when asked to explain it.

The message is clear, ie, students are not learning more but are just copying better.

Furthermore, I personally have witnessed a number of teachers/educators who now post amazing articles using AI tools. For a proof in a pudding, check LinkedIn today and compare the same with the pre-Gen AI era.

To conclude my article this week, I would like to emphasise that the vital damage of what AI would be doing to school may be permanent if action is not taken now. Students that graduate tomorrow will highly depend on AI for any task or job given.

The question is, if AI can do the job, then why employ graduates as extra baggage? I leave the thought of whether to ban AI in schools to you until we catch up again next week. Stay tuned.

MARKETS’ TRUMP TRUCE IS ON EVER-SHAKIER GROUND

NEIL UNMACK

IF STOCK markets are to be believed, Donald Trump has pulled off a masterstroke. The US president has ratcheted up tariffs on trading partners while avoiding tanking either the economy or asset prices. Yet investors’ muted response to Thursday’s latest levies may be misleading.

The Trump-market truce will soon face steeper tests. Equities have come a long way since April 2, when the president’s so-called reciprocal tariffs sent the S&P 500 Index down about 10% in a week.

Stocks quickly bounced back and then set records, boosted by the idea that Trump would always chicken out, known as the TACO trade.

That theory is crumbling. Thursday’s assault raised the average US levy on imports to about 20% — not far off the April 2 level of 22%, Société Générale economists reckon. Canada, Switzerland and others saw their scheduled duties spike.

Yet S&P 500 futures fell just 1% before US markets opened, which would still leave the benchmark about a quarter above its April nadir.

There are some good reasons for the nonchalance. Some levies, like India’s 25% rate, may yet come down. The new package may just be a last-minute ploy to maximise pressure on trading partners before striking deals.

And the most damaging scenario — a global trade war — looks unlikely given key trading partners like Europe and Japan have agreed deals without retaliation.

Lastly, even if tariffs are now a reality, looser fiscal policy in the US and Germany means there is more money sloshing around two of the world’s biggest economies, helping short-term growth.

Yet the full brunt of the tariff war is still only starting to emerge and the final implementation of the global levies is due next week. Core US goods inflation was a reassuring 2.4% in July, yet price rises may have been kept lower by importers bringing in more goods ahead of the duties.

Analysts at Pictet reckon the impact will become more apparent in August and September.

They note that surveys point to between 60% and 80% of US firms planning price increases over the next three months. That may squeeze consumer confidence, hurting growth. — Reuters

Oman and China ties: Anchoring the future



In 2024, Oman’s exports to China totalled RO 9.3 billion, making up 40% of the nation’s total exports.



DR YOUSUF HAMED
AL BALUSHI
yousufh@omaninvestgateway.com

The writer is founder and CEO - Smart Investment Gateway, economists, board adviser & business transformation mentor.

Modernisation and Oman Vision 2040: Our Work and Proposals”, was emblematic of this ethos. It brought together business leaders, experts and institutional stakeholders to explore ways of aligning China’s developmental experience with Oman’s long-term vision.

Importantly, the forum was not merely a ceremonial gathering; it was a platform for business-to-business engagement, project exploration and cultural understanding.

Organisations such as the Oman-China Friendship Association (OCFA) are central to cultivating this connective tissue. Acting as an enabler of cross-sector cooperation, OCFA supports initiatives that span economic, cultural and humanitarian domains.

From business forums and bilateral exhibitions to cultural programmes and exchange initiatives, the association ensures that the Oman-China relationship remains vibrant at both grassroots and strategic levels.

By championing informal diplomacy and trust-building efforts, OCFA helps convert high-level agreements into practical, people-centred outcomes.

The private sector, in particular, stands to benefit immensely from this robust bilateral framework. Chinese

investors have shown sustained interest in Oman’s Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, particularly those in Al Duqm, Suhar and Salalah, where joint ventures in manufacturing, logistics and renewable energy are gaining momentum.

Omani firms, in turn, are increasingly exploring opportunities to tap into China’s manufacturing capabilities, technology ecosystem and vast consumer markets. This mutual engagement is not only fostering economic resilience but also expanding the industrial base of the Sultanate of Oman.

One of the most promising sectors in this regard is manufacturing, which is fast becoming a cornerstone of Oman’s economic diversification strategy. Over the past four years, the manufacturing sector has achieved an average growth rate of 7.3%, reaching a value of RO 3.6 billion in 2024, equivalent to 9% of Oman’s GDP.

Export figures from this sector are equally impressive, totalling RO 6.2 billion.

Meanwhile, FDI into manufacturing surged from RO 1.7 billion in 2021 to RO 2.5 billion in 2024 and Chinese capital is expected to further catalyse this momentum.

With enhanced collaboration in advanced manufacturing, industrial automation and technology transfer, the sector is poised for accelerated expansion.

This dynamic is further supported by Oman’s strategic location at the crossroads of major global trade routes, modern logistics infrastructure and transparent investment frameworks. As China continues its outward economic engagement — driven by the Belt and Road Initiative — Oman is well-positioned to serve as a critical link between Asia, the Gulf, East Africa and beyond.

BUSINESS

OMAN 'S ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION GROWS BY 12.6 PER CENT

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's total electricity production recorded a significant growth of 12.6 per cent by the end of May 2025, reaching 18,948.9 gigawatt per hour.

This is an increase from 16,829.3 gigawatt-hours during the same period in 2024, according to preliminary data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Al Dakhiliyah Governorate registered a production increase, reaching 1,760.7 gigawatt-hours by the end of May 2025. Musandam Governorate also saw a production rise of 19.2 per cent, totalling 185.8 gigawatt-hours, while production in Muscat Governorate increased by 5.5 per cent to 116.7 gigawatt-hours.

In Al Sharqiyah North & South Governorates, production reached 3,831.7 gigawatt-hours, marking a 4.1 per cent growth. Total production in Al Batinah North & South and Al Dhahirah Governorates was approximately

Musandam Governorate also saw a production rise of 19.2 per cent, totalling 185.8 gigawatt-hours, while production in Muscat Governorate increased by 5.5 per cent to 116.7 gigawatt-hours.



This is an increase from 16,829.3 gigawatt-hours during the same period in 2024.

10,501.6 gigawatt-hours, an increase of 1.3 per cent compared to the same period last year.

In contrast, Dhofar Governorate recorded a production decrease of 4 per cent, amounting to 2,281.5 gigawatt-hours. Production in Al Wusta Governorate also slightly declined by 0.7 per cent, reaching 60.4 gigawatt-hours.

Statistics showed that Oman's net electricity production — which includes purchases by the Oman Power and Water Procurement Company and the Rural Areas Electricity Company — increased by 13.1 per cent to 18,483.1 gigawatt-hours by the end of May 2025, compared to 16,339.3 gigawatt-hours at the end of the same period last year.

On the other hand, the quantity of water produced in Oman saw a slight decrease of 0.9 per cent by the end of May 2025, reaching approximately 206.5989 million cubic metres, compared to 208.5631 million cubic metres during the same period in 2024. — ONA

CLASSIFIEDS

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC
The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Panchakarma, Yoga, Kalari, Massage Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Marma Therapy & Post Delivery Care
Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair Service Road, Near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-King
Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com

Auditors & Accountants
• Audit & Accounting • CFO Services • Secondment
• VAT & Tax Return Filing • VAT Refund Assistance
Contact: 92182750 • Email: contact@umpauditors.com

PTC Rent A Car
Daily, Weekly, Monthly Car Rental Available
Travel & Tours
9345 3444

Driving School
Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)
Contact No: 99074072

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.
Muscat: 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar: 9731 6218, Salalah: 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

JOB VACANCY
Furniture company requires for immediate placement:-
1- Outdoor sales, 5 years experience in furniture and wall to wall carpets, Oman driving license.
2- Driver with heavy driving license.
Please send CV to Email: wm8457577@gmail.com
And mention in subject Job number 1 or 2

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.
Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocroaches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA
PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]
Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

SIT. WANTED

SRI LANKAN Male — (CGMA ACMA+ CPA+BBA) Asst. Finance Manager/ Chief Accountant, 12+ Experience in Oman & GCC, Expert in Finan. Reporting (MIS), VAT, Audit, Cashflow, Budget, AR AP Recon, IFRS, Payroll, Banking. Contact: 78773250. Email: ali.mohamedown@gmail.com

INDIAN female BSC graduate and Internship Python. Presently in family visa. Seeks suitable placement as admin. Contact: 94942510

CHIEF accountant, MBA finance, 9+ years experience in financial statements, auditing, budgeting, VAT, tax, fixed assets, reconciliation, payroll. Seeking a full-time or part-time position in a senior role. Contact: akramhaniffa@yahoo.com / 93988825.

ACCOUNTS/ Finance: Indian male (MBA Fin) having more than 19 years of experience in Oman accounts & finance looking for suitable placement, NOC available and can join immediately. Contact: 92076716

INDIAN male (Mechanical Engineering) with 3 years experience in diesel engine works (Gensets/ Engines), 2 years in Machine Maintenance, seeks job. Contact: 78022420

EXPERIENCED accountant with expertise in accounting, administration and documentation. Proficient in Tally and MS Office. Contact: + 968 72806772

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

Planning Engineer, PMP. Indian male 11 years experience in Construction Projects. Well versed with Primavera P6 Software, strong communication skills, Interpersonal skills, EDT Claims, Recovery schedules, project control. Having Omani Driving Licence. Contact: 78002582. Email: engineer4planning@gmail.com

Urgent Hiring
PLANNING ENGINEER
Requirements: Civil Engineer Graduate (4 years program)
• 8 years of experience in the same role.
• Experience in planning of pipe laying, road and infrastructure projects.
• Building experience will be an added advantage.
• Construction preparation of monthly progress reports, Interim Bar Chart Progress Report & statement of resources required to makeup shortfall in the progress meeting. The candidate should be proficient in the use of Primavera Software. (Planning engineer would be stationed at the site).
• PMP will be an added advantage.
QUANTITY SURVEYOR
Requirements: QS - BSC in QS
• 8 years of experience in the same role.
• Experience in contract administration.
• Experience in Both Pre and Post Contract QS related works for Building Projects (Experience in Infra will be an Added Advantage).
Send your CV to: muscatproject4@gmail.com

WAREHOUSE FOR RENT

WAREHOUSE for rent in Misfah.
Contact: 79939666, 99888390

FLAT for rent 3BKH 18 Nov Street, Ghubrah.
Contact: 92470065, 92408308

STORES for rent 18 Nov St, Ghubrah, 200m, 300m, 400m suitable for all commercial use.
Contact: 92470065/92408308

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN male MBA, 20 years experience in Oman & GCC in Project sales/ Dealer market in All construction materials including Cables & Accessories having D/L looking for the post of Sales Manager/Assistant Manager. Contact: 00968 78099493

OMAN DAILY Observer
FREE* CLASSIFIEDS
• SITUATION WANTED
* NOW FREE CLASSIFIED IN OMAN DAILY OBSERVER ON THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ONLY
Send your advertisement (Only one per coupon & no photocopies), either by mail or in person, with your local identity.

To advertise in Ministry of Information channels



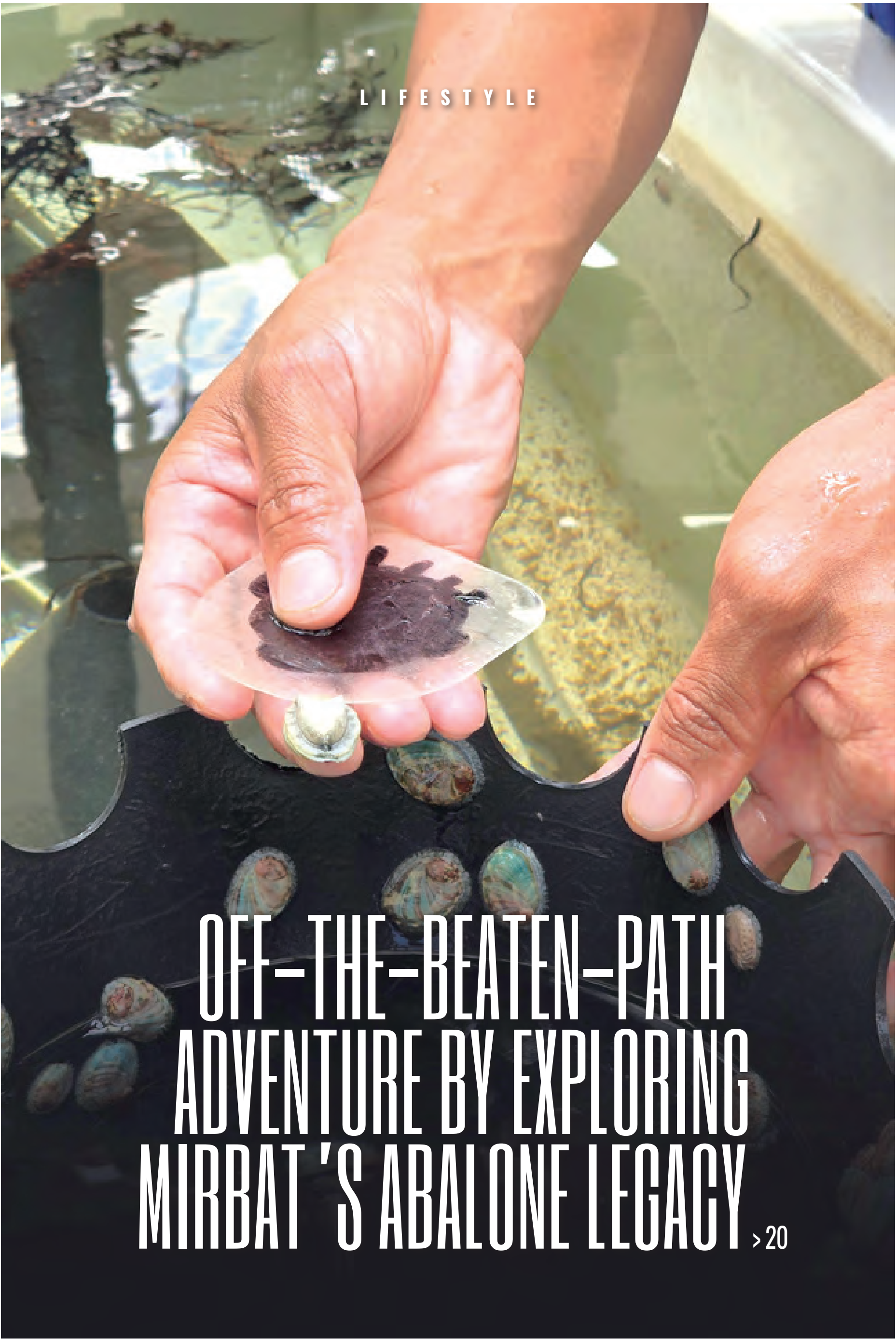
To advertise

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

اردھار izdihar



ART/LIFE



L I F E S T Y L E

OFF-THE-BEATEN-PATH ADVENTURE BY EXPLORING MIRBAT'S ABALONE LEGACY >20

ENTERTAINMENT

‘Peaky Blinders’ creator to pen new James Bond movie: studio



STEVEN KNIGHT, the creator of gritty TV crime series “Peaky Blinders”, will write the highly anticipated next James Bond movie, studio Amazon MGM announced on Thursday.

Knight will work alongside previously announced director Denis Villeneuve (“Dune”) to bring the world’s most famous fictional spy back to the big screen after a prolonged absence.

Amazon MGM Studios acquired creative control of the 007 movies in February and has moved quickly to get one of Hollywood’s most valuable franchises back into production.

There has been no new Bond film since 2021’s “No Time to Die.”

Knight is best known as the mind behind violent British gangster series “Peaky Blinders” which was set in industrial England at the turn of the 20th century and became a global hit.

Running for six seasons and with a Netflix film version currently in the works, “Peaky Blinders” turbo-charged the careers of leading man Cillian Murphy, alongside a stellar supporting cast including Tom Hardy, Anya Taylor-Joy and Kingsley Ben-Adir.

In addition to “Peaky Blinders”, Knight also co-created the wildly popular television quiz show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” and has penned four novels.

The Birmingham, England-based screenwriter, producer and director’s other TV credits include “Taboo”, “See”, “This Town” and “All the Light We Cannot See”. The Bond films, based on Ian Fleming’s novels, have earned more than \$7 billion collectively at the global box office since debuting in 1962.

No release date or title has yet been set for the film franchise’s 26th installment.

And despite frenzied speculation among fans, there has been no announcement on which actor will replace Daniel Craig as the suave British super-spy.

Among the actors most discussed to be the next Bond are Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Tom Holland, Harris Dickinson, Jacob Elordi and Ben-Adir — but Amazon MGM has so far refused to disclose the franchise’s most closely guarded secret. — AFP

Q U I C K F E A T U R E S



LIFESTYLE

A gamer is seen playing a video game during the China Digital Entertainment Expo and Conference known as ChinaJoy, at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre. — AFP



MUSIC

Brazilian samba singer Miguelzinho do Cavaco performs during the Rio 2025 Winter Festival at Marina da Gloria in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. — AFP



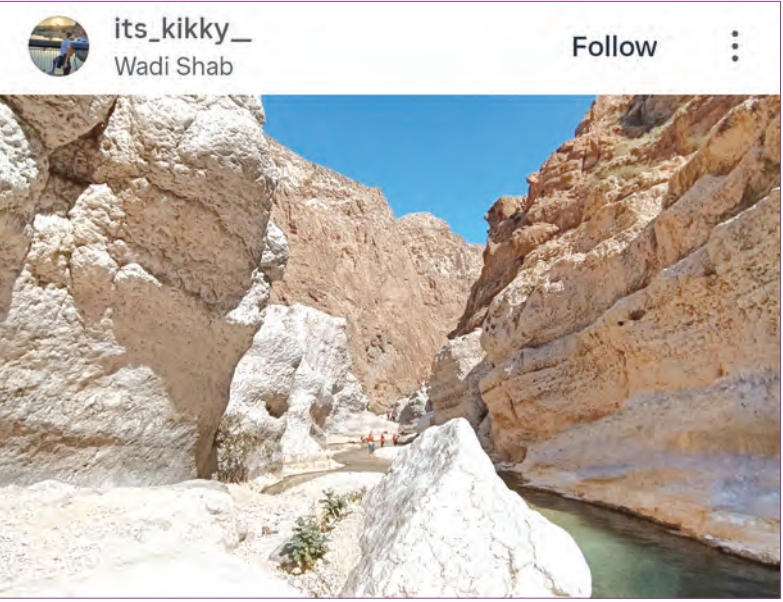
HERITAGE

A Kyrgyz “berkutchi” (an eagle hunter) holds his golden eagle, during the hunting festival “Salburun”, in the village of Bokonbayev, near Lake Issyk-Kul. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Out in the Desert



Beauty of Remote Places

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. To be selected, follow us on Instagram and every time you upload or share your photos, make sure to tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

New giant stick insect species is Australia’s heaviest, scientists say



IN A REMOTE rainforest in Australia, home to deadly snakes, spiders and creepy-crawlies, scientists have discovered a new species of stick insect they believe is the heaviest ever found in the country.

The new species weighs 44 grammes (1.55 oz), about the same as a golf ball and is 40 cm (15.75 inches) long.

James Cook University’s Angus Emmott, who helped identify the new *Acrophylla alta* species, said the creature’s large size could be an evolutionary response to its cool, wet habitat.

“Their body mass likely helps them survive the colder conditions and that’s why they have developed into this large insect over millions of years”, he was quoted as saying in a media release.

“From what we know to date, this is Australia’s heaviest insect”. The new stick insect was discovered in the

canopies of the mountainous Wet Tropics region of Far North Queensland, in Australia’s northeast.

The remote habitat was probably also why it had remained undiscovered for so long, Emmott said.

“It’s restricted to a small area of high-altitude rainforest and it lives high in the canopy. So, unless you get a cyclone or a bird bringing one down, very few people get to see them”, he said.

The stick insect’s distinctive eggs also helped scientists identify it as a new species.

“Every species of stick insect has their own distinct egg style”, Emmott said.

“They have all got different surfaces and different textures and pitting; and they can be different shapes. Even the caps on them are all very unique”. Two specimens have been added to the Queensland Museum’s collection to aid future research. — Reuters



In Hiroshima, a schoolboy keeps memories of war alive with guided tours



SINCE THE age of seven, Japanese schoolboy Shun Sasaki has been offering free guided tours to foreign visitors of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park with a mission: ensuring that the horrors of nuclear war do not fade from memory with the passage of time.

Aged 12 now, Shun has conveyed that message to some 2,000 visitors, recounting in his imperfect but confident English the experiences of his great-grandmother, a ‘hibakusha’ who survived the atomic bomb.

“I want them to come to Hiroshima and know about what happened in Hiroshima on August 6”, Shun said in English, referring to the day the bomb was dropped in 1945.

“I want them to know how bad is war and how good is peace. Instead of fighting, we should talk to each

other about the good things of each other”, he said.

About twice a month, Shun makes his way to the peace park wearing a yellow bib with the words “Please feel free to talk to me in English!” splashed across the back, hoping to educate tourists about his hometown.

His volunteer work has earned him the honour of being selected as one of two local children to speak at this year’s ceremony to commemorate 80 years since the A-bomb was dropped — its first use in war. Shun is now the same age as when his great-grandmother Yuriko Sasaki was buried under rubble when her house, about 1.5 km (0.9 mile) from the hypocentre, collapsed from the force of the blast. She died of colorectal cancer aged 69 in 2002, having survived breast cancer decades earlier.

The uranium bomb instantly killed about 78,000 people and by the end of 1945 the number of dead, including from radiation exposure, reached about 140,000. The US dropped a second atomic bomb on Nagasaki on August 9.

Canadian Chris Lowe said Shun’s guided tour provided a level of appreciation that went beyond reading plaques on museum walls.

“To hear that about his family... it surely wrapped it up, brought it home and made it much more personal. So it was outstanding for him to share that”, he said.

Shun said he plans to continue with the tours as long as he can.

“The most dangerous thing is to forget what happened a long time ago... so I think we should pass the story to the next generation and then, never forget it, ever again”.

— Reuters

FEATURES



OFF-THE-BEATEN-PATH ADVENTURE BY EXPLORING MIRBAT'S ABALONE LEGACY

BY YERU EBUEN

DURING the monsoon season in Oman, known locally as Khareef Dhofar Season, the southern region of Dhofar Governorate transforms into a lush, verdant paradise, attracting visitors from around the world. From the cool mist that blankets Salalah, to the vibrant cultural festivals, Khareef is the perfect time to explore the hidden gems of Dhofar.

Beyond the usual attractions such as the pristine beaches, the frankincense trees and the bustling souqs, there is a unique and fascinating aspect of Mirbat that many travellers overlook — the region's pioneering abalone farm, which has established itself as one of the Middle East's largest producers of this luxury seafood delicacy.



THE HISTORIC HEART OF MIRBAT AND ITS ABALONE LEGACY

Mirbat, a historic town nestled on the southern coast of Dhofar, has long been recognised as the country's premier destination for marine products, especially abalone. Historically, locals have fished for wild abalone along the shores, utilising traditional methods handed down through generations. However, due to overharvesting and the increasing demand for high-quality seafood, wild abalone populations have declined, prompting the government and private sectors to explore sustainable alternatives.

This led to the development of one of the Middle East's largest abalone farms, with operations rooted in innovative aquaculture techniques. The Mirbat abalone farm was established roughly a decade ago as part of a strategic plan to promote sustainable mariculture and reduce pressure on natural populations. The farm's capacity expanded rapidly, leveraging advanced breeding, cultivation and research practices to produce premium abalone for local markets and export.

The Mirbat abalone farm operates predominantly during the cooler months, aligning with the natural growth cycle of the molluscs. The farm's controlled environment mimics the natural habitat, ensuring optimal conditions for growth and reproduction. Seasonal variations are carefully monitored; in particular, late summer and early autumn are prime periods for harvesting, with the farm's scientists observing remarkable growth rates due to their innovative techniques.

The farm's research and development team continually experiment with water quality, feeding regimes and breeding methods to enhance yield, quality and disease resistance. As a result, Mirbat has become a hub of scientific advancement in aquaculture, setting standards for sustainable and eco-friendly mollusc farming down the Gulf region.

WHY VISITING THE FARM IS A UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Given its status as a research and production site, visits to the Mirbat abalone farm are strictly regulated. Tours are only granted with prior approval, ensuring the integrity of the operation and the safety of its staff. Yet, for those with genuine curiosity and interest

in marine biology or sustainable aquaculture, this represents an unparalleled opportunity to see cutting-edge research in action.

Educational tours offer visitors a rare glimpse into the entire process — from hatchery breeding and larval development to the growth phase and final harvesting. Visitors can learn about the farm's innovative techniques, sustainable practices and the importance of marine conservation. They also get the chance to see the laboratory work, breeding tanks and the nurturing environment that produces some of the best abalone in the world.

The farm's produce does not stay confined to the local markets. Once harvested, the abalone undergoes



quality checks and processing at the facility before being distributed to premium supermarkets, seafood restaurants and specialty stores across Oman and the Gulf region. For international customers, the farm's products are exported to various markets, maintaining a reputation for premium quality and sustainable sourcing.

Those interested in tasting or purchasing Mirbat abalone can track availability through local gourmet stores or directly contact authorised distributors. Some local markets even host seasonal sales where fresh premium abalone is available to the public.

IMMERSIVE STOPOVER

While the natural beauty and cultural richness of Dhofar are undoubtedly compelling, a visit to the abalone farm offers a different, more insightful experience that complements the region's scenic and cultural attractions. This activity not only highlights Oman's innovative approach to sustainable fishing but also provides a fascinating educational perspective on marine conservation and scientific research.

Khareef Dhofar is more than just a seasonal monsoon; it's a celebration of Dhofar's natural beauty, cultural heritage and innovative spirit. Between exploring lush green mountains, enjoying vibrant festivals and uncovering hidden treasures like the Mirbat abalone farm, visitors are encouraged to step off the beaten path and embrace all that this extraordinary region has to offer.