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OIA cuts debt, strategically overhauls foreign investment

Overall debt reduced by 47%; direct sales of assets and listings earned RO1.5bn in private investment

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Investment Authority (OIA) is changing public perception and its performance through a wide-ranging programme of reforms and financial gains, according to a review published in a special edition of its quarterly bulletin *Enjaz & Eejaz* marking its fifth anniversary.

Since assuming ownership of state-owned companies, OIA acknowledged facing widespread societal perceptions that questioned governance, financial sustainability and the role of its companies in the broader economy. In response, the authority implemented targeted measures aimed at improving transparency, reducing costs and expanding private sector participation.

One of the key concerns was lack of clear governance structures. To address this, OIA introduced the Code of Governance for OIA Entities in 2021 and launched a digital platform to monitor compli-



The Salaries and Incentives Rationalisation Programme led to financial savings of more than RO250mn

ance and institutional performance. These efforts helped OIA secure the third place globally in the Governance and Sustainability Performance Development Index.

Public concern over high salaries and unclear benefits was met with the Salaries and Incentives Rationalisation Programme. 'The reform reduced incentive categories from 80 to 12, unified benefits across companies and led to financial savings of more than RO250mn,' it stated.

To address doubts over profitability, OIA mandated annual disclosures using the XBRL platform and restructured company debts. By the end of 2024, overall debt levels had been cut by 47%. These improvements supported an upgrade in Oman's credit rating to the highest in-

vestment-grade level. 'Several affiliated firms have since returned to profitability.'

The authority also tackled concerns about competition with the private sector. Through its Divestment Programme and launch of Future Fund Oman (FFO), OIA divested from 18 assets via direct sales and listings on Muscat Stock Exchange. These moves brought in over RO1.5bn in private investment. OIA has also limited its ownership in new projects to a max-

imum of 40% to allow for greater private sector participation.

To streamline mandates and reduce duplication, OIA rolled out the Rawabet programme, aligning company policies with Oman Vision 2040. This led to 41 synergy projects and eight shared strategic priorities, along with restructuring in key sectors such as logistics, food and electricity.

In the bulletin's foreword, Abdulsalam al Murshidi, President of OIA, wrote, "While we celebrate these milestones, we are acutely aware that the greatest opportunities lie ahead. Our focus will remain on private sector empowerment and foreign investment attraction through initiatives like the Divestment Programme and FFO. Concurrently, we will conduct comprehensive reviews of all policies and guidelines to ensure a robust governance framework, one that fosters collaboration across OIA and its companies, enabling even greater achievements for our nation."

Looking forward, OIA plans to review performance evaluation frameworks, upgrade digital assessment tools and continue aligning its operations with global best practices, reinforcing its role in Oman's economic diversification and national development strategy.

Dakhliyah inks 5 investment deals worth RO11mn



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Governorate of Dakhliyah signed five new investment agreements on Friday with Omani companies to implement development projects in the wilayats of Jabal Akhdar and Bahla with a combined investment value of RO11mn.

Covering an area of more than 60,000sqm and investment durations ranging from 15 to 50 years, the projects aim to promote economic diversification and enhance tourism and service infrastructure in the mountainous region.

Among the agreements is a major integrated commercial complex in the Hail al Yemen area of Jabal Akhdar. The RO7.8mn project, to be executed by Smart Supply International, will include a three-star hotel, educational park, entertainment centre and commercial market.

Additional projects include implementation of a 3D-printed open field initiative in Saih Qatna, development of Da'an al Bu-

saiteen Park, operations of Saih Qatna Park and establishment of an integrated tourist park in Bahla.

The Investment and Planning Department in Dakhliyah said the agreements mark a new phase of structured investment targeting projects that respect the natural environment while supporting economic and social development.

The agreements were signed on the sidelines of the Jabal Akhdar Media Forum, held in co-operation with Oman Journalists Association, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and University of Nizwa. More than 70 journalists and media professionals attended the event, which aimed to highlight ongoing development in the governorate and provide a transparent view of investment initiatives.

Sheikh Hilal bin Saeed al Hajri, Governor of Dakhliyah, said the projects reflect a strategic direction to build a development environment aligned with the geography and economic potential of the governorate.

MoL announces 600 new jobs in Dhofar

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Ministry of Labour (MoL) has announced the creation of 600 new employment opportunities in Dhofar following a series of field visits - headed by H E Dr Mahad bin Said Ba'awin, Minister of Labour - to major private sector employers as part of its ongoing Omanisation efforts.

The ministry confirmed that 150 new jobs will be created at Port of Salalah by 2025 year-end, while Nama Dhofar Services will offer 450 positions across its subsidiaries. These are part of institutional partnerships aimed at expanding sustainable employment for Omani jobseekers.

During the visit to Port of Salalah, certificates were awarded to participants of the Tamkeen programme, which aims to prepare national talent for entry into the labour market.

At Nama Dhofar Services, officials reviewed operations at the company's control centre and evaluated the progress of

Creation of these jobs aligns with national efforts to strengthen local employment frameworks

NASSER AL HADHRAMI

the 'Leadership Formation' programme, which is designed to equip Omanis with the skills needed to take on senior roles.

A memorandum of cooperation was also signed between Directorate General of Labour in Dhofar and Nama Services Dhofar focused on joint efforts in training and employment.

Nasser bin Salem al Hadhrami, Director General of Labour in Dhofar, said creation of these jobs aligns with national efforts to strengthen local employment frameworks.

"These efforts represent a key pillar in supporting national workforce development and enhancing readiness of Omani youth to engage in the labour market," Hadhrami said.

UK healthtech firm co-founded by Omani doctor acquired by US giant Aya Healthcare

M Najmuz Zafar
Muscat

An Omani doctor's tech venture, born from the chaos of overburdened hospital wards in the UK's National Health Service (NHS), has joined forces with one of the largest healthcare staffing firms in the United States.

Aya Healthcare, based in San Diego, has acquired Locum's Nest, a British company that connects NHS hospitals with healthcare professionals through a mobile app. The platform helps fill staffing gaps more efficiently and has already saved the NHS over £750mn since its launch in 2016. The company was co-founded by Dr Ahmed Shahrabani and Dr Nicholas Andreou, both NHS physicians at the time.

Dr Shahrabani, who was born in Muscat and studied at the British School in Madinat Qaboos, told *Muscat Daily* that the idea for Locum's Nest came from witnessing daily inefficiencies in the hospital system.

"As a junior doctor, I saw time lost to rota gaps being filled through last-minute phone calls



Entrepreneurship is a lot like medicine – what sets you apart is how you connect with people

DR AHMED SHAHRABANI

and emails. It was not safe and not sustainable," he said. "We created Locum's Nest to fix that - to give doctors and nurses more time, clarity and control so they can focus on their patients."

Today, the app supports over 70,000 clinicians across the UK. Following the acquisition by Aya Healthcare, Locum's Nest plans to expand its reach nationwide

with Dr Shahrabani continuing as CEO. "Our mission is not changing - it's accelerating," he said. "This partnership gives us the infrastructure to scale while staying true to our core: empowering clinicians and improving patient care."

Though the platform will continue to operate under the Locum's Nest brand, the acquisition aligns two leading healthcare staffing innovators on either side of the Atlantic. Aya Healthcare is the largest healthcare talent software and staffing company in the US, known for building flexible, tech-driven solutions for hospitals and health systems.

Dr Shahrabani, who still practises medicine in North Central

London, believes Omani youth can learn from his journey. "My advice is simple: go for it. Start building and learning now. Oman has immense potential, especially in healthcare," he said. "The infrastructure is there. With the right mindset and innovation from within, Oman can become a regional hub."

He also expressed pride in his Omani roots, describing his school days in Muscat as formative. "Those were some of the happiest years of my life. That foundation shaped who I am today."

Outside of medicine and business, Dr Shahrabani is a semi-professional race car driver in a British national championship, a tennis player and an off-roading enthusiast.

"Entrepreneurship is a lot like medicine - what sets you apart is how you connect with people," he said. "Communication, empathy and building relationships matter more than any textbook."

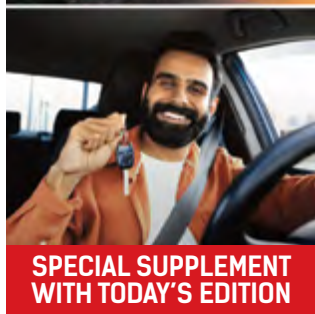
He welcomed aspiring entrepreneurs from Oman to reach out to him on LinkedIn, adding, "I'd be honoured to support the next generation in any way I can."



Oman-Japan ties anchored in trust: H E Kiyoshi Serizawa



Sudan: Is a rival government splitting the country in two?



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT WITH TODAY'S EDITION

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and Japan enjoy a long-standing relationship marked by mutual trust, economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and political goodwill.

Appointed in Ramadan 2025, H E Kiyoshi Serizawa is the 15th Ambassador of Japan to Oman. He enters the role with a clear focus on strengthening ties through a series of cultural, business, and people-to-people initiatives, reflecting the depth and continuity of the bilateral partnership.

Rooted in centuries-old trade relations and shared values, the Oman-Japan relationship has evolved into a dynamic cooperation spanning diplomacy, commerce, and culture. The new ambassador's appointment reaffirms Japan's commitment to deepening this engagement and exploring new areas of collaboration. Excerpts:

As the new ambassador of Japan to Oman, what are your top priorities?

The relationship between Japan and Oman continues to grow steadily across various fields, and as ambassador, my primary goal is to strengthen this momentum. My mission is to broaden our bilateral cooperation by encouraging more exchanges - whether in politics, business, government, education, or culture.

One of the cornerstones of our friendship is the excellent rapport between our Imperial and Royal families. A great example is the visit of H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, to Japan this April, which reaffirmed the deep-rooted trust between our nations.

To further this bond, fostering mutual visits and people-to-people interactions is essential. The bilateral Foreign Policy Dialogue, which brought together senior officials from both countries - such as State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji Takuma's visit to Oman in February, and H E Sheikh

INTERVIEW: H E Kiyoshi Serizawa, 15th Ambassador of Japan to Oman

‘Oman-Japan ties anchored in trust’

Khalifa bin Ali bin Issa al Harthy, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs in Oman's Foreign Ministry, visiting Japan in April - demonstrates our ongoing diplomatic efforts.

Beyond diplomacy, we aim to expand economic collaboration, particularly in tourism, decarbonisation, and agriculture - areas aligned with Oman Vision 2040. I also place importance on building robust frameworks for long-term projects.

Our defence ties are also deepening. Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis al Raisi visited Japan in May, and Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force, which operates in nearby waters on anti-piracy missions, regularly docks in Oman for support. These high-level exchanges reflect the trust and shared interest we have in maritime safety and regional stability.

How do you look forward to increasing cultural relations between Japan and Oman?

Cultural exchange plays a vital role in

building lasting connections between nations. Recently, the Embassy of Japan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, held a Manga exhibition at the Omani Society for Arts in Ghala. Despite being

relocated to Oman. This decision underscores the peace and stability that Oman continues to maintain, making it a welcoming environment for cultural and human activity.

Peace, after all, is the foundation

ences in the future.

How many visas Japan issued to Oman residents last year, and for what purposes?

In 2024, we issued over 1,600 visas to residents of Oman. The majority were for tourism, followed by business and educational purposes. We've noticed that many young people are inspired to visit Japan after watching Omani social media influencers share their experiences online. This organic form of promotion has sparked growing interest in Japan's culture, lifestyle, and hospitality.

This year, we are already seeing an increase in visitors, largely due to the Expo 2025

Osaka/Kansai. Events like the Expo not only attract international guests but also promote deeper cultural understanding. Tourism, in this context, becomes more than leisure - it becomes a bridge that connects people and deepens mutual respect.



held during the summer vacation, the event welcomed over 750 visitors, highlighting strong local interest in Japanese culture.

Interestingly, the exhibition was initially planned for another country, but due to regional security concerns, it

upon which meaningful artistic and cultural experiences thrive. With the continued support of the Omani government, I'm optimistic that our cultural relationship will grow stronger, allowing our two societies to share more diverse and enriching experi-

How has the response been to the Omani Pavilion at the World Expo in Osaka?

From what I've gathered, the Omani Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka/Kansai has been warmly received. Its theme - 'Land, Water and People' - resonates across cultures and age groups, appealing to visitors ranging from young children to senior citizens.

Guests are especially drawn to the sensory experiences on offer - such as sipping traditional Omani coffee and enjoying aromatic bubbles that carry the essence of Oman's natural landscapes. These immersive elements create lasting impressions and allow visitors to take a part of Oman with them, even after the Expo concludes in October.

Such cultural representations not only boost tourism but also promote a deeper appreciation for Oman's heritage and its harmonious relationship with nature. These shared experiences help elevate Oman's image on the global stage.

Are there any plans to open a Japanese school in Oman?

There are currently about 120 Japanese nationals living in Oman, and while there are no immediate plans to open a full-fledged Japanese school here, we are constantly exploring ways to strengthen educational and cultural cooperation.

At present, Japanese language courses are available through the Oman-Japan Friendship Association. Additionally, Dhofar University began offering Japanese classes last year, which is a welcome development and a sign of growing interest in our language and culture.

I personally admire the dedication of the Japanese teachers and volunteers who are working hard to share their knowledge. Their efforts are invaluable and play a crucial role in building deeper bonds between our two nations.

JABAL

صندوق جبل للدخل الثابت
Jabal Fixed Income Fund

The Chairman's Report
For the Period ending 30 June 2025

On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I am pleased to present the financial results of Jabal Fixed Income Fund for the period ending 30 June 2025.

Below is a summary of the financial results:

For the period ending June 30, 2025	
	OMR
Total Income	89,099
Total Expenses	(63,915)
Profit (Loss) for the Period	25,184
Profit (Loss) per Unit	0.008
Total Net Assets	4,148,839
NAV per Unit	1.0104

Market Performance

10-year USTs closed 2Q25 at 4.230%, only 2.3bps higher than 1Q25 but jumped to as high as 4.601% during the quarter on the back of rate cut expectations being pushed to November and higher yields in Gilts and JGBs which weighed on USTs causing the curve to bear steepen aggressively during the quarter. EM spreads tightened 16bps in 2Q25 due to a selloff in USTs as well as a rotation into EM markets due to a weaker USD and a continued rotation from DM markets to EM markets. As such in 2Q25, EM has underperformed DM by 194bps, largely due to uncertainty in the global markets from trade tensions.

Fund Performance

As of 30th June 2025, the total AUM of the fund stood at RO 4,156,865. Since inception (5th February 2025), the fund has returned 1.08% underperforming the market by 1.95%. It was a successful quarter for the fund. The fund's performance turned positive and JAM continues to narrow the gap between the benchmark and the fund. Also, the fund doubled in size from continuous inflows during the quarter. The fund's duration increased substantially during the quarter as JAM look timely opportunities of the selloff in rates and credit spreads during the quarter to yield up the portfolio to ~6.7% (ex-cash).

Market Outlook

The EM-DM spread continues to narrow and is now at multi-year tight at 86bps at 2Q25. The large selloff in USTs in 2Q25 made it very attractive for outright yield hunters to pick up bonds during the quarter at very attractive levels in the EM world. Furthermore, as markets expect continued USD weakness as the USD downcycle continues, JAM expects more rotation into EM markets from DM markets, especially in the LCY space as FX may be the alpha driving factor going forward.

With the ongoing tensions, the global outlook remains fairly uncertain. The outcome of trade tariffs is undoubtedly inflationary and recent commentary from the FOMC acknowledges that these may remain persistent on inflation. However, the neutral rate remains close to where the current Federal Funds rate is and rate cuts may be pushed to 2026. While trade talks continue into 3Q25, global trade will continue to shift its focus to other markets and trading partners rather than just the US which in turn also favours EM markets in general.

Regardless of timing, markets still continue to expect rate cuts by the Federal Reserve and as such, should that happen even in a small way, staying long duration remains to be a good strategy to lock in yields and capitalize on price appreciation when the rate cut comes.

Markets are expected to continue to remain volatile, providing trading opportunities to actively manage the fund and to lock in stable yields for the fund over the medium term.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the members of the Fund Management Body, I would like to extend our thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimur for the leadership and vision and the Omani government for the efforts towards driving

growth and economic stability. I would like also to thank the Financial Services Authority and the Muscat Stock Exchange for their relentless efforts in developing the capital market, and also for the fund manager and the service providers for their efforts in managing the fund, and our valued unitholders for their confidence and support given.

On behalf of the Fund Management Body

Chairman
28 July 2025

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the period from 05 February to and as at 30 June 2025

	From 05-02-2025 to 30-06-2025 RO
Income	
Interest income	-
Accrual bonds interest income	58,674
Net realized loss on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(6,735)
Net unrealized gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	37,160
	89,099
Expenses	
Management fees	(12,303)
Custody and administration fees	(4,000)
General and administrative expenses	(47,292)
Foreign exchange loss	(320)
	(63,915)
Net profit / (Loss) and total comprehensive income/ (loss) for the period.	25,184
Profit / (Loss) per unit	0.008

Statement of Financial Position
For the period from 05 February to and as at 30 June 2025

	30-06-2025 RO
ASSETS	
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	3,781,985
Cash and cash equivalents	300,498
	74,382
Other receivable	4,156,865
Total assets	
LIABILITIES	
Accruals and other payables	8,026
Total liabilities	8,026
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	4,148,839
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	4,156,865
Net assets value per unit attributable to the unitholders	1.01038

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Registration opens for Oman Desert Marathon

Muscat - The organising committee of the Oman Desert Marathon has opened registration for the 11th edition of the event, which will be held in Bidiyah, North Sharqiyah from January 10 to 14, 2026.

Top international long-distance runners have confirmed their participation, further cementing the marathon's reputation as one of the world's premier desert races.

The race continues to attract global attention, recently receiving extensive coverage in German magazine *Runner's World*, one of the leading publications dedicated to endurance running. 'This recognition underscores Oman's growing profile as a hub for sports tourism and extreme endurance events,' stated the organisers.

The Oman Desert Marathon has also received accreditation from the international organisation SheRACES, becoming the first event in the Middle East to do so. 'The certification reflects the race's commitment to inclusivity, particularly in enhancing women's participation in long-distance running, where global participation still stands at only 16% despite notable female success in road and mountain races.'

SheRACES advocates for gender equality in endurance sports.

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Major agri-tourism projects on the anvil in Jabal Akhdar

Our Correspondent
Jabal Akhdar

Dakhliyah authorities are advancing plans to transform Jabal Akhdar into a hub for integrated agricultural and eco-tourism development with new investment projects announced during a high-level meeting held last week in the wilayat.

Chaired by Sheikh Hilal bin Saeed al Hajri, Governor of Dakhliyah, the meeting brought together Sheikh Sultan Mansour al Ghaithy, Wali of Jabal Akhdar, and Masoud Sulaiman al Azri, Director General of Agricultural and Fisheries Marketing at Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The proposed project includes several key components, most notably a honey museum featuring exhibits on the history of Omani bees, a sorting unit, a lab-



Proposed project includes several components, most notably a honey museum, rose farm and rosewater distillation factory with public viewing area

oratory and space for environmental education. Also planned is a rose farm, a rosewater distillation factory with public viewing area and retail space for locally produced rose products.

The investment plan further includes development of an olive

farm and a public park, aimed at promoting sustainable tourism practices tied to local agriculture. Officials confirmed that the project will be implemented under a corporate investment system in partnership with private sector entities.

A joint technical team has been formed comprising governorate and ministry officials to assess rainwater harvesting and terrace rehabilitation projects. The objective, according to officials, is to improve water resource efficiency and preserve the traditional mountain farming heritage.

Following the meeting, the governor conducted a site visit to review ongoing agricultural efforts across the wilayat.

Omani students reconnect with date palm heritage in Mudhaibi

Our Correspondent
Ibra

A student-led initiative aimed at raising awareness about the cultural and economic importance of the date palm tree was held on Friday in Samad al Shan, in the wilayat of Mudhaibi, North Sharqiyah.

Titled 'The Palm Tree: A Heritage Throughout History', the event brought together more than 50 male and female students from a summer programme in Al Suwairij village.

Organised by the Citizenship Department of the Ministry of Education, the initiative highlighted the central role of the date palm in Omani society and its significance as a source of livelihood.

Subha bint Sulaiman al Hemaili, Senior Educational Researcher at the ministry's Citizenship Department, said the event was designed to instil values of citizenship and preserve the authentic Omani tradition associated with palm cultivation and use.

"The initiative stems from the importance of the date palm tree in Omani society and aims to preserve its history. It educates students about its significance, components, and economic value, and encourages preservation of the professions linked to it," Subha said.

Participants were introduced to the various parts of the palm tree, its different types and varieties, and the traditional industries that depend on it. The

programme also explored the tree's connection to Oman's heritage and identity.

The students learned about ancient irrigation system - the aflaj - methods of water distribution among farmers, and the sale of water shares. Traditional methods of determining irrigation times, including the use of stars - locally referred to as sawar - were also explained.

The event concluded with a session on the seasonal period known as Al Qaidh (summer), during which community activities such as Tanaa al Nakheel, Jadad al Nakheel, and Al Tabsil are observed. These practices remain closely linked with the annual date harvest and continue to be an integral part of rural life in Oman.

Month-long Jabal Akhdar Festival 2025 opens

Jabal Akhdar - Jabal Akhdar Festival 2025 officially opened on Friday at Celebrations Square under the patronage of Sheikh Sabaa bin Hamdan al Saadi, Secretary-General of National Celebrations Committee. The event was attended by officials, private sector representatives and members of civil society.

Organised to stimulate domestic tourism and promote Jabal Akhdar's natural and cultural assets, the festival will run till August 30. Activities include cultural performances, sports competitions and entertainment programmes for all age groups.



The opening ceremony featured drone and laser shows set against the mountainous backdrop, besides traditional art displays and folk music performances.

Sheikh Hilal bin Saeed al Hajri, Governor of Dakhliyah,

said the festival supports sustainable tourism by aligning investment in natural resources with social and economic empowerment. "The festival reflects the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and reinforces the governorate's position on

the national tourism map," he said.

He noted that 65 small and medium-sized enterprises are participating, alongside ten local farmers showcasing agricultural products. The festival has also created 60 temporary jobs for local youth in organisational and support roles.

The festival grounds include dedicated areas for children and youth, a theatre for performances, amusement rides and food outlets. Folklore groups, the Lamborghini Club and the WanderDrive sports car team are also participating, enhancing the festival's appeal.

Oman, China explore deeper ties at Salalah forum

Our Correspondent
Salalah

The third Omani-Chinese Friendship Forum was held in Salalah last week focusing on strengthening strategic partnership and expanding avenues of cooperation and investment between Oman and China.

Organised under the theme 'Chinese Modernisation and Oman Vision 2040: Our Work and Proposals', the forum was a joint initiative of Al Roya newspaper, the Chinese Embassy in Oman and the Oman-China Friendship Association. It brought together officials, experts and specialists from both countries.

H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, inaugurated the forum and felicitated participants and speakers.

H E Dr Saleh Said Masan, Undersecretary for Commerce and



Industry at Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, described the forum as a "unique opportunity to exchange expertise and explore promising investment areas that serve the development priorities of both countries."

H E Lyu Jian, Ambassador of China to Oman, said relations between the two countries have remained strong for over 1,200 years, with diplomatic ties formally established in 1978. "Our

cooperation has been stable and fruitful, built on mutual respect and equality."

He added that China is Oman's top trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching US\$36.7bn in 2024. China is also among the top five foreign investors in Oman. "Our collaboration includes the launch of the first Omani satellite, joint energy investments and training programmes that have benefited over 1,200 Omanis."

The ambassador noted that trade between China and the GCC reached US\$288bn in 2024, with Chinese investments increasing by more than 30% in the first half of 2025. He called for more cultural cooperation and the introduction of direct flights between Oman and China.

Dr Khalid Salim al Saidi, Chairman of Oman-China Friendship Association, said it plays a "vital role in strengthening ties beyond formal meetings". He added that its work now includes building cultural bridges and informal cooperation initiatives based on mutual values.

Naif Hamed Fadhil, Head of the Dhofar branch of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the forum is "important for bringing business owners closer and enabling bilateral investment in energy, technology, industry, logistics and tourism".

JABAL

صندوق جبل للفurus

JABAL FURAS FUND

The Chairman's Report

For the Period ending June 30 2025

On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I am pleased to present the financial results of Jabal Furas Fund for the period ending June 30 2025.

Below is a summary of the financial results:

For the period ending June 30, 2025		OMR
Total Income		74,759
Total Expenses		(41,421)
Profit (Loss) for the Period		33,338
Profit (Loss) per Unit		0.009
Total Net Assets		3,497,621
NAV per Unit		0.979

Market Performance

Oman's benchmark MSX 30 total return index made a strong comeback in the second quarter of 2025, rising 4.7% thereby bringing 1H 2025 total return to positive territory at 3.9%. This year's performance has been mainly driven by strength in Financial (+6.3%) and Industrial (+30.7%) total return indices. Overall market turnover revealed strong improvement in the top market capitalization companies amid liquidity funds and ahead of MSX30 index revision on July 1, 2025. The notable index inclusions were OQEP, OQBI and Asyad Shipping, while Bank Dhofar and Ahli Bank were the notable exclusions. Since the beginning of the year, volumes have continued to show an uptick with monthly average turnover rising to OMR 98mn for the first half.

Fund Performance

As of 30th Jun 2025, the Total AUM of the fund stood at RO 3.498 million. Since inception (23rd May 2024), the fund has declined 2.6% compared to the benchmark return of -0.1%. For YTD, the fund has underperformed with +1% return compared to benchmark's +3.9% gain. We remain overweight on select large banks, industrials and underweight in the Telecom sector, which led to positive contributions. On the other hand, the overweight position in OQEP, Renaissance and Abraj has led to underperformance of the fund.

Economy and Market outlook

As per IMF, Oman's real GDP is estimated to grow 2.3% in 2025 and c. 3.6% in 2026 amidst gradual easing of oil production under OPEC+ agreement, benefits of ongoing structural reforms and the steady growth in non-oil economic diversification efforts. On the back of prudent fiscal policies, despite continued spending, Oman reported fiscal surplus of 3.3% in 2024 and expected to remain in positive in 2025 and to increase further with the recovery in oil prices. Moody's recently upgraded Oman credit rating to Investment grade status, Baa3 with stable outlook driven by high per-capita income, moderate government debt, and strong financial assets. Oman's government debt declined to 35.5% of GDP in 2024 from 67.9% levels in 2020. On the corporate earnings, the preliminary H1 2025 results of MSX companies increased 15.5% YoY, came above the estimates driven by banking, and industrials sector companies. Overall financial sector earnings increased by 24.9% YoY, and the industrial sector earnings grew by 130.9% YoY. The services sector earnings (excluding Omantel) declined 2% YoY. Despite recent market recovery, MSX trades at an attractive level as compared to its 10-year average and vis-à-vis the regional and global emerging markets. The strong corporate earnings, improvement in liquidity and high dividend yield to remain supportive going forward. The fund to adopt bottom-up investment strategy and to stay invested in companies with robust fundamentals, higher liquidity and stable dividends.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the members of the Fund Management Body, I would like to extend our thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimur for the leadership and vision and the Omani government for the efforts towards driving growth and economic stability. I would like also to thank the Financial Services Authority and

On behalf of the Fund Management Body

Chairman

29 July 2025

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the period ending 30 June 2025

	01-01-2025 to 30-06-2025 RO	23-04-2024 to 30-06-2024 RO
Income		
Dividend income	181,750	-
Interest income	3,269	11,670
Net realized loss on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss (1,925)		-
Net unrealized loss on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss (108,335)		(16,553)
Net investment gain/(loss)	74,759	(4,883)
Expenses		
Management fees	(35,317)	(6,735)
Custodian fees	(3,090)	(697)
Transaction Cost	(39)	-
General and administrative expenses	(2,975)	(52,066)
Total expenses	(41,421)	(59,498)
Profit/Loss and total comprehensive income /(loss) and increase (decrease) in net assets attributable to the unitholders for the period	33,338	(64,381)
Profit/(Loss) per unit	0.009	(0.021)

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2025

	01-04-2025 to 30-06-2025 RO	23-04-2024 to 30-06-2024 RO
ASSETS		
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	3,480,770	1,522,712
Cash and cash equivalents	32,553	2,415,674
Other asset- interest receivable	-	-
Total assets	3,513,323	3,938,386
LIABILITIES		
Accruals and other payables	15,702	938,448
Total liabilities	15,702	938,448
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	3,497,621	2,999,938
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	3,513,323	3,938,386
Net assets value per unit attributable to the unitholders	0.979	1.000

Oman aims to maintain stable oil and gas production, reserves

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals is aiming to maintain stable levels of oil and gas production and reserves, striking a balance between optimal resource utilisation and long-term sustainability.

Dr Saleh bin Ali al Anboori, Director General of Exploration and Production at the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, confirmed that all companies operating in producing concession areas are implementing production and reserve compensation programmes throughout the year.

In a statement to the Oman News Agency, he explained that the sultanate's average production of crude oil and condensates in 2024 reached approximately 993,000 barrels per day, while natural gas production averaged around 149mn cubic metres per day, indicating a stable supply trend in recent years.

He noted that the ministry is actively marketing several open concession areas and seeking to attract new investment to intensify exploration and drilling operations in the coming period. These efforts are aligned with global market demand and the objectives of OPEC+ to maintain international market stability.



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DR SALEH AL ANBOORI



Dr Anboori further stated that the ministry is currently prioritising the marketing of offshore blocks, which are expected to offer promising future prospects. "These areas could play a key role in sustaining production and reserves through the introduction of advanced technologies and innovative development strategies."

He highlighted that Oman's investment environment in the oil and gas sectors remains highly attractive, drawing interest from both international and domestic

companies. In 2024, the Ministry signed three petroleum agreements for Blocks 38, 74, and 15.

Dr Anboori added that exploration is vital to boosting oil and gas reserves. "Exploration activities have continued steadily, and the ministry aims to sustain and increase this momentum in the coming years."

A total of 73 exploratory and appraisal wells were drilled last year, including 54 oil wells and 19 gas wells. Of these, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) drilled 24 oil wells and nine gas wells as part of its annual plan.

Dr Anboori reported that by the end of 2024, crude oil and condensate reserves stood at approximately 4.825bn barrels, while gas reserves reached 23.3tn cubic feet - evidence of the ongoing success in replenishing production and ensuring the sustainability of resources.

He emphasised that the ministry remains committed to achieving a 100% reserve replacement rate. This is being pursued through enhanced exploration efforts, increased recovery rates via technologies such as enhanced steam and polymer injection, and by maintaining an attractive investment climate - all of which aim to secure a stable future for Oman's energy sector.

OPAZ joins World Free Zones Organization

Muscat - Oman's Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has officially announced its membership in the World Free Zones Organization (WFZO), an international non-profit institution dedicated to supporting and developing free and economic zones worldwide. The organisation includes more than 1,600 zones and economic institutions from over 140 countries.

This membership aligns with OPAZ's ongoing efforts to enhance the competitiveness of the special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities under its supervision. It also aims to open new horizons for promoting these zones internationally as leading investment destinations known for their flexibility, readiness, and advanced infrastructure, reflecting a strategic direction to strengthen the international presence of Oman's zones.

OPAZ's membership aims to create more opportunities for exchanging expertise and adopting best practices alongside leading international partners. It also contributes to improving operational efficiency and developing promotional and marketing tools, thus supporting efforts to attract high-quality investments and projects with substantial added value.

MSX: Monthly trading value more than doubles to RO468mn in July

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded several gains in July, with monthly trading value more than doubling to RO467.8mn - marking the highest trading value so far this year.

This increase was driven by greater buying activity from local investment funds and institutions amid optimistic expectations for further improvement in the performance of public joint-stock companies, which reported stronger financial results and higher net profits in the first half of this year.

Trading value surged by 103.9% in July compared to RO229.4mn in June 2025. The number of transactions executed increased by 42.1%, reaching 49,030 transactions compared to 34,489 in June 2025. The market capitalisation of the Muscat Stock Exchange gained RO862.2mn in July, rising to RO29.132bn by the end of the month.

Investors focused last month's trading on OQ Basic Industries, which recorded trading of approximately RO111.8mn, representing 23.9% of the total trading value. Bank Muscat came second, with RO90.1mn in trading. Asyad Shipping recorded trading of RO54.1mn, while Sohar International saw trading of RO48.3mn. OQ Gas Networks registered RO36.9mn in trading, representing 7.9% of the total.

In July, the prices of 61 stocks rose, 39 declined, and 13 remained unchanged. Sembcorp Salalah led the gainers, rising 54.3% to close at 159bz. Fincorp Financial Centre rose 45.1%, closing at 45bz. Dhofar Generating Company climbed to 77bz, up

MSX market cap rises to RO29.1bn

The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded gains of RO311mn in its market capitalisation last week, rising to RO29.1bn by the end of Thursday's trading session. This increase was driven by rising share prices, the listing of the 75th issue of Government Development Bonds, and an increase in the market capitalisation of closed companies.

The market capitalisation of public joint-stock companies reached RO13.5bn at the end of weekly trading, representing 46.5% of the total market capitalisation of the MSX. The market capitalisation of the bonds and sukuk market reached RO4.6bn, while the capitalisation of the closed market stood at



RO10.9bn.

Last week, the MSX listed the 75th issue of Government Development Bonds, totalling RO72.7mn. The bonds are divided into 727,000 units, each valued at RO100, with an annual interest rate of 4.3%.

The MSX witnessed posi-

rights issue offered by Ahlibank to its shareholders from July 24 to July 28, valued at RO50mn. This was aimed at increasing the bank's capital to RO294.9mn. July also saw the delisting of Oman Investment and Finance Company following its merger with Dhofar International Development and Investment Company.

Public joint-stock companies announced several positive developments during the month. Asyad Shipping disclosed that it had received a new 308,000-tonne crude oil tanker as part of a \$206mn deal to acquire two such tankers.

Liva Group, Oman's leading insurance company, announced that it had restructured and con-

OQGN gets IGC approval for 193km Fahud-Suhar gas pipeline project

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Integrated Gas Company (IGC), the state-owned entity overseeing Oman's entire gas supply chain, has announced its approval for the implementation of a major new gas pipeline project to meet the growing industrial demand in Sohar Port and Ibri.

The project, which will be executed by OQ Gas Networks (OQGN), involves the construction of a 42-inch diameter, 193km gas pipeline extending from Fahud in Ibri to Suhar, with an additional lateral connection serving the Ibri Industrial Area.

IGC has granted full approval for this project as the exclusive authority responsible for issuing gas transmission directives in Oman and has assigned the implementation to OQ Gas Networks, the owner and operator of the gas transmission infrastructure under its jurisdiction.

This new pipeline will enhance the reliability and availability of natural gas supplies to key economic zones, supporting sustainable industrial growth both now and in the future.

Following a competitive tender process, OQ Gas Networks awarded a contract worth



RO105mn in June for the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) works to Petrojet & Partners. The pipeline supply contract was awarded to Jindal Saw Limited. The project is expected to be completed within 24 months.

The pipeline will increase the length of the national gas network by 4.5% and accounts for approximately 9.5% of the base value of regulated assets, underlining its significance to Oman's energy infrastructure.

In a statement to the Oman News Agency, Abdulrahman bin Humaid al Yahyai, CEO of Integrated Gas Company, said, "This strategic project represents a significant milestone in the company's long-term vision to develop an efficient, flexible, and future-ready national gas network."

He explained that the project enhances Oman's capacity to meet its growing industrial energy requirements and strengthens its position as a regional energy hub.

He added that the project embodies the role of the Integrated Gas Company in building a reliable energy system that supports the industrial and economic aspirations of the sultanate, promoting investment, local content, employment opportunities, and the transition to clean energy.

Yahyai noted that the gas pipeline will supply the Suhar Industrial Port with approximately 13mn cubic metres of gas per day to meet the requirements of upcoming industrial projects. Part of this supply will also serve Ibri Industrial City to support planned developments there.

FSA engages with private healthcare institutions on Dhamani platform

Muscat - The Financial Services Authority (FSA) held a meeting with representatives from private healthcare clinics and medical centres that have recently joined the second phase of the Dhamani electronic platform. This initiative forms part of the FSA's ongoing efforts to raise awareness of digital health insurance and to improve the management of health insurance claims.

The meeting aimed to famil-

iarise private healthcare institutions with the platform's advantages and to clarify the procedures for processing health insurance claims. Attendees also reviewed the regulatory framework governing the sector. Discussions included the challenges these institutions face with digital integration, as well as potential solutions.

The second phase of the Dhamani platform marks a sig-

nificant step towards establishing a unified medical record for insured individuals, allowing them to access details of their medical visits at any healthcare facility connected to the system. The platform has played a key role in streamlining health insurance transactions within Oman by integrating operational and financial processes among insurers, private healthcare providers, and third-party administrators (TPAs).

Trump sacks labour data chief after weak jobs report

Myles Udland

US President Donald Trump announced on social media that he had instructed his administration to dismiss Erika McEntarfer, Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), following the release of the July jobs report, which included what the BLS described as "larger than normal" revisions to employment data from May and June. The report, published on Friday morning, revealed that the

US economy added just 73,000 jobs in July – well below expectations – while the unemployment rate rose to 4.2%. However, the most striking figures were the significant downward revisions to job growth in May and June, with a combined 258,000 jobs removed from previously reported totals. May's figures were revised from 144,000 to only 19,000, and June's from 147,000 to a mere 14,000. US Labour Secretary Lori



The report published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that the US economy added just 73,000 jobs in July – well below expectations – while the unemployment rate rose to 4.2%

Chavez-DeRemer appeared to confirm McEntarfer's dismissal in a post on X, stating that Deputy Commissioner William Wiatrowski would serve as the BLS's interim head. McEntarfer had been confirmed as commissioner by an 86-8 Senate vote in January. In its statement on Friday, the BLS explained the revisions were due to "additional reports received from businesses and government agencies since the last published estimates and from

the recalculation of seasonal factors." Speaking to reporters as he departed the White House for the weekend, President Trump reiterated unsubstantiated claims that McEntarfer was politically motivated and insisted her "numbers were wrong." He added that he would begin the process of selecting a permanent replacement and that three candidates were under consideration, though he did not disclose any names. Asked whether the

individuals in question had experience in labour statistics, Trump replied: "I'll put someone in who's going to be honest." Economists, meanwhile, largely agreed that the July data, alongside the revisions for May and June, point to a far weaker labour market than previously suggested, contradicting recent statements from officials including Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell. (Source: Yahoo Finance)

President Trump slaps steep tariffs on 6 Arab countries

Istanbul, Turkey – US President Donald Trump announced sweeping new tariffs late Thursday, hitting six Arab countries with steep rates as part of his drive to "rebalance trade" with trade partners. According to the executive order released by the White House, Syria has the highest rate (41%), followed by Iraq (35%), Libya and Algeria (30%), Tunisia (25%), and Jordan (15%). Trump defended the move in a post on his Truth Social platform, declaring: "Tariffs are making America GREAT & RICH Again." He told NBC News in a separate interview that the process is going "very well, very smoothly," while insisting the new duties would remain in place. The order also set tariffs on dozens of other countries, including 39% on Switzerland, 30% on South Africa, 50% on Brazil, 20% on Taiwan, and 15% on Türkiye, with a baseline rate of 10% for nations not listed. The measures are scheduled to take effect on August 7. With immediate commercial



US President Donald Trump

and economic ramifications, the new trade framework, which the White House has hailed as a move toward "reciprocity and fairness," applies tariffs ranging from 10% to 41%. Trump, who has repeatedly linked tariffs to national security, said the hikes would bring wealth and factory jobs back to America. The rapid rollout sparked concern in global markets, with analysts warning of potential disruptions to supply chains and new inflationary pressures. Middle Eastern economies, already facing challenges from high unemployment and fragile growth, are expected to be among the most affected by the steep duties. Anadolu Agency



Chairman's Report

Dear Shareholders,
Assalamu alaikum wa rahamatullahi wa Barakatuhi (May the Peace, Mercy and Blessing of Allah be with you!)
On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Management team of Al Madina Insurance Company ("Al Madina" or "the Company"), I am pleased to present the financial results for the period ended 30th June 2025.
Through the successful execution of strategic initiatives, Al Madina has enhanced operational efficiency and achieved Gross Written Contributions (GWC) of RO 23.2 million in the Q2 2025. This performance reflects our disciplined underwriting and focused sales approach.
The financial statements for the period have been prepared in accordance with newly implemented FAS 42.4.3, and 30 standards. As required, specific comparative figures from prior periods have been restated for consistency. Transitioning to the new standards posed significant challenges, primarily due to changes in accounting and actuarial practices, including the application of Risk Adjustment, Discounting, and enhanced reserving techniques. Despite these complexities, your Company has ensured full compliance, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and adherence to globally recognized, Shariah-compliant accounting standards.
As a result, your Company reported a Profit After Tax of RO 0.833 million in Q2 2025, compared to RO 0.816 million in Q2 2024, as restated under the new standards. If we were to continue reporting under the previous AAOIFI standards, the total profit after tax for Q2 2025 would have been RO 1.721 million. (2024 Q2: RO 0.715 million).
Results from Operations
The global reinsurance market has continued to harden, characterized by reduced capacity, increasing claims, and heightened pricing pressures. These conditions have led to higher reinsurance costs and lower commission income.
Despite these headwinds, Al Madina has maintained stable growth by reinforcing the adequacy of its reserves and diversifying across all business lines. This strategic resilience has supported our consistent performance.
Q2 2025 financial performance reflects your Company's ongoing commitment to generating a sustainable surplus from takaful operations safeguarding participants' interests while consistently creating value for shareholders.
In Q2 2025, Recognized Takaful Contribution increased by 6%, reaching to RO 20.1 million compared to RO 18.9 million in Q2 2024. Furthermore, the Participants' Fund surplus from takaful operations under the new accounting standards increased to RO 0.019 million in Q2 2025, as compared to a deficit of RO 0.413 million in Q2 2024 (as restated).
Our focus remains on enhancing core capabilities, improving loss ratios, and delivering value to both participants and shareholders.
Investment Income
Despite a challenging global economic environment marked by geopolitical uncertainties, shifting U.S. tariff policies, and oil price volatility your Company achieved a robust 28% growth in investment income during Q2 2025.
The total investment income reached RO 1.090 million, compared to RO 0.852 million in Q2 2024, driven by a prudent asset allocation strategy. We continue to seek Shariah-compliant, value-accretive investment opportunities aligned with the FSA's regulations and our long-term strategic goals.
Shareholders' profit
Al Madina delivered another quarter of positive financial performance in terms of shareholder's profitability. In Q2 2025, the Shareholders Fund reported a Profit After Tax of RO 0.813 million, as per new accounting standards. If we were to continue reporting under the previous applicable AAOIFI standard, the shareholders profit after tax would have been RO 0.826 million.

Risk Management

Your Company continuously assesses the risks related to both its insurance operations and investment activities and implements appropriate measures to effectively manage and mitigate them.

Company's Outlook & Vision

Al Madina remains optimistic about Oman's economic prospects and the growth potential of the Takaful sector in 2025. Increasing domestic and foreign investment, combined with a stable market environment, provides a strong platform for continued progress.
To capitalize on emerging opportunities, we will focus on maintaining stability, driving sustainable growth, and fostering innovation. Key priorities include enhancing customer experience, introducing new shariah compliant products, and leveraging technology to boost efficiency. We also remain vigilant to global reinsurance challenges, including natural disasters and capacity constraints that may affect pricing and availability.
As part of our ongoing transformation, your Company has advanced the digitalization and automation of claims processes to improve cost efficiency, accelerate salvage disposal, and enhance service delivery ultimately elevating customer experience and supporting long-term sustainability. The anticipated rollout of mandatory health insurance in 2025 is expected to provide a significant boost to the health insurance segment.
As Oman continues to position itself as a regional hub for tourism and healthcare, we are actively expanding our outreach through strategic partnerships and physical presence across key locations.
As a leading Takaful operator, Al Madina remains deeply committed to integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into both our insurance operations and investment strategies. Our commitment to sustainable practices has resulted in tangible progress in environmental protection and community development.
In alignment with national objectives, we remain committed to developing Omani talent. Our newly launched Mentoring Program, complemented by extensive training initiatives, aims to equip young Omani professionals with the skills needed for leadership roles, especially in technical fields.
Looking ahead, our strategic vision centers on strengthening underwriting fundamentals, expanding market presence, and supporting Oman's national priorities, including Omanization and job creation. We remain focused on Takaful-compliant investments that generate strong returns for both shareholders and policyholders. With disciplined underwriting, targeted sales strategies, and a customer-first approach, your Company is well-positioned to achieve sustainable growth, operational profitability, and long-term value creation in 2025 and beyond.

Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere gratitude to our valued customers, trusted business partners, shareholders, the Sharia Supervisory Committee, and our dedicated employees for their unwavering commitment and contributions. We also wish to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Financial Services Authority and commend their efforts to strengthen the insurance sector particularly their focused initiatives toward the development and growth of the Takaful industry in Oman.
On behalf of the Board, I take this opportunity to express our deepest respect and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq Al Said for his visionary and progressive leadership. We remain confident that under His Majesty's guidance, the Sultanate will continue its path of sustainable growth, advancement, and national prosperity.
May God Bless you all.

Dr. MOHAMMED BIN ALI AL BARWANI
Chairman of the Board

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2025											
	Shareholders' fund			Participants' fund			Grand total				
	Unaudited 30 Jun 2025 RO	Audited 31 Dec 2024 (Restated) RO	Audited 31 Dec 2023 (Restated) RO	Unaudited 30 Jun 2025 RO	Audited 31 Dec 2024 (Restated) RO	Audited 31 Dec 2023 (Restated) RO	Unaudited 30 Jun 2025 RO	Audited 31 Dec 2024 (Restated) RO	Audited 31 Dec 2023 (Restated) RO		
ASSETS											
Cash and bank balances	198,239	552,905	3,438,492	9,625,248	7,872,485	7,866,195	9,823,487	8,425,390	11,304,687		
Investments carried at fair value through profit or loss	1,892,497	1,641,819	1,016,796	-	-	-	1,892,497	1,641,819	1,016,796		
Receivable from participants' fund - family takaful	-	-	-	120,000	195,651	937,133	120,000	195,651	937,133		
Receivable from participants' fund	1,206,553	1,976,220	3,386,009	-	-	-	1,206,553	1,976,220	3,386,009		
Other receivables and takaful assets	2,437,012	1,920,988	897,716	3,763,391	3,087,410	2,464,267	6,200,403	5,008,398	3,361,983		
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	2,452,553	2,526,794	1,755,180	-	-	-	2,452,553	2,526,794	1,755,180		
Bank deposits	4,299,033	4,299,033	4,299,033	10,097,728	11,647,379	10,647,604	14,396,761	15,946,412	14,946,637		
Investments carried at amortised cost	4,670,894	4,670,584	2,568,788	3,270,547	3,012,869	948,060	7,941,441	7,683,453	3,516,848		
Deferred tax asset	279,548	279,548	287,146	-	-	-	279,548	279,548	287,146		
Investment in real estate	4,920,000	4,920,000	5,170,000	-	-	-	4,920,000	4,920,000	5,170,000		
Property and equipment	459,432	485,935	572,233	-	-	-	459,432	485,935	572,233		
Takaful acquisition service cost	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Takaful Arrangement assets	-	-	-	323,063	-	141,313	323,063	-	141,313		
Retakaful Arrangement assets	-	-	-	43,137,853	41,474,758	46,900,644	43,137,853	41,474,758	46,900,644		
Total assets	22,815,761	23,273,826	23,391,393	70,337,830	67,290,552	69,905,216	93,153,591	90,564,378	93,296,609		
LIABILITIES, PARTICIPANTS' FUND AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY											
LIABILITIES											
Charity fund payable	1,193	3,065	6,711	-	-	-	1,193	3,065	6,711		
Accounts and other payables	2,117,207	2,188,713	1,968,836	5,274,623	5,689,992	-	7,391,830	7,878,705	1,968,836		
Payable to shareholders	-	-	-	1,206,554	1,976,220	3,386,009	1,206,554	1,976,220	3,386,009		
Payable to participants' fund - Family / general takaful	-	-	-	120,000	195,649	937,133	120,000	195,649	937,133		
Employees' end of service benefits	644,175	595,352	555,768	-	-	-	644,175	595,352	555,768		
Takaful Arrangement liabilities	-	-	-	56,112,029	54,990,807	58,468,571	56,112,029	54,990,807	58,468,571		
Retakaful Arrangement liabilities	-	-	-	3,337,415	170,077	3,517,340	3,337,415	170,077	3,517,340		
Deferred Wakala fees income	659,438	606,847	421,059	-	-	-	659,438	606,847	421,059		
Total liabilities	3,422,013	3,393,977	2,952,374	66,050,621	63,022,745	66,309,053	69,472,634	66,416,722	69,261,427		
PARTICIPANTS' FUND											
Surplus (Deficit) in participants' fund	-	-	-	4,287,209	4,267,807	3,596,163	4,287,209	4,267,807	3,596,163		
Total participants' fund	-	-	-	4,287,209	4,267,807	3,596,163	4,287,209	4,267,807	3,596,163		
SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY											
Share capital	17,500,000	17,500,000	17,500,000	-	-	-	17,500,000	17,500,000	17,500,000		
Share premium	1,380,151	1,380,151	1,380,151	-	-	-	1,380,151	1,380,151	1,380,151		
Legal reserve	1,630,099	1,548,785	1,401,361	-	-	-	1,630,099	1,548,785	1,401,361		
Investment fair value reserve	235,476	309,717	225,000	-	-	-	235,476	309,717	225,000		
Retained earnings	(1,351,978)	(858,804)	(67,493)	-	-	-	(1,351,978)	(858,804)	(67,493)		
Total equity	19,393,748	19,879,849	20,439,019	-	-	-	19,393,748	19,879,849	20,439,019		
Total liabilities and equity	22,815,761	23,273,826	23,391,393	70,337,830	67,290,552	69,905,216	93,153,591	90,564,378	93,296,609		
Net assets per share attributable to shareholders	0.111	0.114	0.117	-	-	-	-	-	-		
UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF INCOME & OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2025											
	Shareholders' fund			Participants' fund			Grand total				
	Unaudited 30 Jun 2025 RO	Unaudited 30 Jun 2024 (Restated) RO		Unaudited 30 Jun 2025 RO	Unaudited 30 Jun 2024 (Restated) RO		Unaudited 30 Jun 2025 RO	Unaudited 30 Jun 2024 (Restated) RO			
Recognized takaful contributions	-	-		20,112,393	18,899,677		20,112,393	18,899,677			
Recognized takaful costs	-	-		(5,796,929)	(6,954,257)		(5,796,929)	(6,954,257)			
Retakaful net result	-	-		(14,637,951)	(12,149,576)		(14,637,951)	(12,149,576)			
Takaful gross margin	-	-		(322,487)	(204,156)		(322,487)	(204,156)			
Amortization of deferred cost (related to provision of takaful arrangements)	-	-		(1,169,766)	(573,673)		(1,169,766)	(573,673)			
Amortization of deferred income (related to retakaful arrangements held)	-	-		990,796	525,534		990,796	525,534			
Other takaful income/(expense) - net	-	-		315,904	(328,773)		315,904	(328,773)			
Surplus from Takaful operations before investment income	-	-		(185,553)	(581,067)		(185,553)	(581,067)			
Investment income - net	-	-		455,455	372,848		455,455	372,848			
Mudarib share	-	-		(250,500)	(205,067)		(250,500)	(205,067)			
Hiba from Shareholder's to Policyholder's	-	-		-	-		-	-			
Surplus from Takaful operations	-	-		19,402	(413,287)		19,402	(413,287)			
Wakala fees earned	4,419,413	4,965,096		-	-		4,419,413	4,965,096			
Investment income - net	634,696	479,253		-	-		634,696	479,253			
Mudarib share	250,500	205,067		-	-		250,500	205,067			
General and administrative expenses	(2,924,737)	(2,627,593)		-	-		(2,924,737)	(2,627,593)			
Takaful acquisition service cost earned	(1,419,832)	(1,363,616)		-	-		(1,419,832)	(1,363,616)			
Other income/(expenses) - net	20	(284,886)		-	-		20	(284,886)			
Profit/(loss) before taxation	960,060	1,373,321		-	-		960,060	1,373,321			
Provision for tax	(146,920)	(144,005)		-	-		(146,920)	(144,005)			
Profit/(loss) for the period - Shareholders	813,140	1,229,316		-	-		813,140	1,229,316			
Net combined Profit/(Loss) for the period	813,140	1,229,316		19,402	(413,287)		832,542	816,029			
Other comprehensive income for the period (Shareholders' fund)											
Items that are or may not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss	(74,241)	(81,924)		-	-		-	-			
Net change in fair value of Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	738,899	1,147,392		-	-		-	-			
Total other comprehensive income for the period	664,658	1,065,468		-	-		-	-			
Earnings Per Share (EPS) - Shareholder	0.005	0.007		-	-		-	-			

Eight Omani female riders honoured in Rabat after completing training

In a festive ceremony held at the National Equestrian Institute of Crown Prince Moulay el Hassan in Der Salam, Rabat, eight young Omani female riders were honoured at the conclusion of a two-week equestrian training camp.

The event was attended by H E Khalid bin Salum Bamkhalif, Ambassador of Oman to the Kingdom of Morocco, along with several dignitaries and officials from the equestrian sector.

The ceremony marked the culmination of an intensive and enriching training programme that included practical and theoretical sessions. The riders delivered a live equestrian performance demonstrating their progress in show jumping, dressage, and harmony with horses - a symbolic conclusion to their learning journey in Morocco.

The camp was led by Fanida Chahboun, head coach of the Olympic Equestrian Training Centre in Morocco and a graduate of the National Equestrian Institute. She was supported by a specialised Moroccan coaching team.

The daily routine of the riders began with horse grooming and stable cleaning - a practice that fostered a strong sense of discipline and responsibility.



plined and responsible.

Training covered key disciplines:

Classical riding to improve balance and control

Show jumping with lessons on

types of hurdles, measuring distances, technique, and common errors

Dressage focusing on precision and coordination with the horse

Vaulting, taught by Morocco's

National Vaulting Head Coach Sami, which introduced the girls to acrobatic horseback routines to build flexibility and confidence

This was the first time Omani female riders trained in vaulting,



and their performance impressed the coaches. Some of the girls, all under the age of 14, showed exceptional promise, with the potential to represent Oman at future international events, including the World Equestrian Games - a milestone that would mark the first female vaulting representation from the Arab world.

The programme also included

Hamood Sultan al Tooqi, Chairman of the Olympic Equestrian Training Centre in Oman, and Badr Fakir, Director General of the Royal Moroccan Equestrian Sport Federation.

H E Bamkhalif expressed his pride in the cooperation between Oman and Morocco, describing the initiative as a testament to Arab solidarity and shared cultural values. The riders in turn

H E Khalid bin Salum Bamkhalif expressed his pride in the cooperation between Oman and Morocco, describing the initiative as a testament to Arab solidarity and shared cultural values

workshops on stable management, horse care, nutrition, equine first aid, and professional rider development, helping build a strong foundation in equestrian knowledge.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to the riders by H E Bamkhalif, alongside Sayyid Chirfe El Aoui, Director of the National Horse Institute,

shared their gratitude, praising the depth of the experience that enhanced not only their technical skills but also their cultural understanding.

Organised in collaboration between the Olympic Equestrian Training Centre in Oman and the National Horse Institute in Morocco, the camp served as more than a training opportunity - it reflected the spirit of Arab unity and the growing presence of Arab women in international equestrian sport.



Nizwa receives first delivery of Kia EV6 electric vehicle

Extending electrifying experiences, Kia is proud to announce that Nizwa city has received the first delivery of Kia's all-electric crossover AWD, the Kia EV6.

Perfect for mapping everyday journeys, the EV6 features premium luxurious interiors, advanced safety and connectivity features that elevate lifestyles and introduce immersive driving experiences to the customers in Oman.

Bringing exceptional yet sustainable and futuristic driving experiences on the roads of Nizwa, the EV6 is based on Kia's advanced Electric - Global Modular Platform, offering ultra-fast charging capabilities of 4.5 minutes of minimum charging time. The EV6 can add up to 100km of range using the ultra-fast charging (800V) device for short distance coverage. As for more substantial charges, it takes less than 18 minutes to go from 10% to 80%, saving your time and fuel as you prepare for the day.

Considered as the practical everyday car, the EV6 is equipped with powerful capabilities, with a top speed of 188km per hour, the EV6 AWD's synchronous motors

powers 0 to 100km speed in just 3.5 seconds with a maximum power of 239KW.

Inside the futuristic interiors of the EV6, Kia has taken a bold approach to sustainability without compromising on luxury and performance in a 5-seater setting. The cabin features vegan leather and recycled PET materials, reflecting Kia's commitment sustainability by delivering environment friendly yet premium products.

The interior is designed for comfort, with a spacious layout that makes every ride feel like a premium experience such as the extra storage on the front trunk to hold bags and shoes and ventilated relaxation seats. One of the standout option feature is the Meridian premium sound system, which delivers rich, clear audio through a 14-speaker setup, providing a truly immersive audio experience.

The Kia EV6 features cutting-edge technology that keeps you connected ensuring seamless journeys. Integrated 12.3" Navigation + 12.3" Cluster LCD, 64 colour Ambient Mood lighting and the integrated panoramic curved display enhances overall mood.

Al Maha Petroleum, Takaful sign deal to enhance digital insurance services

In a progressive step toward re-defining the digital insurance landscape in the Sultanate, Takaful Oman and Al Maha Petroleum have signed an agreement to enable the delivery of comprehensive, sharia'a-compliant insurance solutions directly through Al Maha's advanced digital platforms - offering customers an enhanced, all-in-one digital experience.

This collaboration is aimed at improving accessibility for users across Oman. By integrating Takaful Oman's motor insurance products with Al Maha's user-friendly and widely accessible digital ecosystem, the agreement seeks to provide a seamless journey - from quotation to policy issuance - on a single, unified platform. This integration will be available exclusively through the Al Maha Plus application, enhancing its role as a unified digital platform for everyday services. It also complements Oman's broader digital transformation agenda, supporting national goals of service innovation.



Neelmani Bhardwaj, CEO of Takaful Oman Insurance, commented, "This agreement represents a defining moment in our journey toward a more digitally connected and customer-focused insurance model. At Takaful Oman, we are constantly looking at innovative ways to meet the evolving needs of

today's digitally empowered customers. Collaborating with Al Maha Petroleum allows us to not only increase our reach, but to also make insurance more accessible, responsive, and aligned with the lifestyles of a tech-savvy generation. This is a step forward in our mission to transform how insurance is perceived and consumed in Oman."

Hamed al Maghdri, CEO of Al Maha Petroleum, added, "We are proud to partner with Takaful Oman Insurance as part of our commitment to continuously enhance the value we offer to our customers. Our focus is on delivering integrated digital services that go beyond the conventional. This collaboration brings the power of insurance to our digital platforms - enabling customers to access critical financial protection tools alongside everyday

services like fuelling, payments, and loyalty rewards. Through our Al Maha Plus application, we are building a unified, customer-centric experience that simplifies access to essential services. This reflects our vision to evolve from a traditional petroleum provider into a digitally driven brand that truly puts the customer first."

By combining industry expertise, digital agility, and customer insight, this collaboration aims to deliver a differentiated and future-ready value proposition. The initiative is also aligned with the strategic goals of both organisations to innovate and diversify their offerings.

With a customer-centric approach and a diverse distribution network since its inception in 4, Takaful Oman Insurance effectively meets Oman's changing market demands.

NBO picks talents from Tomorrows' Leaders campaign

The National Bank of Oman (NBO) recently welcomed 35 promising graduates into its flagship NBO Tomorrows' Leaders Programme, reaffirming its longstanding commitment to investing in local talent and building a resilient, future-ready workforce for the sultanate.

The onboarding event marked the beginning of a structured journey for the selected candidates, who were chosen through a comprehensive assessment and interview process. Designed to nurture early-career professionals, the NBO Tomorrows' Leaders Programme plays a key role in preparing Oman's youth for long-term careers in the banking and financial sector.

Dr Ali Moosa al Abri, General Manager & Chief Human Resources Officer at NBO, said, "Talent development is one of our core priorities and we take pride in building a culture that supports growth at every stage of



a professional journey. Welcoming these young graduates into our programme reflects our belief in Omani potential and our responsibility to empower the next generation of national leaders."

He added that this was not just about filling roles; it is about preparing individuals to navigate complexity, embrace change and lead with purpose in a rapidly evolving environment.

For over 50 years, NBO has

carried a proud legacy of investing in people, he reminded, adding that the Academy of Excellence stands as a cornerstone of that heritage, having long been at the forefront of developing local talent in the financial sector.

"Our future depends on how well we equip today's talent, and we are committed to doing so with intention and care. The Programme aligns with Oman Vision 2040 objectives to enable a

generation of capable, empowered youth who contribute to building a stronger, more prosperous nation," Abri added.

The NBO Tomorrows' Leaders Programme is part of the bank's broader strategy to nurture Omani talent across all career levels. This includes Tamayuz, a high-potential development initiative aimed at equipping emerging leaders within the bank with the skills, experience

and mentorship required to potentially take on senior roles. In parallel, NBO runs an annual internship programme, offering university students across the Sultanate meaningful on-the-job training that bridges academic learning with real-world experience. Together, these initiatives form a cohesive framework that reflects NBO's purpose-driven approach to human capital development.



FSA to participate in juniors’ forum for insurance in Dhofar

As part of its continued efforts to enhance financial and insurance awareness across various segments of society, the Financial Services Authority (FSA) will be participating for the third consecutive year in the Dhofar Kharif Festival through an interactive awareness forum titled ‘Juniors’ Forum for Insurance and Investment in Dhofar Autumn 2025’.

The event will be held at Salalah Gardens Mall from August 5 to 11, between 4pm and 10pm daily.

The forum targets children, teenagers, and their families visiting the autumn season, aiming to foster early financial awareness and introduce young individuals to the concepts of insurance and investment

through an entertaining and interactive educational approach. It also seeks to engage parents in informative discussions that support the family’s role in instilling sound financial principles.

This year’s forum will feature a range of diverse activities and programs in collaboration with the Muscat Stock Exchange and Muscat Clearing & Depository Company.

The forum will include a variety of daily activities, most notably the Reading Corner presented by Al-Hakawati (The Storyteller), where meaningful stories related to insurance and investment, published by the FSA, will be narrated, followed by simple educational activities to reinforce the discussed concepts.

OAB gets national award for journey to ‘empowerment’

Oman Arab Bank has proudly received the ‘Organization with Best CSR Practices’ award at the Oman Leadership Awards 2025, presented by CMO Asia, in a ceremony that celebrated organisations making a significant and sustainable impact on society and the national economy.

This national recognition is more than a symbol of excellence - it is a powerful reflection of the bank’s long-standing journey of purpose, where community impact has been woven into its core strategy. Rather than viewing CSR as a separate requirement, Oman Arab Bank has fully embraced it as a pillar of its identity and growth.

The Oman Leadership Awards honour institutions that embody the philosophy of ‘Making a Real Difference’ through integrity, purpose, and sustainable practices. Oman Arab Bank stood out after rigorous evaluation by a distinguished panel of judges from diverse disciplines.

Commenting on the award, Sulaiman al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, stated: “We are honoured to receive this recognition, which is not just an award, it’s a demonstration to our core mission. At Oman Arab Bank, CSR is not an initiative. It’s



a responsibility rooted in who we are and what we stand for.” Dalal al Rahma, Acting Head

of Corporate Communications at OAB, said, “This award is not just a milestone; it is a mirror that ex-

emplifies our collective heartbeat as a responsible and sound institution. Every campaign we

launch, every partnership we build, is rooted in empathy and impact. We listen, we learn, and we lead with purpose. Therefore, I believe that is how real change begins, and, eventually, how trust is earned.”

What set OAB apart was its

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SULAIMAN AL HARTHI

strong integration of ethical values into everyday operations, along with its commitment to transparency and accountability. The bank’s proactive communication and collaboration with stakeholders ensure that its initiatives are inclusive, measurable, and aligned with national goals such as Oman Vision 2040. With this recognition, Oman Arab Bank reinforces its role as a changemaker in the financial sector.

Jetour strengthens customer trust in Sultanate of Oman

Jetour, the fast-growing automotive brand that made its debut in Oman on December 21, 2022, under the exclusive distributorship of MHD Automobiles LLC, is proud to assure customers of comprehensive after-sales support, including readily available genuine parts and a nationwide network of professional service centres.

The launch of Jetour in Oman, in collaboration with the MHD Group, introduced the dynamic X70, X70 PLUS, X90, Dashing, T1 & T2 models to the local market. Since then, Jetour has rapidly

established itself as a preferred choice for customers seeking performance, style, and value.

A key part of delivering on this promise is ensuring long-term reliability through dedicated service and parts availability - a commitment that MHD Automobiles takes seriously.

From day one, MHD Automobiles has prioritised building a robust infrastructure to support Jetour owners throughout their ownership journey. Jetour customers have access to a network of modern service centers located across key regions of the



sultanate, including Azaiba, Mabala, Wadi Kabir, Sohar, Nizwa, Sur, Buraimi, Barka and Salalah.

Whether it’s routine maintenance or more complex diagnostics, every Jetour vehicle is serviced by certified technicians using the latest tools and tech-

nologies. Most importantly, genuine Jetour spare parts are always in stock, ensuring quick turnaround times and peace of mind for customers.

Regular maintenance is essential for preserving your vehicle’s performance, safety, and value. Jetour’s after-sales services ensure comprehensive care through essential checks, including:

- Oil and filter changes to keep the engine running smoothly
- Tyre inspection to extend tire life and improve handling
- Brake inspections and fluid top-

ups for safety and reliability

- Battery health checks
- Air & A/C Filter replacements to maintain clean airflow to the engine and cabin
- Windshield wiper and lighting inspections to ensure visibility and safety
- Inspection of Vehicle through Jetour diagnostic tools

By following the manufacturer’s recommended schedule and maintaining a clear service history, Jetour owners can enjoy a hassle-free driving experience backed by expert care.

“At MHD Automobiles, our

relationship with the customer doesn’t end with a sale. It begins there,” said Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, CEO, MHD Automobiles. He also remarked, “We understand that service excellence and the availability of parts are key pillars of customer satisfaction. That’s why we’ve built a strong support ecosystem across Oman to ensure Jetour owners receive the best care - wherever they are.”

With a growing number of Jetour vehicles on Oman’s roads, MHD Automobiles is continually expanding its service capabilities.

Marathon Des Sables to be held at Jordan’s Wadi Rum

Jordan’s Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Lina Annab, and CEO of the Global Marathon Des Sables (MDS), Cyrille Gauthier, held a press conference in Amman to officially launch the fifth international edition of the Marathon des Sables, scheduled to take place in Wadi Rum from November 1 to 8, 2025.

The desert ultramarathon, organised by the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) and Experience Jordan Adventures, is one of the world’s most challenging endurance races, that brings together about 650 runners from across the European Union and beyond. The growth of this global event in Jordan has been a testament to the country’s ideal setting and this year the event is expected to be the largest ever.

Over the past decade, Jordan has made significant strides in shaping its adventure tourism landscape.



iCAUR attempts category innovation with cool player

The global automotive market is witnessing a shift in consumer perception. Customers today demand more than basic vehicle functionality that they seek to express their identities through their cars.

This was observed by iCAUR, a new cool brand for overseas markets, which has rejected the traditional race for features, specs and configurations since its inception.

Whether exploring the wilderness or making a statement in the urban landscape, young and young-at-heart consumers share a common pursuit of freedom, exploration and cool style, the company state. At its essence,

this reflects a growing desire for personalised lifestyles tailored to diverse preferences.

iCAUR redefined the relationship between products and users, as well as between brand and users, through category innovation, turning cars into personalised companions that connect diverse lifestyle scenarios. 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.

Category innovation fundamentally disrupts traditional automotive logic. In iCAUR’s innovative vision, differentiation in category innovation is not merely about product iteration. It restructures the way the brand connects with young and young-at-heart users at a fundamental level. At its core, it transcends the conventional role of a ‘transportation tool’, transforming ‘cool’ from a mere style label into a tangible design language.

Special Economic Zone at Duqm launches ‘Visit Us’ campaign

Tourism, entertainment, and cultural activities organised under the ‘Visit Us’ campaign kicked off this week at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The campaign runs from July 27 to August 31 and targets visitors heading to Dhofar during the Khareef season, aiming to boost the tourism sector in the zone.

The festivities began with a colourful kite show that set the tone for a joyful and vibrant atmosphere. In Saay Commercial District Park, a lively evening of traditional Omani music and folkloric performances celebrating the sultanate’s rich cultural heritage was held, headlined by Al Njoom Band.

Meanwhile, the newly launched Duqm Entertainment Centre hosted a musical evening featuring renowned Omani singer Salah al Janabi, who performed a selection of his popular songs in an elegant artistic setting. Throughout the campaign, Saay Commercial District Park will host a variety of family-friendly events, including a children’s theatre and other activities and shopping experiences.

The ‘Visit Us’ campaign also includes upcoming events such as a poetry night, the ‘Duqm Hike,’ a treasure hunt competition, and many more interactive



Target audiences include families and groups travelling to Dhofar from northern and central Oman, domestic and Gulf tourists heading to or returning from Dhofar

programmes designed to entertain visitors, support local businesses, and stimulate tourism in SEZAD.

The campaign aims to revitalise economic and tourism activity in Duqm during the summer, encouraging travellers to stop and explore the area’s attractions. It also seeks to support local businesses, hospitality, and

service providers, while enhancing Duqm’s image as a future tourist destination. Target audiences include families and groups travelling to Dhofar from northern and central Oman, domestic and Gulf tourists heading to or returning from Dhofar, youth, nature lovers, adventure seekers, and social media influencers.

Ukraine claims attacks on Russian drone storage airbase and Penza military plant

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukraine's Security Service of Ukraine (SSU) on Saturday reported that its drones hit the Shahed storage airbase in Primorsko-Akhtarsk and the Elektropribor military plant in Penza in Russia just as three people were killed by Russian strikes on Kherson.

Ukraine's drone attack on Russia reportedly hit the Elektropribor plant in Penza, which Kyiv claims works for the Russian defence industry.

According to Ukrainian special services, equipment for digital networks in military command systems, devices for aviation, armoured vehicles, ships, and spacecraft are produced there.

Ukraine claimed their first drone attack at the Primorsko-Akhtarsk military airbase in Krasnodar Krai caused a fire to break out. The storage and launch sites of the Shahed attack drones were also targeted, according to the SSU.

Videos of a massive fire that was purportedly on the premises of the Novokuibyshevsk oil plant in Samara Oblast were shared on social media.

The footage on Telegram, widely used to disseminate information about Russia's war in Ukraine, captured drone-like activity and the reaction of air defence systems.

The governor of the region, Vyacheslav Fedorishchev, confirmed the drone strike on Novokuibyshevsk. "Enemy UAVs attacked one of the industrial facilities in Novokuibyshevsk this morning. Emergency services are working at the scene," he wrote on Telegram.

Internet service was subsequently restricted across the



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Two people were killed in Kherson by Russian shelling, according to the officials, the latest in a barrage of Russian drone and missile attacks on Ukraine's capital

oblast, and operations at the Samara airport were suspended, Fedorishchev said.

Russian attack kills 2 in Kherson
Meanwhile, two people were killed in Kherson by Russian shelling, according to the Kherson Oblast Military Administration. The deaths in Kherson were the latest in a barrage of Russian drone and missile attacks on

Ukraine's capital, including that of Kyiv early on Friday that killed 31 people, including five children. Around 150 people were injured. Two people were killed on Saturday morning in Kherson by a Russian attack, according to the Kherson Oblast Military Administration. A Russian airstrike on Kherson's Korabelnyi area left a 68-year-old lady dead and two others injured: a 79-year-old man

who received blast trauma and a 41-year-old man who suffered various injuries to his limbs and torso, according to local media. One person was reportedly killed in the area on Friday and nine people injured. The body of a man was found beneath the debris of a residential structure in the Dniprovskiyi area shelled by Russia, local officials said. Ukraine says they are holding off Russia, but Moscow's sum-

Nuke submarines 'closer' to Russia, says Donald Trump

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump said on Friday that two nuclear submarines he directed to be deployed after comments by former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev are 'close to Russia'.

"Yeah, they're closer to Russia," Trump said in an interview with Newsmax when asked about the location of the submarines.

Trump said earlier that he directed the deployment of two US nuclear submarines to 'the appropriate regions' amid an escalating war of words with Medvedev.

"A former president of Russia who is now in charge of one of the most important councils, Medvedev, said some things that are very bad, talking about nuclear. And

when you mention the word nuclear, I say - you know, my eyes light up, and I say, 'We better be careful, because it's the ultimate threat'. Shouldn't have said it.

"He's got a fresh mouth. He said things in the past too, and so we always want to be ready, and so I have sent to the region two nuclear submarines. I just want to make sure that his words are only words and nothing more than that," Trump told Newsmax.

Medvedev lashed out Monday at Trump, warning that the US president's escalating pressure on the Kremlin about the war in Ukraine risks triggering a broader conflict, not just between Russia and Ukraine, but between Russia and the US.

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Elon Musk's Tesla ordered to pay \$243mn over crash

Miami, US - A jury in Miami on Friday said Tesla was liable in a 2019 fatal crash in the Florida Keys, and ordered the electric vehicle firm to pay US\$243mn to the family of a deceased victim and her injured boyfriend.

In 2019, a driver in a Tesla Model S went through an intersection and drove into a couple who were standing next to their parked Chevrolet Tahoe. Naibel Benavides Leon, who was 22 years old, was killed in the crash, with her boyfriend Dillion Angulo heavily injured in the collision.

The jury said Tesla is partly responsible for the death because its Autopilot technology failed.

"Tesla designed Autopilot only for controlled-access high-

ways yet deliberately chose not to restrict drivers from using it elsewhere, alongside Elon Musk telling the world Autopilot drove better than humans," Brett Schreiber, an attorney for

In 2019, a driver in a Tesla Model S went through an intersection and drove into a couple. Naibel Benavides Leon, who was 22 years old, was killed in the crash, with her boyfriend seriously injured

the plaintiffs, said after the verdict. Musk, the world's richest person, is Tesla's CEO and largest shareholder.

Schreiber said the order 'represents justice for Naibel's tragic death and Dillion's life-

long injuries'. Tesla will have to pay US\$200mn in punitive damages, along with 33% (US\$43mn) of the US\$129mn in compensatory damages.

The driver of the Tesla was looking for his phone after it had fallen to the floor of the vehicle, when the fatal crash occurred. The court argued that the Autopilot system should have been disabled once the

driver was distracted. The driver allegedly did not receive any alerts as he ran a stop sign and stop light before hitting the victims' SUV. Tesla plans to appeal the verdict, and has said the driver is solely responsible for the crash. "Today's verdict is wrong," the electric vehicle company said, while saying it 'only works to set back automotive safety and jeopardise Tesla's and the entire industry's efforts to develop and implement lifesaving technology.' Tesla has said that drivers who are using the Autopilot still need to be fully attentive while driving and to keep their hands on the steering wheel. DW

US: Epstein associate Ghislaine Maxwell moved to Texas prison

Texas, US - Ghislaine Maxwell, an associate of child sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, has been transferred from a prison in the southern US state of Florida to a lower security facility in Texas, the Bureau of Prisons announced on Friday.

Maxwell's lawyer, David Markus, also confirmed to the Reuters news agency that she had been transferred to the new facility.

Maxwell is currently serving a 20-year sentence behind bars on charges of child sex trafficking. She is accused of grooming underage girls for Epstein to sexually abuse.

US authorities did not explain the reason why Maxwell was



Federal Prison Camp Bryan in Texas

transferred to a new facility in Bryan, Texas. She was earlier imprisoned at FCI Tallahassee in Tallahassee, Florida.

The minimum-security Federal Prison Camp Bryan where Maxwell is now housed has better conditions than the low-security FCI Tallahassee in Florida.

Federal Prison Camp Bryan has little to no perimeter fencing

and a lower staff-to-inmate ratio, whereas FCI Tallahassee has double-fenced perimeters fencing and more prison staff on site. Victims of Epstein and Maxwell have condemned Maxwell's move to a lower-security prison.

"Ghislaine Maxwell is a sexual predator who physically assaulted minor children on multiple occasions, and she should never be shown any leniency," Annie and Marie Farmer and the family of Virginia Giuffre said in response to the transfer. They said the transfer 'smacks of a cover up'.

Annie and Marie Farmer have accused Epstein of molestation. DW

Sudan: Is a rival government splitting the country in two?

Khartoum, Sudan - War-torn Sudan appears one step closer to breaking up. Last weekend, a Sudanese coalition led by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) announced the establishment of a rival government in Darfur.

The announcement had been widely expected after the RSF - which holds nearly all of the Darfur region and parts of the south - and other armed groups had formed the Sudan Founding Alliance (TASIS) in March. At the time, the alliance said it would soon establish a 'Government of Peace and Unity' in areas under its control.

But now, the newly formed 'Transitional Peace Government' with RSF leader General Mo-

hamed Hamdan Dagalo as president claims to have jurisdiction over all of Sudan.

In a statement, TASIS said it was committed 'to building an inclusive homeland and a new, secular, democratic, decentralised, and voluntarily unified Sudan founded on the principles of freedom, justice, and equality'.

Condemnation from AU, UN
Unsurprisingly, the internationally recognised government under the leadership of General Abdel-Fattah Burhan and Prime Minister Kamil al-Taib Idris - who control the capital, Khartoum, along with the north, east and centre of the country - has swiftly rejected the rival admin-



The announcement of a rival government in Sudan has some observers fearing intensified fighting

istration as 'artificial construct' and 'illegitimate entity'. The African Union with its 55 member states also said it would not recognise a 'so-called parallel government' in Sudan.

The AU pointed out that the establishment of the new government 'has serious consequences on the peace efforts and the existential future of the country'.

Similarly, the UN has warned that the existence of the new administration could deepen Sudan's fragmentation and complicate diplomatic efforts to end the war in Sudan.

The war began in April 2023 when Sudan's army chief Burhan and the RSF's Dagalo fell out over the inclusion of the RSF into the Sudanese Armed Forces, or SAF. "By announcing a government structure, the RSF is attempting to force itself into international discussions not as a militia to be disarmed, but as a political stakeholder with parallel governing authority," said Amgad Fareid Eltayeb of the Sudanese think tank Fikra for Studies and Development.

"Behind this lies a carefully timed and deeply political manoeuvre with far-reaching consequences for the narrative battle over legitimacy, governance and international engagement in Sudan's catastrophic war," he

told DW. In his view, the announcement was clearly timed to precede a planned meeting of the United States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. Representatives from those four countries had hoped to launch a political dialogue between Sudan's army and the paramilitary RSF in order to issue a joint statement calling for an end of the hostilities and for improved humanitarian access. But that meeting, originally planned for late July, was cancelled at short notice. A new date is yet to be determined with some diplomats suggesting it could be rescheduled for September. DW

Palestine warns against raid of Al-Aqsa Mosque by illegal settlers

Ramallah, Palestine - The Palestinian Foreign Ministry on Saturday warned of plans by illegal Israeli settler groups to stage a mass incursion into the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem on Sunday. The move coincides with what Jews mark as Tisha B'Av, a day of mourning they associate with the destruction of the First and Second Temples.

The ministry in a statement condemned the 'incitement campaigns and settler preparations' for the raid, saying the move reflects Israel's determination to target Al-Aqsa and gradually enforce control over the site.

It accused Israel of using religious occasions 'to advance its colonial and expansionist agenda, altering the historical and legal status quo of both Muslim and Christian holy sites'.

The ministry urged the international community to take 'concrete measures to protect the Palestinian people, especially Jerusalem and its sacred sites'.

The Jerusalem Governorate also warned of a 'dangerous escalation', saying the planned incursion is 'not an isolated religious act but part of a calculated effort to undermine Al-Aqsa's legal and historical standing and impose Israeli sovereignty'.

It stressed that extremist illegal Temple groups push for such raids every year 'in open defiance of the sanctity of the mosque'.

This year's calls come amid heightened incitement, only weeks after Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir ordered police to permit illegal settlers to sing and dance inside the mosque compound.

The Islamic Waqf, which administers the site, has reported a sharp rise in violations since Ben-Gvir took office in late 2022.

Since the start of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023, more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed and 7,000 injured in the West Bank by Israeli forces and illegal settlers, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

In a landmark opinion in July 2024, the International Court of Justice declared Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory illegal. It demanded the evacuation of all settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

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Latest Israeli attacks kill 27 in Gaza

Those killed included 16 people who were waiting for humanitarian aid, sources said

Gaza City/Ankara - At least 27 Palestinians were killed early on Saturday in a series of Israeli airstrikes and shootings across the Gaza Strip, including 16 people who were waiting for humanitarian aid, sources said.

According to medical sources, 12 bodies were transferred to the Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City after Israeli forces opened fire at the aid distribution area along the Netzarim Corridor.

Three Palestinians waiting for humanitarian aid near distribution centres on Al-Tina Street in southern Khan Younis were shot dead by Israeli forces.

In the town of Al-Zawaida, an Israeli airstrike targeted a family home killing five members of the same family including three children.

Another Palestinian was killed and several others wounded in a separate Israeli strike on a civilian gathering also in Al-Zawaida.

Meanwhile, three members of the same family were killed and others wounded when an Israeli drone dropped a bomb on tents sheltering displaced families near the Industrial Junction in northern Khan Younis. Separately, two women were killed in strike on a tent in northwest of Khan Younis.

Overnight, Israeli forces continued to demolish homes and facilities in the eastern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis, witnesses said.

In Rafah, Israeli forces opened fire on Palestinians



In the town of Al-Zawaida, an Israeli airstrike targeted a family home killing five members including three children

waiting for aid near a distribution centre operated by the controversial Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, killing one and injuring 25 others.

Rejecting international calls for a ceasefire, the Israeli army has pursued a brutal offensive on Gaza since October 7, 2023, killing more than 60,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children. The relentless bombing has destroyed the enclave and led to severe food

shortages and deaths by starvation. US envoy Steve Witkoff said he spent a few hours in Gaza on Friday to give US President Donald Trump 'a clear understanding of the humanitarian situation and help craft a plan to deliver food and medical aid to the people of Gaza'.

7 more die of starvation

Seven more Palestinians, in-

cluding a child, died from starvation and malnutrition in the Gaza Strip on Saturday, according to the Health Ministry in the besieged enclave.

The new deaths, recorded in the past 24 hours, brought the total number of starvation-related fatalities since October 2023 to 169, including 93 children, the ministry said in a statement.

It warned that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza continues to escalate as the Israeli blockade, now in its 18th year, prevents the entry of sufficient food and medical supplies.

"The situation is deteriorating rapidly," the ministry stressed, renewing calls for the international community and humanitarian organisations to intervene immediately to stop the suffering and deliver urgent aid.

Since March 2, Israeli authorities have completely sealed off all border crossings, intensifying famine-like conditions across the enclave.

Medicines from WHO

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza announced on Saturday that a convoy of trucks carrying critical medicines and medical consumables is scheduled to enter the Gaza Strip with coordina-

tion from the World Health Organization (WHO).

In a statement, the ministry said the shipment only includes medical supplies and no food items. "These supplies are of extreme importance and urgently required to continue life-saving treatment for patients and the injured," it added.

Aid from Italy

Italy will begin airdropping humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip starting August 9, Defence Minister Guido Crosetto has announced, state news agency ANSA reported.

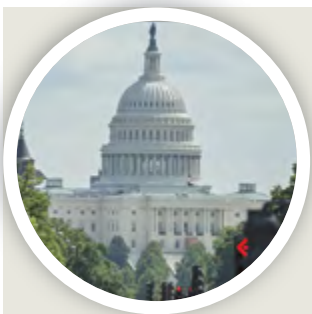
"I have given the go-ahead for a mission that will involve Army and Air Force resources to transport and airdrop essential goods destined for civilians in Gaza hard hit by the ongoing conflict," Crosetto said in a statement on Friday.

The operation will initially deploy an 'advance party' to coordinate preparatory activities and liaise with local authorities, according to the minister.

"Our first airdrops could take place as early as August 9, enabling the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to complete the procurement of foodstuffs and their transportation to Jordan," he added.

The aid delivery aims to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the besieged enclave, which continues to face severe shortages of food, water, and medical supplies due to the ongoing hostilities.

Anadolu Agency



Democrats urge Trump to end war in Gaza Strip

Washington, D.C., US - Four Democrats in the House of Representatives urged US President Donald Trump on Friday to end the war in the Gaza Strip by working to return all parties to the negotiation table.

Reps. Gregory Meeks, Rosa DeLauro, Jim Himes and Jamie Raskin sent a letter to Trump with a 'deep sense of urgency and moral responsibility'. "The ongoing war in Gaza has reached a point of profound humanitarian crisis, geopolitical instability, and perilous risk for all involved."

"We urged you to use the full weight of American diplomacy to bring about an immediate, just, and durable end to the conflict," lawmakers wrote in the letter.

They said the primary military objectives of Israel's war in Gaza 'have long since been achieved'.

"Now is the time for you to bring all relevant parties back to the negotiating table without delay," said the lawmakers.

Anadolu Agency

Syria: Can parliamentary elections create a new beginning?

Damascus, Syria - In mid-September, Syrians are set to elect their new parliament for the first time since the fall of the authoritarian Assad regime, which had shaped the country's politics for over half a century.

The new parliament in Damascus is expected to have 210 members, 60 more than the current provisional parliament, which was formed in March this year. The new parliament will serve for a transitional period of three years, at the end of which a new constitution is to be adopted. Foreign election observers are allowed.

Areas that are not under government control at present, such as the Kurdish-controlled regions and the predominantly Druze province of Sweida, which was recently shaken by violent unrest, will continue to have seats allocated on the basis of their population, according to the Syrian state news agency SANA.

Multiple challenges

The fact that elections are taking place is a truly historic moment, said Sarah Bassisseh, a political scientist researching at the University of Tübingen. "Syria is going through a difficult transition phase. But the fact that the country now has a new electoral system gives many Syrians great hope, even if they are aware of the difficulties associated with the elections, particularly the general loss of trust among smaller sectarian and ethnic groups in the government," she said.

This makes it all the more important for the country's political leader, Ahmed al-Sharaa, to convince these groups that the elections are transparent and legitimate.

Middle East expert Birgit Schaebler, historian and professor at the University of Erfurt and director of the Orient Institute in Beirut until 2022, takes a similar view.



Syria's interim president Ahmed al-Sharaa

To characterise the upcoming elections, she compares them to the practices under the ousted Assad regime: under the rule of former president Bashar Assad, two-thirds of the seats automatically went to the dominant Baath Party and its allies. "This meant they could never lose," she told DW.

"The parliament was correspondingly weak and it was primarily a debating club that rubber-stamped the president's directives," she explained.

That is now set to change: 140 members of parliament are to be elected in a democratic process by regional electoral committees, although the details are yet to be clarified.

The remaining 70 members of parliament are to be appointed by interim president Ahmed al-Sharaa.

However, the president's sig-

The new parliament in Damascus is expected to have 210 members, 60 more than the current provisional parliament, which was formed in March this year

nificant influence on the elections is seen particularly controversial in Syria, especially since not all citizens and population groups believe that he has truly distanced himself from his former militant Islamist links.

Are diversity, integration at stake?

"Even in his current government, Ahmed al-Sharaa surrounded himself with people

close to him," said Sarah Bassisseh. "It is composed of close associates," she explains.

In her view, the appointment of a Christian, Hind Kabawat, as Minister of Social Affairs was intended to demonstrate diversity and inclusivity. "But many Syrians are sceptical that this is a sincere gesture and isn't intended to distract from the fact that the government as a whole is heavily dominated by al-Sharaa's confidants," she told DW.

In turn, parts of the population fear that this policy will continue with regard to the new parliament. "It is at least unclear how diverse and inclusive it will ultimately be," Bassisseh said.

Scepticism also prevails due to the fact that the remaining 140 members of parliament will not be directly elected, but rather appointed by regional electoral committees.

However, Birgit Schaebler doubts that direct elections

would even be possible given the severely weakened infrastructure and logistics caused by 14 years of civil war.

She points out that al-Sharaa is sticking to the election date despite the recent violence in the Druze region. "He could have postponed it, yet the fact that he has not done so can certainly be seen as a positive sign," she said.

Moreover, Al-Sharaa is under pressure both nationally and internationally, according to the expert. "The government has lost a great deal of trust as a result of the recent violence and Al-Sharaa must regain that trust," she told DW.

The question of who he will appoint to the 70 non-elected seats is likely to be a key factor in this, Schaebler believes. "Of course, ultimately all population groups want to see themselves represented in parliament," she said.

DW

Bangladesh still polarised after Hasina's ouster

Expectations that last year's student-led uprising would bring change have not yet been met

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Sheikh Hasina resigned as Bangladesh's long-serving prime minister in August 2024 after weeks of deadly protests that started over a controversial quota system for government jobs, but morphed into a wider anti-government movement.

Hasina fled to India, while other members of her Awami League party were either arrested in connection with the protests or went into hiding.

Today, in the capital, Dhaka, the main office of the powerful opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by Hasina rival and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, is a hub of activity.

Many BNP members, including Zia, who had been imprisoned on charges including graft, vandalism and violence - which the BNP says were politically motivated during Hasina's 15-year tenure - are now free.

Abdus Salam, a prominent BNP leader, told DW that the only change he sees since Hasina fled to India in August 2024 is political freedom.

"We were in hiding during this time last year. We were not able to stay in our homes. We were facing numerous court cases. We didn't have a normal life.



The interim government is aiming to hold elections in April 2026, saying it needed time to implement constitutional reforms, changes to the electoral process and bring about progress in judicial independence and press freedoms

That suffering may have ended," he said.

In another busy Dhaka street, Ambia, a garment factory worker, told DW that while she admires the students who led last year's uprising to bring change in her country, she said her expectations have not yet been met.

"I hoped that the anarchy

would end, and that people wouldn't politicise every incident," said Ambia. "The political parties create many issues whenever something happens. I didn't expect that. The feeling of security hasn't returned yet."

The interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, a former banker and prominent economist, had been aiming to

hold elections in April 2026, saying it needed time to implement constitutional reforms, changes to the electoral process and bring about progress in judicial independence and press freedoms.

However, Yunus' administration did not rule out a possibility of polls in February, which has been demanded by the BNP and its allies.

Rights violations

Bangladesh has seen some economic progress, but human rights remain a concern.

London-based rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) has said the Yunus-led interim government is 'falling short' on its promise to improve human rights in Bangladesh.

"Some of the fear and repression that marked Sheikh Hasina's Awami League Party's 15-year rule, and abuses such as widespread enforced disappearances, appear to have ended," according to HRW.

"However, the interim gov-

ernment has used arbitrary detention to target perceived political opponents and has yet to deliver systemic reforms to protect human rights."

"The hope of the thousands who braved lethal violence a year ago when they opposed Sheikh Hasina's abusive rule to build a rights-respecting democracy remains unfulfilled," said Meenakshi Ganguly, HRW's deputy Asia director.

At the same time, Islamist parties have increased their visibility since Hasina's ouster.

The Yunus government also withdrew a ban on the country's

largest Islamist party last August, reversing a decision by the Hasina government.

A rally held by an influential Islamist group in May drew thousands to the streets of Dhaka. As many as 20,000 people turned out to show support for the Hefazat-e-Islam group as it laid out a list of demands for Bangladesh's interim government.

They opposed government proposals that include equal inheritance rights for women, a ban on polygamy and recognition of sex workers as labourers.

Foyez Ahammad, senior assistant press secretary for the interim government, told DW that HRW's expectation of reducing human rights violations to zero may not have been achieved, but significant progress has been made toward reducing it.

"HRW has expressed its dissatisfaction (with) many issues as their expectation after the era of Sheikh Hasina didn't meet to the level they expected," Ahammad said.

"Bangladesh was in a condition of massive human rights violations, where hundreds of secret prisons were operating, and enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings happened," he added, noting that press freedom 'went down to zero' under Hasina's rule.

"We have made progress from that situation within a short period. For example, media houses that were closed down in the past reopened," added Ahammad, who said that ordinary people are expressing their opinions openly, including on social media. DW

MONGOLIAN DESERT LURING TOURISTS



People riding camels at a desert scenic area in Dalad Banner of Erdos City, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Kubuqi desert in Erdos City has entered its peak tourist season in midsummer, attracting numerous tourists from around the country to visit (Xinhua)

Ex-Colombian president gets 12-year house arrest

Bogota, Colombia - Former right-wing Colombian President Alvaro Uribe Velez has been sentenced to 12 years of house arrest in a decision delivered on Friday by Judge Sandra Heredia.

Uribe is also disqualified from holding public office for eight years and must pay a fine.

Uribe, 73, received the maximum sentence after being found guilty of witness tampering and procedural fraud.

It marks a historic moment as the first time a former Colombian president has been convicted and sentenced for a crime.

Throughout the process, the former president has consistently maintained his innocence.

Uribe's defence team has announced it will appeal the decision. If the Superior Court of Bogota maintains Heredia's ruling, the case could escalate its appeal to the Supreme Court of Justice, where it began.



The trial originated 13 years ago from a political debate in Congress between Uribe and Senator Ivan Cepeda of the governing party.

Cepeda insinuated Uribe's alleged links to extreme right-wing paramilitary groups in Colombia. In response, Uribe denounced Cepeda before the Supreme Court of Justice, alleging that the senator irregularly sought testimonies from imprisoned former paramilitaries across the country to link him to the illegal armed

groups. But in 2018, the Supreme Court of Justice found insufficient evidence to proceed against Cepeda and closed his case. In the same ruling, the Court ordered an investigation into Uribe for alleged witness tampering to discredit his political adversary. The former leader was effectively accused of manipulating testimony. In 2020, the Court ordered Uribe's home detention. Anadolu Agency

Peace on Korean Peninsula: Seoul opens door, Pyongyang holds leverage

Seoul, South Korea - South Korean President Lee Jae-myung's early overtures to Pyongyang have raised cautious hopes for a thaw in relations on the Korean Peninsula, but experts say the path forward depends squarely on North Korea's next move.

As Lee signals a willingness to engage, the question looming over Seoul's diplomacy is whether the North will respond constructively or revert to provocation.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, when North Korea invaded the South. It ended in July 1953 with an armistice, but no peace treaty was signed, leav-

ing the two sides technically still at war.

Decades of diplomatic efforts have produced limited and short-lived results. Still, President Lee has emphasised his commitment to dialogue.

"The most secure path to national security is building a state that never needs to go to war - in other words, peace," he said.

Shortly after Lee's inauguration, North Korea halted propaganda broadcasts at the border, mirroring a similar move by Seoul.

The rare reciprocal gesture led to speculation over whether tensions might ease.



Lee Jae-myung

Experts urge caution despite signals

Ramon Pacheco Pardo, a professor of international relations at

King's College London, said Lee appears serious about improving ties with the North, but geopolitical shifts complicate the outlook.

"South Korea will need to do more than just suspend propaganda to bring Pyongyang to the negotiating table," he told Anadolu. "The close ties between North Korea and Russia are making Seoul proceed with great caution."

Pardo said the suspension of loudspeaker broadcasts is still 'an important step toward easing tensions', even if it is not unprecedented. "Ultimately, I believe inter-Korean dialogue will happen sooner or later," he said,

adding that it could serve the interests of both sides.

Key-young Son, a scholar at Korea University's Institute for Asian Studies, echoed that view, saying the recent gestures are largely symbolic and far from decisive.

Whether they evolve into substantive steps remains uncertain.

Pragmatic approach from Seoul

According to Son, President Lee's policy may reflect a more measured and realistic stance compared to past administrations.

"His political background suggests a preference for tangible,

phased progress over grand symbolic initiatives," Son said.

While the early moves signal intent, he said it's unclear whether they will lead to formal negotiations or broader normalisation.

North Korea's role remains decisive

Son emphasised that Lee's approach is grounded in conditional pragmatism - not ideology.

"He has made it clear that he does not intend to pursue unilateral communication," Son said.

"As long as Pyongyang avoids significantly escalating tensions, I don't expect Seoul to rush into

any agreements."

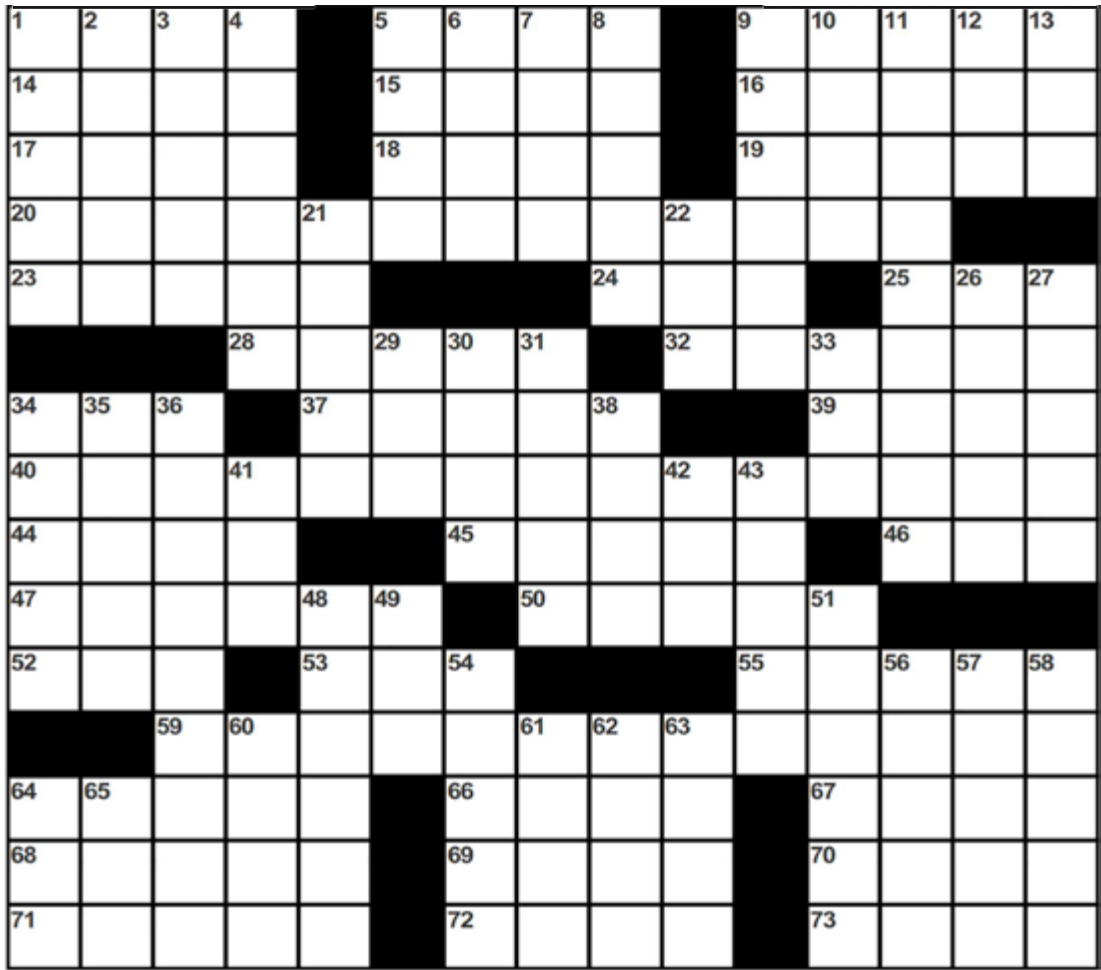
He also said North Korea's reaction will ultimately determine whether the diplomatic door opens or shuts.

External actors will also shape the trajectory.

"Any moves toward normalisation between the Koreans will draw close attention from countries like the US and Japan," Son said.

He added that both US President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba could respond with initiatives of their own to shape developments on the Peninsula. Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1) English dude
5) Instrument with some heft
9) Not a heavyweight 14) Frau's partner
15) Got dirty going home?
16) Blotto
17) Jason's ship
18) Title character with the King of Siam
19) Battery terminal
20) Dilly-dalliers' activities
23) "Come in!"
24) " ... and you know the rest"
25) Spigot
28) Perform incorrectly
32) Force out of office
34) Word with "photo" or "black"
37) Extremely long films
39) Voice in the choir
40) The art of putting things off for tomorrow
44) Member of the Jackson 5
45) Glitterati member, briefly
46) Bawl
47) Acted badly
50) Like illegally parked cars, often

52) Don'ts partners
53) "Much _ About Nothing"
55) Come to mind
59) Delays leading to rescheduling
64) Bloodhound's guide
66) Material in a gym
67) Mine entrance
68) At a good clip, in poetry
69) Pre-owned
70) 5,280 feet
71) Word with "film" or "home"
72) Cushiony forest growth
73) Fortune-teller, supposedly
DOWN
1) Make sore by rubbing
2) "Great white" bird
3) Slangue
4) For the time being
5) The last one was Nicholas II
6) Arm bone
7) Type of cherry
8) "Love is blind," e.g.
9) Batting position
10) Type of valuable vase
11) Relating to the Pope
12) Hallucinogenic drug

13) Caustic drain opener
21) Less humid
22) "... be an honor"
26) Mary of "The Maltese Falcon"
27) Indiana's state flower
29) Where to get a muddy face
30) LP or CD, e.g.
31) Santa's reindeer, collectively
33) Butter unit
34) Made a choice
35) First-rate, slangily
36) In a way
38) Fodder holder on a farm
41) Bunk
42) Not yet unwrapped
43) Crosswise, on deck
48) Resurrection Day
49) Banned bug killer
51) Enters REM sleep
54) Codeine source
56) Low-budget film, often
57) Attendance counter
58) Banana oil, for one
60) Fairy-tale opener
61) About
62) Words of denial
63) Concludes
64) First name on "Cheers"
65) Bean counter, for short

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Do you tell the truth or take that dare? If it's up to you, you say yes to both! No challenge can stump you for long. You bring it to all chores, quizzes, or competitions that leave your lessers scratching their heads in confusion. You're completely fearless when it comes to taking on any rules, and you're quite willing to go way above and beyond, particularly if it lets you exercise a new talent or skill. Who can keep up with you?

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
You're expansive, genuine, and full of vigor, and that should set the tone for your day. Making new contacts and finding new ways to learn more about your people or those you'd bring closer is easier than usual for you too. With this kind of lovely warmth, it's all a piece of cake. Tonight, try to set up some fun activity so everyone can get together and relax.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
One thing is vital for you to get much satisfaction from life and it's not cash, romance, or rock stardom. No, it's just a good sense of humor. With that, everything feels like a win. Without it, everything feels like a distraction. Luckily, you can appreciate the silly side of almost anything, and that talent is infectious. You're an especially fun companion right about now, and most people are glad to be close to you and your positive attitude.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
They say that water always seeks its own level, and your energy delivers on that lesson. Like-minded people should help you get your life in motion now. Seek out and bond with those you know to be similar or compatible with your personal style. Opposites certainly do attract, but at times like these they could just draw more go-nowhere conflict than anything else.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
You have a really hard time dealing with it when you see someone being treated unfairly. It totally offends your sense of justice. For now, you're feeling extra feisty and totally up for a big, bruising fight. You just need a mask and a cape to turn into a superhero defending anyone who's been misused or abused. Your motives are impeccable and your powers are tremendous, so go right ahead and find someone to protect

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Listen carefully and you might be able to hear some grumbles of discontent from colleagues or even your boss. Don't worry too much, but try to keep their objections in mind as you go about marshaling resources for the next big push you've got to take care of. You work hard and you need access to the highest quality supplies to do things right, but others could feel like they're being left out.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
Right now, your energy is prompting you to throw a party, go party hopping, bop to your inner beat, or find some way to make the day more fun. You may see party hats everywhere and want to try one on yourself, and as soon as possible. Get all your essential work out of the way, then gather your people in a heartbeat. You need to get out there and have some fun!

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
You're in the right place when it comes to socializing. Try planning a meal with some old pals you haven't seen in forever or a big night out with your favorite people. Invite everyone, as big group get-togethers are exactly what you need right now. Take the lead. Your people are thrilled that you're calling on them. They know that when you're behind it any event is a blast.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You know what happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object, right? You know it can be a lot more fun than people give it credit for, especially if both parties know how to give. When it comes to your relationships, don't ask how much you can get. Try instead asking how much you can both benefit. If you both can give a little, you should move forward quite a lot.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
You're feeling a bit too much impulsively extravagant right now, but it sure feels good! Go right ahead and enjoy these freakishly wild and wacky times, but do remember to return to business as usual before the end of the day. Hold off on the low humor, major purchases on your credit card, or telling off your friends for the hundredth time. After all, you do still need to deal with these people tomorrow.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
You need to tune out from the madness a bit and give yourself some quiet time. Take a break from the dramatic fireworks going on at work or at home and be sure not to wade into the fray, even if you're positive you could smooth things over. You're quite persuasive, of course, but for now, your special brand of personal energy could actually intensify the situation to an explosive level that has unpleasant results for all involved.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Keep pushing even if it gets repetitive, especially if someone keeps bugging you who just doesn't get the message. Be totally firm and draw clear boundaries that they can't cross, or you could find yourself stuck right in the middle of their insane drama as a supporting character. Back off and keep your mind occupied with your own matters if you want to take care of it quickly.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. In July 2021, UNESCO designated four South Korean sites as a world natural heritage site?
A. Mediaeval temples
B. Tidal mudflats
C. Prehistoric settlement sites
D. Lakes

2. What is the name of a calculating machine that originally consisted of beans or stones moved in grooves in sand or on tablets of wood, stone, or metal?
A. Abacus
B. Slide rule
C. Chisanbop
D. Difference engine

3. What award is the equivalent of the Oscars for British industries involved in film, television, video games and forms of animation?
A. Emmys
B. BAFTAs
C. Tonys
D. Grammys

Answers: 1.B 2.A 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

N	T	W	O
O	I	T	G
B	D	G	L
D	H	O	Y

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

SOLUTION
20-25 words: Excellent,
15-20 words: Very good,
10-15 words: Good,
5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

		9	7			1		
8	7	5			6		3	
			9	5	8			
	2	8	5					
3			2		4			1
					1	5	8	
			4	1	9			
	3		8			6	2	4
		7			3	9		

WORD BUILDER



You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

5	1	6	3	2	9	7	8	4
4	2	9	5	7	8	1	3	6
3	7	8	6	1	4	2	9	5
2	8	1	5	9	3	4	6	7
1	6	7	4	8	2	9	5	3
9	3	7	6	5	8	2	1	4
4	6	7	8	1	3	5	9	2
6	9	2	3	7	1	4	5	8
8	5	1	2	3	7	6	4	9

FAVOURITE SON BIDS FAREWELL

Tottenham captain Son says he is leaving club

Seoul, South Korea - Tottenham Hotspur captain Son Heung-min will bring his 10-year spell with the Premier League club to an end this summer, the 33-year-old South Korean said on Saturday.

Son, who is under contract until 2026, led Spurs to their first trophy in 17 years with their win over Manchester United in the Europa League final in May, having joined the North London club from Bayer Leverkusen in 2015.

While Son did not disclose his next destination, British media have linked him with a move to Major League Soccer club Los Angeles FC.

"I have decided to leave the team this summer," Son said at a press conference ahead of Spurs' pre-season friendly against Newcastle United in Seoul on Sunday.

"I think it was one of the most difficult decisions I've ever made in my football career. Playing football and being with one team for 10 years is something I am very proud of, but I think I gave my all to the team every single day.

"I did my best on the field and off the field, and by winning the



Son Heung-min celebrates with the Europa League trophy, Tottenham Hotspur's first title in 17 years, in May

Europa League, I thought I'd done everything I could and achieved."

Son has made 454 appearances for Spurs and scored 173 goals. He won the Premier League Golden Boot in the 2021-22 season. "It was the place where I grew a lot as a football player and a person, so I have a very grateful heart."

Manager Thomas Frank said Son was "truly Spurs legend in every aspect".

"I like that the club has been open to it because it is never, never easy to find that perfect timing ... I think it is probably the perfect timing going out on a high," he added. Son said winning a title in Europe with Spurs "felt like I had achieved everything I possibly could".

He made his Tottenham debut in September 2015 and went on to make 333 Premier League appearances. He scored 127 times in the league - level with former Chelsea striker Jimmy Floyd Has-selbaink at 16th in the league's all-time scorers list, above the likes of Dwight Yorke, Steven Gerrard and Ian Wright.

Son formed a memorable attacking partnership with Harry Kane, now at Bayern Munich, and the pair hold the record for the most goal combinations in the Premier League. The pair registered a record 47 combinations, Son scoring 24 goals to Kane's 23. In a prolific two-season period - 2020-21 and 2021-22 - they linked up 21 times for goals.



Victor Osimhen

Galatasaray sign Osimhen from Napoli in record deal

Galatasaray have signed striker Victor Osimhen from Serie A side Napoli for 75 million euros (85.74 million dollars), the Super Lig champions announced on Thursday, making the Nigerian the most expensive incoming transfer in Turkish football.

Osimhen's transfer shattered the previous record set by Fenerbahce when they signed Youssef En-Nesyri from Sevilla on a five-year contract for 20 million euros in July last year.

As part of the agreement, 10% of any future profit from Osimhen's next transfer will be paid to SSC Napoli, Galatasaray said.

"A four-year contract has been signed with the player, starting from the 2025-2026 season" Galatasaray said.

According to the agreement, the 26-year-old will receive net guaranteed salary of 15.0 million euros for each season.

Osimhen will also get a net loyalty bonus of 1.0 million euros per season and 5.0 million euros as image rights payments — compensating for the use of his name, image, and likeness in the club's branding and promotional activities.

Napoli also confirmed the terms of the deal.

Osimhen had been linked with a move away from Napoli last year but the Nigeria international had seen a permanent move collapse on deadline day of the close season transfer window.

He subsequently joined Galatasaray on loan for the 2024-25 season, where he delivered in an outstanding campaign with 37 goals and eight assists in 41 appearances across all competitions, leading them to a 25th Turkish league title .



Milan Skriniar (R) with Nelson Semedo

Fenerbahce sign Slovakia defender Skriniar from PSG

Slovakia defender Milan Skriniar has left French champions Paris St Germain to join Fenerbahce on a four-year contract, the clubs said on Thursday.

Fenerbahce said that Skriniar, on loan with the Istanbul-based club since January, will receive an annual salary of 8.0 million euros (\$9.13 million). The transfer fee was not disclosed.

"Milan Skriniar... has completed a permanent move to Fenerbahce SK in Türkiye" PSG said in a statement.

The 30-year-old joined PSG

from Serie A club Inter Milan in 2023 and helped Fenerbahce to second place in the Turkish top flight last season.

Portuguese international Nelson Semedo also signed with the club, managed by Jose Mourinho, on a two-year contract.

The 31-year-old defender previously played for Barcelona and Benfica and joined the Turkish side on a free transfer after his contract with Premier League club Wolverhampton Wanderers expired. (\$1=0.876 euros)



Helio Sousa

Kuwait appoint Sousa as national team coach

Kuwait City - Portuguese Helio Sousa has been appointed as coach of the Kuwait men's team, the country's football association (KFA) announced on Thursday.

The 55-year-old succeeds Juan Antonio Pizzi, whose contract expired earlier this year.

"Helio Sousa is the coach of the Kuwait national football team. Welcome to Kuwait," KFA said on X without providing further details.

Local media reported that Sousa has signed a contract with the KFA until 2027, reportedly worth \$1.6 million per year.

Sousa previously enjoyed a successful stint with Bahrain, guiding the nation to the West Asian Football Federation Championship title in 2019 before securing their maiden Gulf Cup later that year.

Real's request to postpone LaLiga opener denied

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid will begin their LaLiga campaign with a home game against Osasuna as scheduled after Spain's federation (RFEF) rejected their appeal to postpone the August 19 fixture on Thursday, local media reported.

Real had requested a longer rest period and pre-season after playing in the Club World Cup in the U.S., where they lost to Paris St Germain in the semi-finals on July 9, according to the report.

An RFEF judge ruled that in

order to preserve the integrity of the competition only a case of force majeure would warrant a change to the official calendar, and that Real's case did not justify an alteration, Europa Press news agency reported.

"Finally, it should be added

that although the requesting club claims to have the agreement of the opposing party, CA Osasuna, there is no record of this entity having responded to the request made by this judge," the sole judge was quoted as saying in his ruling by the Europa Press.

Milner to honour his former Liverpool teammate Jota with new jersey number

Brighton & Hove Albion's James Milner will don the number 20 shirt this season as a tribute to former Liverpool teammate Diogo Jota, who died in a car crash in Spain last month.

Jota and his brother Andre Silva were killed in early July when their Lamborghini veered off the road and burst into flames in northwestern Spain.

The Portuguese forward had worn the number 20 during his time at Liverpool, where he and Milner played together for three seasons before the veteran midfielder's move to Brighton in 2023.

"Once I heard Carlos (Baleba) was looking to change his number and 20 was available, I wanted to do it as a mark of respect and obviously pay tribute



James Milner (R) with Diogo Jota

to Diogo Jota," Milner said.

"(He was) an amazing player I was fortunate to play with and a great friend as well. So it'd be a great honour to wear his number in the Premier League."

Liverpool are permanently retiring the number 20 after consultation with the player's wife Rute and family. The squad number will not be used at any level, including the women's team and academy.

The 39-year-old Milner recently agreed a one-year contract extension with Brighton and is chasing Premier League history of his own.

With 638 Premier League appearances already to his name, he sits within striking distance of Gareth Barry's all-time record of 653 games.

Algerian forward Bakrar joins Dinamo Zagreb from New York City FC

New York , US - New York City FC announced the transfer of forward Mounsef Bakrar to Croatia's GNK Dinamo Zagreb on Friday.

The 24-year-old Algerian joined NYCFC in July 2023 and scored 10 goals in 70 matches across all competitions.

"We would like to thank Mounsef for all his contributions during his time with the Club,"

Mounsef brought great energy and a strong work ethic every day, and his commitment to the team was evident from the moment he arrived. We wish Mounsef all the best

DAVID LEE, NYCFC SPORTING DIRECTOR

NYCFC sporting director David Lee said. "Mounsef brought great energy and a strong work ethic

every day, and his commitment to the team was evident from the moment he arrived. We believe

that a transfer back to Europe at this time is best for all parties and we wish Mounsef all the best in the next stage of his career."

Bakrar scored the game-winner in a 2-1 defeat of the New York Red Bulls in the Hudson River Derby on May 18, 2024.

"It's been an incredible experience playing for New York City. I want to thank everyone at the Club for making me feel at home

from day one," Bakrar said. "I take with me wonderful memories from my time here and thank all of my teammates, staff and fans for all the support. I'll be following the team closely and wishing everyone all the best for the rest of the season."

Bakrar previously played in Croatia for Istra 1961 from 2022-23, netting eight goals with three assists in 33 matches.



Mounsef Bakrar



Max Verstappen

Red Bull reprimanded after Verstappen throws towel onto the track

Budapest, Hungary - Formula One stewards reprimanded Red Bull on Friday for a bizarre incident involving Max Verstappen throwing a face towel out of his car and onto the track during Hungarian Grand Prix practice.

The four-times world champion was summoned after the second session at the Hungaroring as stewards reviewed the video evidence.

"Shortly after Car 1 was released from its garage, the driver of Car 1 (Verstappen) was observed to have thrown a towel out of the cockpit," they said in a statement. "The driver explained that while in the garage, the

face towel had slipped from his lap to the side of the seat and the team was unaware that it remained in the cockpit.

"When the driver realised it was there, he moved to the far right of the track and attempted to throw it as far away from the car and the track as possible."

The towel landed on the asphalt, however, and remained there to the end of the session.

Leclerc on pole

Charles Leclerc put Ferrari on pole position for the Hungarian Grand Prix on Saturday with McLaren's Formula One leader Oscar Piastri alongside on the front row.

Kaylee the conqueror

McKeown wins 200m gold to complete backstroke double

Singapore - World record holder Kaylee McKeown underlined her status as the undisputed queen of backstroke swimming as she added the 200 meters gold to her triumph in the 100 at the world championships in Singapore on Saturday.

Once again it was American Regan Smith looking to take down McKeown, only to be reeled in on the last lap as the Australian dominator clocked 2:03.33, the third fastest swim of all time.

It was nearly a second better than Smith (2:04.29), who had taken silver behind McKeown in the 100 and 200 at the Paris Olympics and was runner-up to her again in the 100 in Singapore. Just like in Paris, McKeown's win came straight after compatriot Cameron McEvoy stormed to his second 50 freestyle title in 21.14 seconds, becoming the oldest Australian swimming world champion at the age of 31.

Fastest off the blocks, McEvoy once again denied Ben Proud (21.26) gold, having beaten the Briton to the Olympic title by a fingertip in Paris exactly a year ago.

A new dad since Paris, McEvoy thanked his wife Maddi and gave a shout-out to his baby boy Hartley.

"It's a very different life," he said. "I've got to navigate it, I'll figure it out. But it's cool to have that at home and still be here doing what I love."

Gretchen Walsh kept the U.S. team medal haul ticking upwards with a dominant victory in the 50



Kaylee McKeown clocked 2:03.33, the third fastest swim of all time to win 200 meters backstroke gold at the world championships on Saturday

McKeown's win came straight after compatriot Cameron McEvoy stormed to his second 50 freestyle title in 21.14 seconds, becoming the oldest Australian swimming world champion at the age of 31

butterfly, adding to her 100 title in Singapore.

Touching the wall in 24.83 seconds, Walsh was nearly half a second better than runner-up Alex Perkins, who set an Australian record of 25.31.

Earlier on Friday, flying Dutchwoman Marrit Steenbergen stunned Mollie O'Callaghan to win the 100 metres freestyle

while Olympic champion Kate Douglass posted the second-fastest 200 breaststroke in history to win gold.

O'Callaghan has already won three gold medals this week, taking her overall tally to 11, and one more would see her move past Ian Thorpe to become the most successful Australian swimmer at the world championships.

However, she found herself in fourth place after the first 50 in Friday's final and was unable to claw back the deficit as Steenbergen touched first in 52.55 seconds, 0.12 ahead of O'Callaghan with American Torri Huske (52.89) third.

Steenbergen's victory made her the first swimmer to successfully defend their title from last year's world championships.

O'Callaghan, who won gold in the 200 on Wednesday, said her exertions from Thursday's programme affected her. In addition to the 100 semi-finals, she also anchored Australia home to win gold in the 4x200 relay.

"I'm tired, I'm not going to lie,"

she told Australian broadcaster Nine Network. "None of the girls did what I did last night. I'm happy to walk away with a medal.

"I'm pretty happy, and it just shows the strength that I have and the work I can do in the future knowing that I've barely done any training for this."

South African Pieter Coetzee was also denied a double in the men's backstroke as reigning Olympic and 2023 world champion Hubert Kos powered to victory in the 200, posting a time of 1:53.19. Both swimmers were on world record pace at the 150 metres mark before the Hungarian inched ahead and touched the wall first by 0.17 seconds.

Sevastova stuns defending champion Pegula in Canadian Open third round

Montreal, Canada - Twice defending champion Jessica Pegula crashed out of the Canadian Open after losing to Anastasija Sevastova 3-6 6-4 6-1 in the third round on Friday, while six-times major winner Iga Swiatek marched on with a dominant 6-2 6-2 win over Eva Lys.

The 35-year-old Sevastova, ranked 386 in the world, will next face four-times Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka, who took out Latvian 22nd seed Jelena Ostapenko 6-2 6-4.

"I don't know," Sevastova said after upsetting third seed Pegula.

"Somehow, I was down 2-0 in the second set and started to play better and better. Third set, I played really good. Just trying to stay on the court as long as possible."

Wimbledon runner-up



Anastasija Sevastova

Amanda Anisimova, seeded fifth in Montreal, carved out a comfortable win over Emma Raducanu, beating the 2021 U.S. Open champion 6-2 6-1.

Anisimova's win over Raducanu is her first, having lost their previous two encounters.

She will next face Ukrainian Elina Svitolina.

In the men's draw, American second seed Taylor Fritz made light work of local hope Gabriel Diallo, beating the 27th seed 6-4 6-2.

Fritz, who is eyeing a third title of the season after triumphs in Eastbourne and Stuttgart, will next take on Czech 19th seed Jiri Lehecka.

American fourth seed Ben Shelton, however, was made to work hard by countryman Brandon Nakashima before managing a 6-7(8) 6-2 7-6(5) win.

Rublev, Tiafoe advance in Toronto

Toronto, Canada - Sixth-seeded Andrey Rublev of Russia shrugged off a first-set loss to defeat No. 28 Lorenzo Sonego of Italy 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 in third-round action on Friday at the National Bank Open in Toronto.

Rublev had six aces among 29 winners in the victory.

"The main thing today, I was able to be mentally really good," Rublev told the Tennis Channel. "After the first set, I didn't (go) down. I was, like, OK, let's keep fighting, keep being positive ... then I was able to create more things, like to go to the net."

Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina pulled off an upset as the No. 20 seed knocked out 12th-seeded Jakub Mensik of Czechia 6-2, 6-4. The Spaniard converted all four of his break points as he won 49.1 percent of his returns (28 of 57) compared to Mensik's 29.2 percent (14 of 48). His reward is a fourth-round match versus Rublev.



Andrey Rublev

Japan's Yamashita storms into lead at Women's Open

Porthcawl, Wales - Japan's Miyu Yamashita surged into the lead at the AIG Women's Open with a superb second round seven-under 65 at Royal Porthcawl on Friday, with compatriot and joint overnight leader Rio Takeda three shots adrift.

England's Lottie Woad, the bookmakers' favourite despite the tournament being her first major as a professional, mounted a charge but a triple-bogey at the 16th meant she settled for a two-under 70 to be nine shots adrift at the halfway point.

Reigning champion Lydia Ko of New Zealand was in grave danger of missing the cut after a disappointing round of 73 left her two over for the tournament. Definitely missing the weekend

is 2023 winner Lilia Vu who finished at seven over par.

World number one Nelly Korda struggled with her putting in an even-par 72 round that left her level with Woad.

Yamashita took full advantage of the tranquil early morning conditions on the South Wales coast, setting the tone for a scintillating round with birdies at her opening two holes.

Three more birdies around the turn, another at the 13th and then a final flourish at the 18th where she sank yet another birdie putt meant she walked off with a commanding lead ahead of freshening winds expected for the later groups.

Takeda, who began the day on five-under alongside compatriot



Miyu Yamashita

Yamashita took full advantage of the tranquil morning conditions, setting the tone for a scintillating round with birdies at her opening two holes

Eri Okayama, slipped back with a bogey at the sixth but a tap-in eagle at the par-five ninth got her back on track.

Two more birdies on the way back in kept this year's U.S. Open runner-up on the heels of Yamashita.

Okayama was teeing off her

second round later.

Once again, the galleries flocked to see new sensation Woad in action as she set about making a move up the leaderboard.

The 21-year-old began in steady fashion with a run of regulation pars before the birdies began to flow with four in five holes, including a majestic long putt on the 14th.

But her momentum hit the buffers at the tough 16th where her second shot found thick rough and after attempting to hack out she then took a drop on her way to a seven.

"I was angry after that but I had to move on quickly," Woad, who missed a birdie putt at the 18th, told Sky Sports.

JAISBALL!

Opener hits ton as India extend lead despite England's fightback

London, England - Yashasvi Jaiswal struck a composed sixth Test century to anchor India's second innings on Day 3 at The Oval, guiding them to 304-6 at tea and a commanding 281-run lead in the final Test on Saturday.

Under gloomy London skies, the opener continued his superb series form with a patient 118, holding India's innings together even as wickets fell around him. His knock, marked by resilience and restraint, put India firmly in control before England clawed back with three wickets in the afternoon session.

Jaiswal resumed the day alongside nightwatchman Akash Deep, and the pair frustrated England with a 107-run stand. Deep, making only his second Test appearance, brought grit and flair to the crease, reaching his maiden Test fifty with a flurry of boundaries before falling for 66 to a sharp rising delivery from Jamie Overton.

The morning belonged to India, but England showed renewed purpose after lunch. Gus Atkinson struck with the very first delivery of the session, trapping India captain Shubman Gill lbw for 11. Karun Nair was struck painfully on the hand the next ball but battled on, surviving a drop in the slips before eventually edging behind to Jamie Smith for 17.

England's fielding, however, remained sloppy — six catches went down, including a tough leg-

slip chance off Jaiswal. The opener eventually perished attempting an expansive cut, only to be well held by Overton at deep backward point off Josh Tongue. Ravindra Jadeja (26*) and Dhruv Jurel (25*) ensured there were no further setbacks before the break, extending India's lead toward match-winning territory. England, already without the injured Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer and Chris Woakes, found little consistency despite flashes of promise.

With two days to play, and unpredictable weather lurking, India remain favourites to level the series 2-2, but England's late fightback keeps the contest alive.

Earlier, India roared back into contention on an exhilarating day two as their seamers restricted England to a 23-run lead after the hosts had threatened to run away with a match that the tourists need to win to square the series.

After mopping up India's brittle tail in less than 30 minutes in the morning, openers Zac Crawley and Ben Duckett raced to 92-0 in 12 overs in a blistering return of Bazball.

However, continuing the back and forth theme of the entire series, India responded as their bowlers ran in relentlessly to peg England back to 247. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal then scored quickly in a potentially awkward last 90 minutes, ending unbeaten on 51 with India closing on 75-2,



Inda's Yashasvi Jaiswal celebrates his century against England on Saturday

Jaiswal resumed the day alongside nightwatchman Akash Deep, and the pair frustrated England with a 107-run stand. Deep, making only his second Test appearance, brought grit and flair to the crease

52 runs ahead to leave the pivotal match fascinatingly poised.

Another fabulously undulating day began with India resuming at 204-6 but soon skittled for 224 as pace bowler Gus Atkinson took five wickets in his first Test since May.

It was an all-too-familiar collapse by the tourists as Karun Nair fell lbw for 57 and Washington Sundar was caught for 26. Atkinson then bowled Mohammed Siraj and had Prasidh Krishna caught behind, both for ducks, to finish with 5-33.

England set about their reply in their usual, swashbuckling fashion, exemplified by Duckett's extraordinary reverse hook for six off Akash Deep.

They reached 50 in seven overs - the fastest 50 opening partnership England have ever managed in a Test - but fell just short of the 100 as Duckett was caught behind reversing for 43.



New Zealand's Mitchell Santner celebrates with teammates after taking a Zimbabwe wicket

New Zealand thrash Zimbabwe in first Test

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe - New Zealand won the first Test against Zimbabwe inside three days, securing victory at the Queens Sports Club by nine wickets after skittling out the hosts on Friday.

Stand-in skipper Mitchell Santner took four wickets as Zimbabwe were dismissed for 165 runs in their second innings after being 31-2 overnight, leaving New Zealand needing only eight

runs in their second innings to win the test.

They achieved the target in 14 balls but not before opener Devon Conway was bowled in the first over by Newman Nyamhuri for four.

Henry Nicholls hit the winning run in the third over after tea on the third day to see the tourists go 1-0 up in the two-test series.

Zimbabwe started the day with hopes of wiping out a 158-

run first innings deficit and setting a tough target for New Zealand to chase but they were always up against it, even if the tourists were two bowlers short.

All-rounder Nathan Smith suffered an abdominal strain on the second day and then Will O'Rourke did not bowl after lunch on Friday because of stiffness in his back.

Zimbabwe added only three runs to their overnight score before Nick Welch was caught behind off O'Rourke and by lunch Zimbabwe were tottering on 114-6, still 44 runs adrift.

They had by then lost leading scorer Sean Williams, who tickled the ball down leg to be caught behind for 49, and captain Craig Ervine, who got a feint edge to Matt Henry and was out for 22.

Henry, who took 6-39 in the first innings, persisted as the lone pace man after lunch and dismissed Zimbabwe's last recognised batsman Sikandar Raza cheaply to ensure a nine-wicket match haul.

Santner, captaining the Kiwis for the first time in the absence of the injured Tom Latham, mopped up the tail as he took the last three wickets for figures of 4-27 off 17.1 overs.

Henry took 3-51 in the second innings and O'Rourke 3-28 off 10 overs before his injury.

CLASSIFIEDS

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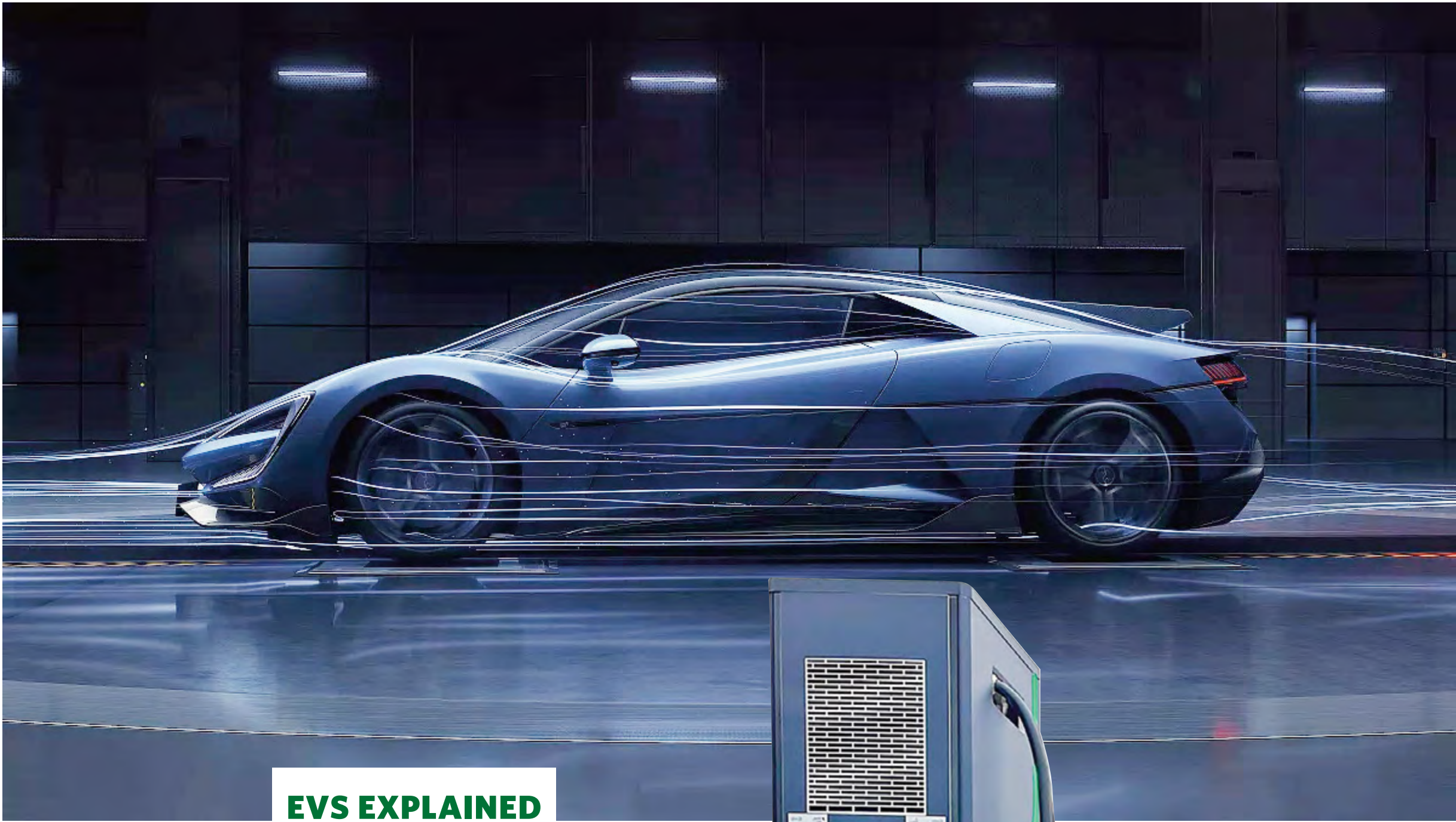
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EVS EXPLAINED

PLUG IN AND PLUNGE AHEAD



Ever wondered how electric vehicles (EVs) work and what makes them different from the vehicles we drive today? Why is everyone making a song and dance about electric vehicles? These questions might worry many a motorist who prefer to remain stuck to the conventional car driven by fuel.

We've all heard of Elon Musk, the somewhat eccentric, technology-loving entrepreneur. The billionaire is hardly ever out of the headlines just now, especially given his role in Donald Trump's presidential election campaign in recent months. But the main reason he came to our attention in the first place was by putting electric vehicles (EVs) back on the map with his company Tesla.

Sales of EVs in Europe reached an all-time high in 2023 with nearly 3.2 million units sold, an increase of 20 per cent compared to the previous year, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

But how do they work and are they dramatically different from the cars we drive every day? Do EVs hold their value? Here's how electric cars fare on the second-hand market:

What's under the hood?

There are, of course, differences between a traditional fossil fuel-powered vehicle and an EV, and most of them are under the hood.

The first major difference is the car's motor. In a petrol vehicle, there is an internal combustion engine (ICE) that works on the principle

HOW DO ELECTRIC CARS WORK AND ARE THEY REALLY BETTER THAN PETROL OR DIESEL CARS? HERE ARE SOME BASIC FACTS

when a mixture of fuel and air is compressed and ignited, an explosion is created.

In a very simplistic way, the energy from this explosion is then used to power the engine and move the vehicle forward. In an electric car, on the other hand, the motor is electric and works using electromagnets.

The second difference is, of course, the battery. To supply electricity to the motor and allow it to operate, electric vehicles are equipped with batteries. These are mainly based on lithium-ion technology, similar to what is inside your mobile phone.

The final key piece is the inverter. The current delivered by the battery is a direct current, but the motor, like your hairdryer, needs alternating current to operate. And that's exactly what the inverter does, turning direct current into alternating current.

Is everything as it seems with EVs?

The main advantage of electric vehi-

cles is that they are purportedly better for the environment. There is no exhaust system and therefore no pollution.

The technology of electric motors is simpler than that of combustion engines. There are fewer parts and therefore less maintenance and less risk of breakdown. This all sounds very promising, but things are not as black and white as they first appear.

Firstly, the cost of purchasing an electric car is higher than its combustion-engined counterparts, even if it's considered cheaper over time due to lower maintenance and a lower cost of recharging.

The second problem concerns access to charging stations. Not everyone has the luxury of having a home equipped - or even that can be equipped - with a personal station. And even if the number of charging points is only increasing, it is not that easy to find the necessary infrastructure close to home, especially outside cities and large urban areas.

But the major drawback of EVs is actually environmental. The vehicles themselves don't emit any pollutants but the batteries powering the motors are made with minerals that have to be mined, a process that has a huge ecological impact on our planet.

While EVs are not perfect, and perhaps never will be, they are generally regarded as the best option we have to reduce vehicle emissions and dependence on fossil fuels, particularly as the technology behind them continues to evolve and improve.

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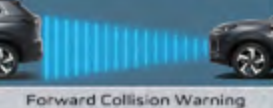
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ROMANIAN ARTIFACTS

Four 400-year-old Romanian artifacts that were stolen from a Dutch museum in January may still be recoverable, according to a court hearing this week.

While the whereabouts of these gold treasures - three Dracian bracelets dating from 50 BCE and the 2,500-year-old Cotofenesti helmet - remain unknown, Dutch prosecutors say that evidence gathered from wiretapped conversations suggests they have not yet been melted down.

On January 25, the Romanian artifacts were stolen during a heist at the Drents Museum in the city of Assen. The thieves blasted several windows open with explosives to gain entry. Dutch police were alerted to reports of an explosion at the Drents Museum in the city of Assen at around 3.45am local time on January 25. The museum building was damaged but nobody was injured.

The Netherlands's Public Prosecution Service said this week that they have completed their investigation into the theft. Of the three main suspects, two men aged 36 and 35 have been connected to the heist thanks to the discovery of their DNA in a sports bag believed to have been used to transport the artifacts away from the crime scene. This bag also contained micro-gold particles and shards of glass that may have resulted from shattering the museum's display cases.

The DNA of a third suspect, a 20-year-old man, was found on a crowbar that was left in the museum. He has also been identified as the man caught on camera buying a sledgehammer and a hammer at a hardware store two days before the robbery.

The three suspects have refused to comment, including declining to provide any information that may help authorities recover the golden treasures, which are insured for US\$6.6m. If they aren't found, the Dutch government will have to pay this sum.

The next hearing is scheduled for October 16. The suspects will remain in pre-trial detention.

Priceless treasures

The precious artifacts were taken from the Drents Museum exhibition 'Dacia—Empire of Gold and Silver', which opened in July 2024 and was just about to close to the public at the end of January. It contained more than 50 gold and silver pieces from Romania in the period from the 20th century BCE to the 3rd century CE. The stolen items were on loan from the Romanian National History Museum in Bucharest.

The golden helmet of Cotofenesti, which was covered in decorations related to Getic mythology and dated to the 5th century BCE, is one of the most important works that was stolen in the heist. One of the most prominent features are the stylised eyes on the helmet's front, influenced by Corinthian or Chalcidian helmets, which were intended to discourage an enemy during battle.

Also included in the theft were Dacian gold spiral bracelets that were unearthed from sacrificial pits; it is understood they were never worn but instead intended as offerings.

CCTV footage of the theft show at least three figures preparing to explode the door on January 25. The police investigation into the incident included forensic examinations of the site, a review of security footage, and an appeal to the public to share any tips or potentially relevant footage from door cameras or dash cams. The police have also enlisted the help of



Cotofenești helmet, 450 BCE

TREASURE HUNT

HOPEFUL CLUES EMERGE IN A THEFT OF ANCIENT ROMANIAN GOLD, VALUED AT US\$6.6MN, FROM A DUTCH MUSEUM



Dacian bracelet from Sarmizegetusa Regia, 50 BCE

Interpol, an international organisation for combatting crime.

Security concerns

The Drents Museum has come under intense scrutiny for the theft. The treasures were on loan from the National History Museum of Romania in Bucharest and were insured for €30 million, according to the museum, which has threatened legal action against the Dutch institution.

In January, Romanian Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu accused the Drents Museum of inadequate security - a claim the museum denied. He promptly announced that Romania would dispatch a team of experts, including forensic police, to assist in the investigation, while also launching a domestic review of the loan agreement, which cost the National History Museum director his job.

"This is a dark day for the Drents Museum in Assen and the National History Museum of Romania in Bucharest. We are intensely shocked by the events last night," said the Drents Museum's general director, Harry Tupan, said in January. "It also gives us enormous sadness towards our colleagues in Romania." The museum emphasised that all proper security measures were in place at the time of the theft, although a report in the NL Times claimed that while extra security had been put in place for the show's run, no guard had been in the exhibition hall at the time of the heist.

Robbed of identity

An announcement of the theft on the museum's official Instagram has become an outlet for the ire of some Romanian commenters. One user criticised the 'casual' tone of the post. "It feels like being robbed of part of your identity and history," they added. "Shame on you for treating these pieces without the respect and protection they deserved!"

"I have translated the description under this post yet no formal apology has been given," wrote another user. "As a Romanian citizen, I perceive this as a gross lack of respect and responsibility."

The Romanian Minister of Culture, Natalia Intotero, announced on January 28 the dismissal of Ernest Oberlander-Târnoveanu, the director of the National Museum of History, after he refused to resign, stating he hadn't broken any laws or regulations by loaning the objects.

"It is an unpleasant situation for him as well, but I felt he was overwhelmed by this situation, particularly in terms of communication," Intotero said in a statement. She has also asked all Romanian museum managers to inform the ministry about the security and surveillance systems each institution has in place, as well as any cultural assets that are on loan outside of the country.

Last fall, thieves used explosives to break into another Netherlands-based art gallery in the early hours of November 1, attempting to make off with a set of Andy Warhol prints. The works were hastily cut from their frames and two were left discarded on the street in what the gallery owner deemed an amateurish stunt.

The Dutch art historian Arthur Brand spoke to the NL Times about the use of explosives to enter museums. "Against this kind of break-in, no museum can fully protect itself," he said. "The thieves have realised this method works. The sky is the limit; the gates are wide open. This is deeply concerning on all fronts. Police and government must find answers quickly."

(Courtesy: artnet.com)

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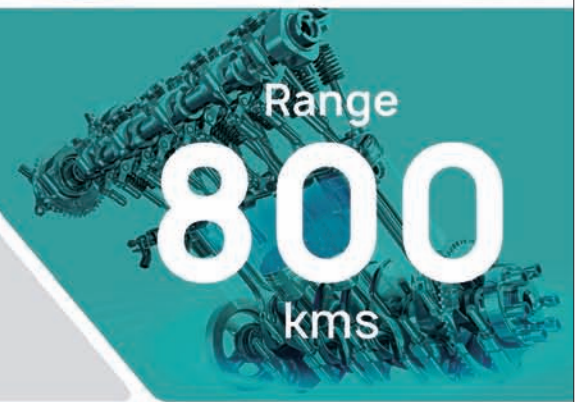
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Foton Auman EST M delivers reliable performance for intercity freight

MUSCAT: A powerful and well-engineered solution, the Foton Auman EST M is the perfect choice for commercial use and businesses that rely on dependable transport. Designed specifically for intercity freight operations, this medium-duty truck combines strength, efficiency, and driver comfort in one reliable package. With its perfect weight and capacity, it is ideally suited for companies prioritising long-term performance and durability.

At the heart of the Auman EST M is the Cummins ISD270 50 engine. This 6.7-litre, six-cylinder diesel unit produces 245 hp and delivers peak torque of 970 Nm. Featuring water cooling, turbocharging, intercooling, and direct injection, the engine ensures consistent performance under a wide range of operating conditions. Whether navigating congested highways or tackling steep gradients, it is engineered to deliver both power and fuel efficiency.

The truck is matched with a FAST 8-speed manual transmission that offers smooth gear changes across various terrains. Its gear ratios provide the flexibility needed for both low-speed torque and high-speed cruising. A robust 430 mm single-disc dry clutch transfers power efficiently, supporting the vehicle under substantial loads during extended journeys.

In terms of physical dimensions and load-bearing capacity, the Auman EST M is purpose-built for commercial demands. It measures 10,695 mm in length, 2,487 mm in width, and 2,790 mm in height, with a wheelbase of 6,100 millimeters. With a curb weight of 5,600 kilograms, it is capable of carrying a rated payload of 13,900 kilograms and supports a gross vehicle



weight of 19,500 kilograms. The front axle accommodates up to 6.5 tonnes, while the rear axle can handle 13 tonnes.

Its safety features are comprehensive, the vehicle includes drum brakes with air cut-off functionality and an engine exhaust brake for added control on slopes. Anti-lock braking (ABS) and a driver's airbag seat contribute to safer operation. For added comfort, the cab is fitted

with an air-suspended driver's seat, air conditioning, power windows, and a reverse parking sensor. Entertainment and connectivity are supported through a media system with radio, MP3, and USB compatibility.

A 260-litre fuel tank enables long-range operation between refuelling stops. Foton supports the vehicle with a three-year or 100,000 km warranty, which can

be extended to five years or 300,000 km.

The Foton Auman EST M offers a complete freight solution that delivers strength, reliability, and thoughtful design across every kilometre travelled.

About GGS

Gulf Great Sands LLC (GGS) has partnered with Foton Motor Group, one of the world's leading commer-

cial vehicle manufacturers, to bring a full range of Foton's vehicles to Oman such as the Foton Toano 18 seater bus, Cargo van and Foton View cargo van, Aumark light-duty trucks, and Tunland pickups. GGS supports these vehicles with a state-of-the-art service centre in Aziaba, Muscat, and offers periodic maintenance services in key cities like Barka, Nizwa, Ibri, Salalah, and Sohar.



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2.0L Turbo Diesel Engine, 137hp



INTRODUCTION

- 21 plants in China
- 32 global KD plants
- 1000+ dealers
- 24 training centers
- Foton have parts warehouse in Dubai
- 12 service centers across Oman
- 8 branches across Oman

JOINT VENTURES



ENGINE



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Al Jenaibi International Automobiles, the exclusive importer of BMW Group vehicles in Oman, is turning the spotlight this season on one of the brand's boldest, most distinctive models: the BMW X4. This SUV continues to make a strong case for style, performance, and cutting-edge innovation wrapped into one athletic silhouette. As the sole importer for the brand in the Sultanate, Al Jenaibi International Automobiles has long been at the forefront of delivering exceptional automotive experiences to its discerning clientele. And the BMW X4 is a model that continues to strike a powerful chord, equal parts showstopper and sports machine, it brings the best of both worlds to Oman's roads.

With its swooping roofline, sculpted lines, and low-slung confidence, the BMW X4 definitely makes an entrance. From the assertive double kidney grille and angular LED headlights to the freeform exhaust tips and sporty rear bumper, everything about the X4 says movement, even when it's standing still. But this isn't just about looks. It's also about how it feels when you get behind the wheel.

Inside, the BMW X4 is undeniably modern, with a driver-centric cockpit that's intuitive without being intrusive. At the heart of the cockpit sits a vibrant 12.3" Central Information Display: intuitive, seamless, and wired with everything from wireless Apple CarPlay® to Android Auto™. It's the kind of setup that doesn't just support your drive, it enhances it.

Whether you're weaving through the city or heading out for a weekend escape, the BMW X4 is designed to elevate every drive and make a statement as you zip by. And for those in Oman looking to chase greatness with every journey, the X4 continues to be the ultimate companion.

Visit Al Jenaibi International Automobiles showroom to explore the BMW X4 in person or book your test drive today.

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Al Jenaibi International Automobiles, the exclusive importer of BMW Group vehicles in Oman, is proud to shine the spotlight once again on one of the brand's most enduring icons: the BMW 5 Series.

The premier business saloon is no stranger to leadership. Since its inception, it has carried the weight of the brand's legacy while setting new standards for what a luxury sedan should be. In Oman, where discerning customers seek both performance and prestige, the 5 Series has become a trusted name, synonymous with comfort, luxury, and understated power.

The current BMW 5 Series' silhouette remains elegant and unmistakably BMW, but the experience inside the vehicle is anything but traditional. This isn't just a car, it's a space designed for how people live, work, relax, and move today.

From the moment you approach it, the 5 Series welcomes you like an old friend. The BMW Kidney Iconic Glow grille - a soft white light tracing the contours of the iconic double kidneys - turns heads after sundown, while the Dynamic Light Carpet offers a touch of theatre, illuminating the ground as you step inside. Slide into the cabin, and the experience turns immersive. The panoramic glass sunroof floods the interior with natural light, making every drive - even your daily commute - feel just a little more open and free. The BMW Curved Display stretches across the dashboard like a piece of modern art, combining digital intelligence with driver-centric functionality.

As the sole importer of BMW vehicles in the Sultanate, Al Jenaibi International Automobiles invites both new and returning customers to experience the timeless elegance of the BMW 5 Series, a car that proves you don't need to shout to be heard, and you don't need to race to lead. Whether you're sliding behind the wheel for a weekend drive or pulling up to a boardroom meeting, the 5 Series adapts to your moment. After all, a true icon doesn't just follow trends, it shapes them.

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Gargash GAC Motor Oman's first year milestone with Mr Vipil Divakaran

GM OF GARGASH MOTORS & GENERAL TRADING - GAC MOTOR OMAN



Can you introduce GAC MOTOR Oman under Gargash Group, and share your overall vision for the Omani market?

GAC MOTOR Oman is part of the esteemed Gargash Group — a company with over 100 years of legacy in the UAE's automotive landscape. Known for trust, quality, and customer focus, Gargash has now extended its footprint into the Omani market, marking a significant milestone in its regional growth. We are proud to represent the group's first step in Oman, and as we often say, **GARGASH MEANS TRUST.**

Our vision is to deliver intelligent, high-quality vehicles tailored for the Omani customer — combining innovation, safety, and value. From day one, our mission has been to become a key player in the market by offering an integrated ownership experience and ensuring true customer satisfaction.

You're approaching your first full year of operations. What have been the key milestones and challenges so far?

We're proud of what we've achieved in this short span. From launching a state-of-the-art showroom to introducing a diverse range of models and activating large-scale marketing campaigns, it has been a transformative year. Of course, every new market comes with challenges—raising brand awareness, standing out in a competitive space—but the positive customer response has affirmed our direction.

What are the current models available in Oman, and how has the market responded to them?

We currently offer a strong product lineup that includes the GS8, Emkoo, Emzoom, and Empow, each designed to cater to different customer segments—from families to



young drivers. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly regarding design, features, and the peace of mind offered up to 10-years manufacturer warranty.

What are GAC MOTOR Oman's future plans in terms of expansion and presence across the Sultanate?

We're actively working on expanding our



footprint through new showroom openings in key region Sohar. In parallel, we're investing in after-sales infrastructure and digital touchpoints to deliver a seamless experience. Our roadmap also includes launching new models and enhancing customer engagement through both online and offline platforms.

What role does Omanisation play in your organization, and how are you supporting local talent development?

Omanisation is a core part of our operational strategy. We're proud that certain departments already have over 70% Omani staff. We provide structured training programs and mentorship, empowering local talent to take on leadership roles. Supporting Vision 2040 is not just a goal—it's a responsibility we take seriously.

How is GAC MOTOR Oman preparing for the transition to electric mobility and green energy?

Sustainability is embedded in our long-term strategy. We're preparing to introduce GAC's fully electric AION series to the market soon, which features advanced EV technologies and impressive range performance. We're also in discussions with local stakeholders to support charging infrastructure and educate customers on the benefits of going electric.

What final message would you like to share with your customers and the Omani public as you near your first anniversary?

We are truly grateful for the trust and support we've received from our customers in Oman. This first year was just the beginning. We remain committed to bringing innovation, value, and a customer-first approach in everything we do. The road ahead is exciting, and we're proud to be driving it with the people of Oman.



GS8

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EDITION



EMPOWR



EMPOWR



EMZOOM



M8



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Free
Insurance



0 سنوات / 100,000 كم ضمان
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Warranty



5 سنوات خدمة
المساعدة على الطريق
5 Years Road Side
Assistance



Oman's automotive market set to grow 7.6% annually through 2030

The Omani automotive market was valued at \$3.12bn in 2024 and is projected to reach \$4.84bn by 2030, registering a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.6% over the period, according to a recent report released by TechSci Research.

The report notes that Oman's automotive sector is undergoing a transformation shaped by changing transportation needs, evolving consumer lifestyles, and infrastructure development. 'Unlike the earlier focus on consumer purchasing power, the current growth trajectory is being driven by structural changes in freight mobility, institutional fleet modernisation, and public-private initiatives in transport digitalisation,' it stated.

Government-led urban planning and the expansion of the road network have improved connectivity between interior towns and industrial zones, thereby boosting demand for vehicles across various utility segments. This trend is not only fuelling growth in the light commercial vehicle segment but also increasing demand for utility-oriented passenger cars suited to intercity travel.

As per the report, a distinctive feature of the sultanate's automotive landscape is the rise in institutional vehicle procurement by logistics firms, leasing companies, and fleet operators prioritising reliability, lower maintenance costs, and extended vehicle lifespan. These organisations are increasingly favouring robust models engineered for rugged terrain, extreme temperatures, and extended service intervals.

Simultaneously, consumers are showing growing interest in value-for-money vehicles such as compact saloons, entry-level SUVs, and multipurpose utility vehicles that offer balanced performance and fuel efficiency. Seasonal buying trends – linked to tax-free periods, religious holidays, and promotional campaigns – continue to influence demand, with vehicle imports often



timed to coincide with expected sales peaks.

The report highlights the growing importance of innovative financing options, including Sharia-compliant leasing (Ijara), which is gaining traction alongside traditional bank financing. These solutions are being

customer satisfaction and loyalty. The rise of vehicle customisation and accessories markets has created new revenue streams for dealerships, especially in areas such as aesthetic enhancements, multimedia systems, and off-road modifications.

government-backed industrial hubs and free zones to establish clean transport corridors are laying the foundation for long-term sustainability.

The digital transformation of vehicle registration, taxation, and service tracking is also improving

green transport incentives.

'While internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles still dominate in terms of volume, the accelerating pace of EV adoption reflects shifting consumer attitudes and a gradual market transition. The development of charging networks in major urban areas, coupled with incentives such as customs fee reductions and pilot fleet deployments along key urban transport routes, has significantly increased interest in electric mobility,' the report noted.

Among all the sultanate's governorates, Batinah South recorded the fastest growth in EV adoption in 2024. This region benefited from a combination of expanding urban infrastructure, high population density, and the targeted installation of EV charging stations in key municipalities and transport hubs. Its proximity to the capital also enabled the early rollout of charging facilities and trial programmes by institutional fleet operators.

Rising vehicle ownership, expansion of aftermarket services, and growing demand for premium and tech-advanced vehicles are key factors expected to drive growth in Oman's automotive market during 2026–2030 period

enabled by digital onboarding processes and credit-scoring platforms that streamline approvals and expand access to vehicle ownership.

Additionally, the post-purchase ecosystem is evolving through insurance bundling, fuel discount schemes, and mobile maintenance applications, all of which enhance

The report noted that electric and hybrid vehicles are receiving increasing regulatory support in Oman, although their market penetration remains limited due to infrastructure challenges and consumer concerns about charging convenience and total cost of ownership. Nevertheless, strategic initiatives by

ownership processes, helping authorities manage traffic flows, emissions control, and inspection schedules more effectively.

In 2024, the electric vehicle (EV) segment emerged as the fastest-growing propulsion category in Oman, driven by infrastructure planning, awareness initiatives, and

1.8mn vehicles registered till June

Our Correspondent
Muscat

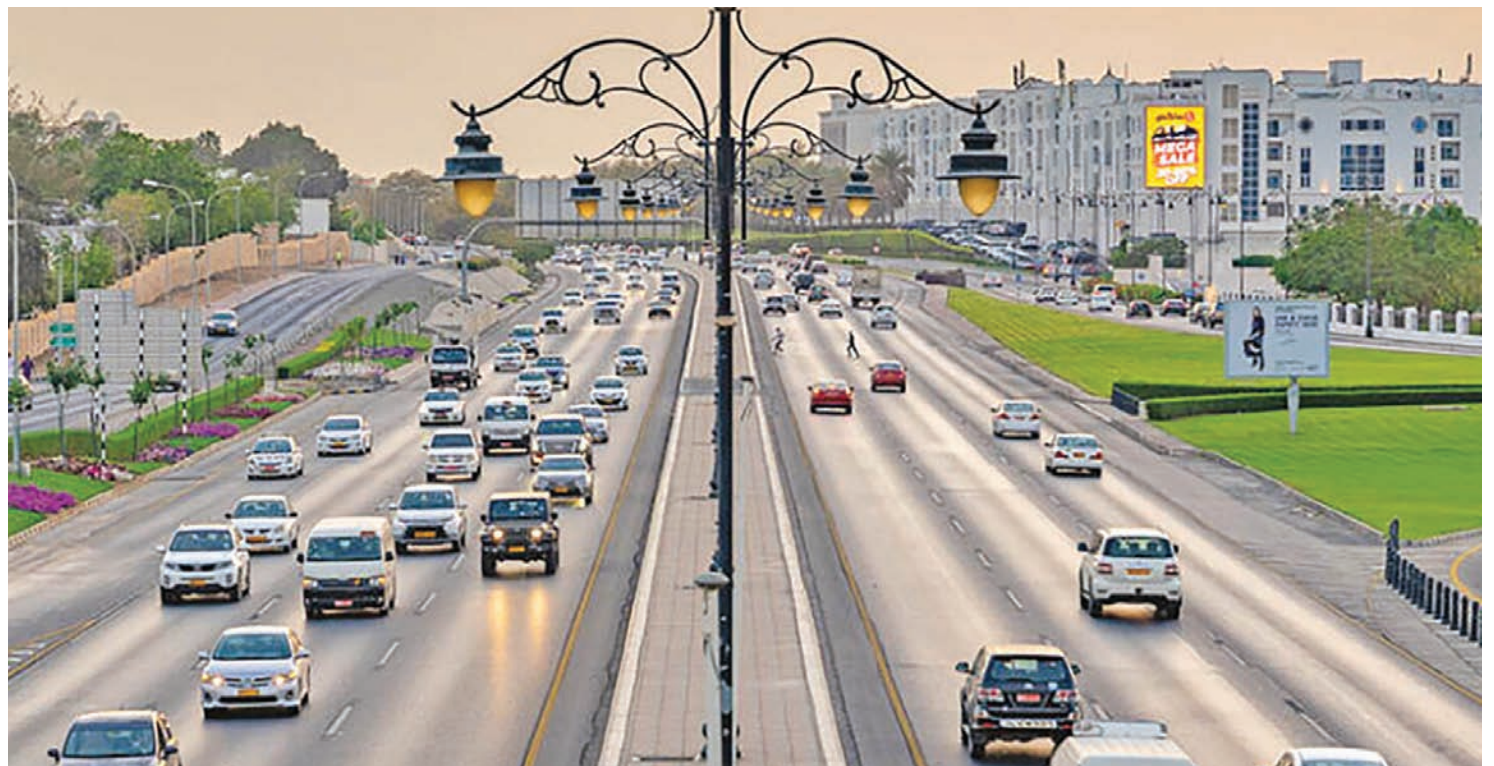
The total number of vehicles registered in Oman this year until the end of June 2025 rose to 1,798,062 from 1,753,872 in December 2024, according to the latest figures from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Private vehicles topped the list with 1,425,308 followed by 264,913 commercial vehicles, 41,386 rental vehicles, and 28,324 taxis.

In percentage terms, the NCSI report showed vehicle registrations by type as follows: 2.3% for rental vehicles, 79.3% for private use, 14.7% for commercial use, 1.6% for taxis, and 2.1% for other uses.

Among vehicle colours, white was the most preferred in the sultanate, with 761,358 such vehicles registered this year. Silver was the second most preferred colour (231,822), followed by grey (181,140) and blue (100,265).

Regarding engine capacity, the



NCSI report indicated that the majority of vehicles (979,300) had engine capacities between 1,500cc and 3,000cc, while 399,770 vehicles had engine capacities between

3,001cc and 4,500cc. The number of vehicles with engine capacities above 4,500cc stood at 223,297, while 146,898 vehicles had engine capacities below 1,500cc.

In terms of weight, the report stated that the majority of vehicles weighed less than three tonnes, with their number reaching 1,631,392. Some 75,575 vehicles

weighed more than ten tonnes, while 51,859 vehicles weighed between three and seven tonnes, and 39,266 vehicles between seven and ten tonnes.

Egypt launches terminal to boost regional vehicle logistics

Cairo, Egypt - Egypt has inaugurated its first dedicated automotive logistics terminal with the launch of the Suez Canal Automotive Terminal (SCAT) in Port Said. Operations began on July 1, 2025, marking a new phase in the country's automotive supply chain capabilities.

The terminal has been developed through a strategic joint venture between three global leaders: Africa Global Logistics (AGL), Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK), and Toyota Tsusho Corporation. SCAT represents a milestone in Egypt's logistics infrastructure, offering specialised services for finished-vehicle handling. The facility is designed to manage the import, export, and transshipment of vehicles, significantly enhancing Egypt's capacity to support regional automotive flows.



Located at the northern entrance of the Suez Canal, SCAT is strategically positioned to serve both North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. At launch, the terminal can berth two large car carriers simultaneously and accommodate up to 2,550 vehicles on a 21.2-hectare site. The terminal's capacity is expected to

expand to 10,000 vehicles in future phases.

Equipped with advanced technology infrastructure, the terminal aims to process up to 50,000 vehicles annually and will be operated by the consortium for a 30-year period. Africa Global Logistics, a major transport and logistics provider across Africa, leads

the initiative with its partners. NYK, a global expert in maritime transport and automotive terminal management, contributes operational expertise, while Toyota Tsusho, a general trading company within the Toyota Group, brings its extensive experience in automotive businesses and longstanding presence in Africa.

"The launch of SCAT is a major opportunity for the continent, particularly for Egypt and the sub-region. It will make it possible to respond effectively to the expected growth of the regional automotive market and illustrates our common commitment to supporting local economic development. We are very proud to co-create this terminal with such partners," said Olivier De Noray, CEO of Ports & Terminals at AGL.

The terminal is expected to

streamline finished-vehicle logistics, reduce congestion at existing ports, and create new opportunities for automotive OEMs, shipping lines, and regional distributors. By combining their respective expertise in logistics, maritime transport, and international trade, the partners aim to position SCAT as a key node in the regional automotive supply chain network.

AGL operates in 49 countries with 23,000 employees and continues to expand its presence in Africa and beyond. The SCAT terminal aligns with AGL's goal of supporting the continent's infrastructure development and offering sustainable logistics solutions.

With SCAT now operational, Egypt strengthens its role as a logistics gateway linking Africa, Europe, and Asia - particularly in the rapidly evolving automotive sector.

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1.5L Turbo Engine, 168hp, 7-speed DCT

L x W x H (mm): 4718 x 1880 x 1710

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1.5L Turbo Engine, 158hp, 7-speed DCT

L x W x H (mm): 4555 x 1850 x 1515

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1.5L Turbo Engine, 165hp, 7-speed DCT

L x W x H (mm): 4810 x 1840 x 1455

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Bestune B70 Sedan: Ultimate Performance

Premium Sedan.
Starting at OMR 7,150, the Bestune B70 1.5 Turbo Sedan is available in Comfort and Limousine variants. The Comfort variant features a refined 1.5L turbo engine and essential tech for daily commuting, while the Limousine variant steps up with a powerful 2.0L turbo engine, premium styling, and enhanced comfort—perfect for longer drives and executive travel.

Bestune T90 2WD SUV That Commands Attention: Perfect Family SUV
For those seeking strength and sophistication, the Bestune T90 SUV starts at OMR 7,700 for the Pre-

mium variant and OMR 8,850 for the Limousine. The Premium model offers a panoramic sunroof, ventilated seats, and advanced infotainment, while the Limousine variant adds a robust 2.0L engine, ambient lighting, and a head-up display—ideal for families and professionals who demand more from their drive.

Bestune T77 Crossover – Sporty Style with Urban Versatility
The Bestune T77 Crossover, starting at OMR 7,150, combines a high stance with a coupe-inspired silhouette. Powered by a 1.5L turbo engine, it's designed for those who crave sporty aesthetics and agile

performance—perfect for city living and weekend escapes.

Bestune B70S Cross – Where Style Meets Adventure
Now starting at OMR 7,450, the Bestune B70S 1.5 Turbo Engine is a crossover that blends utility with flair. Its sleek design and balanced performance make it an ideal companion for drivers who value both function and fashion. Bestune B70 S is also available in a 2.0 turbo engine variant, which produces 215 hp, 340 NM Torque for powerful performance.

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Gulf Great Sands LLC (GGS) has partnered with FAW-BESTUNE Group, GGS- Bestune showrooms are in Al Qurum and Sohar, and state-of-the-art service centres in Aziaba, Muscat, and offers periodic maintenance services in key cities like Barka, Nizwa, Ibri, Salalah, Sur, and Sohar. For more information, visit www.bestune-oman.com or Call 80050800.



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1.5L Turbo Engine, 158hp,
7-speed DCT

PREMIUM MY2025

L x W x H (mm): 4800 x 1915 x 1685



CASH PRICE

OMR 7,150*

VAT INCLUDED

T77 PRO

1.5L Turbo Engine, 168hp,
7-speed DCT

DELUX MY2025

L x W x H (mm): 4718 x 1880 x 1710



B70S

1.5L Turbo Engine, 158hp,
7-speed DCT

PREMIUM MY2025

L x W x H (mm): 4555 x 1850 x 1515

CASH PRICE

OMR 7,450*

VAT INCLUDED



CASH PRICE

OMR 7,150*

VAT INCLUDED

B70

1.5L Turbo Engine, 165hp,
7-speed DCT

COMFORT MY2025

L x W x H (mm): 4810 x 1840 x 1455



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GCC EV market expected to grow over 22% annually

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The GCC electric vehicle (EV) market was valued at nearly \$1.62bn in 2024. Driven by the region's growing focus on sustainability and cleaner transportation solutions, the GCC EV market is projected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22.3% between 2025 and 2034, reaching approximately \$10.44bn by 2034, according to a new research report.

Governments in the GCC countries are introducing major initiatives and incentives to encourage EV adoption. The increasing availability and affordability of electric vehicles are boosting market growth

The GCC region has witnessed a steady increase in electric vehicle adoption, driven by both environmental and economic factors, according to the GCC Electric Vehicle Market Report and Forecast 2025-2034, recently published by ResearchAndMarkets.com.

'The GCC electric vehicle market is set for significant expansion in the coming years, fuelled by strategic government initiatives, the growing availability of EV models, and the rapid development of essential charging infrastructure,' the report stated.

As the world transitions towards cleaner energy and sustainable mobility, the GCC is positioning itself as a leader in the shift to electric transportation, supporting the growth of the regional EV market, the report noted.

Electric vehicles, powered by electricity stored in batteries, offer a more sustainable alternative to

traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. EVs produce no direct emissions, thereby reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. This aligns with the increasing emphasis on sustainability, as governments and organisations in the GCC focus on reducing their carbon footprint and achieving ambitious climate targets.

Furthermore, the rising demand for energy-efficient and cost-effective transport solutions is accelerating the growth of the GCC electric vehicle market.

Key growth drivers

The report highlighted several factors driving the rapid expansion of the EV market in the GCC. Governments in the region are introducing

major initiatives and incentives to encourage EV adoption. Saudi Arabia, the largest EV market in the GCC, has set ambitious targets for electric vehicle adoption, including plans to establish a national EV manufacturing facility and integrate EVs into public transport. The kingdom is expected to account for a significant share of the GCC's EV market.

In addition to government support, the increasing availability and affordability of electric vehicles are boosting market growth. Leading global automakers, including Tesla, Nissan, and BMW, have expanded their EV portfolios to meet growing demand in the region.

Meanwhile, several local manufacturers are entering the market,

intensifying competition and driving down EV costs. The introduction of affordable EV models is crucial to making electric vehicles accessible to a broader consumer base in the GCC, the report acknowledged.

Another key driver of market growth is the expansion of EV charging infrastructure across the region. A well-developed network of public and private charging stations is essential for widespread EV adoption.

In recent years, substantial investments have been made in building a robust charging infrastructure, particularly in urban centres and along major highways. For example, Dubai aims to have 100% of its public transport fleet electrified by 2030, supported by an ex-

tensive network of fast-charging stations. This is creating a favourable market outlook for EVs in the GCC.

Despite the promising outlook, the report highlighted several challenges facing the GCC EV market. One of the main concerns is the high initial cost of electric vehicles compared to petrol or diesel-powered cars. While EVs offer lower long-term operating costs, the upfront price remains a barrier for many consumers.

However, as technology advances and manufacturing processes become more efficient, the price gap between electric and traditional vehicles is expected to narrow, positively influencing the region's EV market dynamics.





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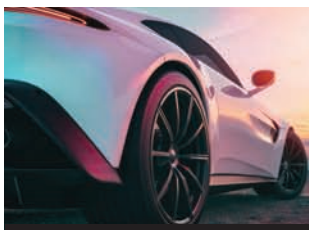
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Global EV sales surge 24% in H1, but US lags behind

As emerging markets outpace North America, EV adoption in the US cools due to waning incentives and rising costs

Global EV sales growth was largely driven by strong demand in China, where sales jumped 28% to 1.11mn vehicles in June. Europe also saw impressive growth, with sales increasing 23% to about 390,000 units

Global sales of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles surged 24% in June compared to the same period last year, reflecting strong momentum in China and Europe, according to market research firm Rho Motion, as reported by WION.

However, US sales experienced a slight decline, down 1%, and experts suggest that the US market could face challenges in the latter half of 2025. June saw a rise in global electric vehicle (EV) sales, with 1.8mn units sold globally. The growth was driven by strong demand in China, where sales jumped 28% to 1.11mn vehicles. Europe also saw impressive growth, with sales increasing 23% to about 390,000 units.

The rest of the world, including emerging markets, experienced a 43% increase, outpacing North America for the first time. However, North American sales fell by 9%, with the US specifically reporting a slight dip in sales. The increase in global sales is seen as part of the ongoing shift to electric mobility, particularly in regions where government incentives, growing EV infrastructure, and increased availability of affordable electric cars are boosting consumer confidence.

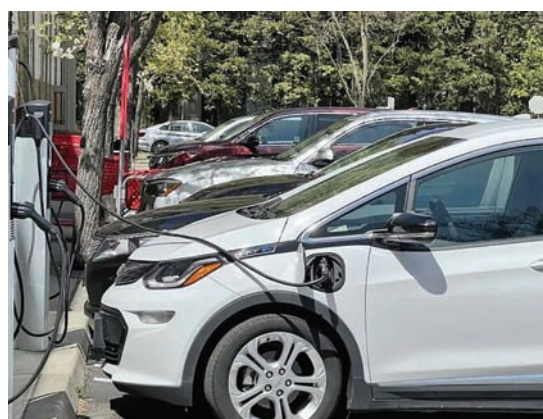
In China, while some cities have run out of subsidies, the government is expected to introduce more incentives in the second half of the year.

US EV market faces challenges

Despite strong global performance, the outlook for the US EV market



Global EV sales growth was largely driven by strong demand in China, where sales jumped 28% to 1.11mn vehicles in June. Europe also saw impressive growth, with sales increasing 23% to about 390,000 units



remains uncertain. A combination of factors, including reduced government-backed tax incentives and rising economic pressures, has led to a slower-than-expected adoption of EVs in the US.

According to Cox Automotive, EV sales in the US saw a decline of 6.3% year-over-year in Q2 2025. The total number of new EVs sold in the US during this period was 310,839, down from 331,853 in the same quarter last year. Although sales were up 4.9% compared to Q1, the decline in Q2 is seen as a

sign of a more mature market, where growth may ebb and flow depending on consumer demand and government incentives.

In addition to the fading tax incentives for new EV purchases – set to phase out in October – Cox Automotive forecasts that the second half of 2025 will likely see a slowdown, especially in Q4, when the full impact of the incentive cuts will be felt. The shift in government policy, combined with rising inflation and supply chain constraints, is expected to test consumer appetite

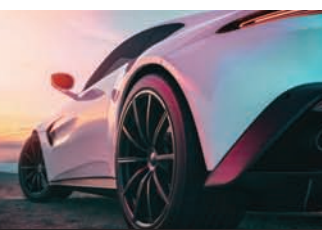
for EVs.

Looking ahead to the third quarter, Cox Automotive predicts that the US EV market will experience a short-term boost due to a rush to purchase before the phase-out of federal tax incentives. However, this growth is expected to be temporary, and the market will likely face significant challenges in Q4. “The second half of the year will be a critical test of EV demand,” said Stephanie Valdez Streaty, senior analyst at Cox Automotive.

In contrast to the US, the Chinese

EV market remains strong, with more than 3mn vehicles sold in the first half of 2025, and exports continuing to grow. The global shift toward electric mobility is clearly underway, but the US market, burdened by policy changes and economic pressures, may struggle to keep pace with other regions.

As global automakers adjust to these shifting dynamics, the US EV market’s ability to maintain growth will depend heavily on how quickly manufacturers and consumers can adapt to the new reality.



EU's end-of-life vehicle law aims for greener roads

Brussels, Belgium - The European Council has adopted its position on a new regulation aimed at strengthening the recycling and reuse of vehicles at the end of their life, marking a key step in aligning the continent's automotive sector with the principles of the circular economy. While the proposed changes promise greater environmental responsibility, concerns remain over the regulation's reach and enforcement.

The End-of-Life Vehicles (ELV) regulation introduces mandatory targets for recycled plastics in car production and opens the door to similar targets for other materials, including steel, aluminium and critical raw materials. The goal is to re-design vehicles in ways that facilitate easier dismantling, material recovery, and recycling.

Paulina Hennig-Kloska, Minister for Climate and Environment of Poland, welcomed the decision, calling it a "game-changer" for reducing waste and external resource dependence. "This legislation will not only boost the competitiveness of our car and recycling industries but also slash red tape to a minimum," she said.

The regulation expands its scope beyond cars and vans to include trucks, motorcycles, and quadricycles. For these vehicles, manufacturers will be required to adopt circularity strategies, design for easy dismantling, and label components. Special purpose vehicles such as fire engines and mobile cranes are also covered under the revised scope.

To close loopholes in the treatment of used vehicles, the Council has proposed stricter documentation requirements to prove a vehicle is roadworthy before any sale or export, particularly for online transactions. Vehicles of special cultural interest and restored classics will be exempted from certain conditions.

A phased approach has been introduced to ensure minimum levels



of recycled plastic in new vehicles. The European Commission will retain the ability to delay targets during shortages or when prices of recycled materials become volatile. It may also set minimum requirements for other materials once feasibility studies are complete.

To ease the compliance burden, automakers will be allowed to file circularity strategies by vehicle category rather than by model. The digital circularity vehicle passport – a record of a vehicle's components and materials – will also be aligned with other EU digital requirements.

Under extended producer responsibility (EPR), manufacturers will cover the full treatment cost of vehicles, including those from un-

ELV regulation introduces mandatory targets for recycled plastics in car production and opens the door to similar targets for other materials, including steel, aluminium and critical raw materials

known or non-existent producers. This includes transportation from collection points to treatment facilities. Trucks and motorcycles will have their entire treatment chain covered under EPR fees.

The regulation also sets clear rules for end-of-life treatment, requiring vehicles to be sent to autho-

risied facilities for depollution and shredding. Mixed shredding with other waste will be banned unless output meets defined quality standards.

To reduce the number of so-called 'missing vehicles', customs checks for exported vehicles will be fully automated, ensuring that only

roadworthy units leave the EU. These checks will be integrated into the MOVE-HUB platform, linking national registers with EU customs systems.

The Council's position now moves into the next phase of negotiations with the European Parliament. The outcome will determine the final shape of the law, which stems from the broader European Green Deal that promotes waste minimisation and sustainable production.

The automotive sector is one of the most resource-intensive industries in Europe. It accounts for 19% of EU steel demand, consumes 6mn tonnes of plastic per year, and uses significant amounts of aluminium, copper, rubber and glass. Integrating circularity into this sector is seen as essential to achieving climate and resource goals.

However, environmental groups say the Council's version of the regulation doesn't go far enough. Critics argue that while the regulation focuses on recycling, it neglects higher-value strategies like repair and reuse that could significantly extend vehicle life. There is also criticism that the rules don't adequately address the environmental impact of rising car numbers and increasing vehicle sizes.

Fynn Hauschke of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) said: "Member States keep dodging the elephant in the room: the ever-increasing size and number of cars on roads is driving up the automotive sector's material use and environmental footprint."

Barbara Metz of Environmental Action Germany (DUH) called for stricter rules to hold producers accountable. "The Council's position shows that environment ministers are bowing to the will of the car industry," she said, arguing that all producers should be required to join EPR systems that charge sufficient fees to enable material recovery.

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Global car production rises despite trade tensions and supply chain risks

Munich, Germany - The global light vehicle production forecast for July 2025 reflects a mixed but generally upward trend, as automakers navigate shifting trade policies, raw material supply concerns, and region-specific market conditions. While short-term gains are being driven by strong regional recoveries, long-term stability remains elusive due to persistent geopolitical and economic risks.

S&P Global's latest projections suggest that the industry is demonstrating resilience, with production upgrades in several key regions. The gains are tempered by an uncertain regulatory landscape, particularly in relation to US tariff policies and looming threats to critical supply chains, including Chinese export controls on rare earth elements.

In Europe, light vehicle production has been revised upward by 90,000 units for 2025 and by 55,000 units for 2026. Improved

Latest projections suggest that the industry is demonstrating resilience, with production upgrades in several key regions. The gains are tempered by an uncertain regulatory landscape, particularly in relation to US tariff policies

production output, particularly for internal combustion engine models, is helping drive these adjustments. Nonetheless, inventory build-up in the first half of 2025 is likely to lead to a correction in the latter half of the year. Regulatory changes in the EU and the anticipated reduction in US tariffs are also factored into the improved outlook for 2026, S&P Global stated in its July 2025 light vehicle production forecast.

Greater China remains a stand-out. The region saw the largest increase, with production forecasts raised by 164,000 units in 2025 and 148,000 units in 2026. Government

incentives and a robust manufacturing base have played a central role, especially in the growth of the new energy vehicle (NEV) segment. While local brands continue to dominate, foreign manufacturers are under increasing pressure, a trend expected to continue into next year.

In Japan and South Korea, modest upgrades reflect improved exports and production stability, the report stated. Japan's output is projected to increase by 23,000 units in 2025 and by 34,000 units in 2026, largely due to a rise in hybrid exports, particularly from Toyota. South Korea's forecast for 2025 has

also been raised by 36,000 units, but longer-term estimates remain flat, reflecting concerns over tariff implications.

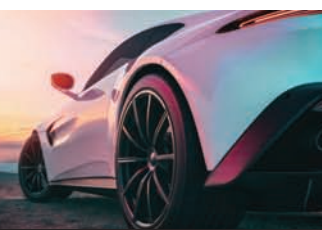
North America has posted a substantial increase in its 2025 production forecast—up by 241,000 units. Despite the resilience shown in this year's performance, projections for 2026 and 2027 have been cut. Policymakers' shifting positions on subsidies and emissions are expected to cause fluctuations in electric vehicle output. Dedicated battery electric vehicle (BEV) production is projected to decline materially in the medium term as a result.

South America has also received a lift in its 2025 forecast, up by 56,000 units. Brazil's new tax regime, aimed at promoting environmental performance and competitiveness, is credited with boosting the region's prospects. However, the same measures are likely to weigh on Argentina's output, as imports replace locally man-

ufactured models.

The picture in South Asia remains mixed, S&P Global said. While the 2025 forecast has been slightly raised, expectations for 2026 and 2027 have been reduced due to macroeconomic headwinds. In the ASEAN subregion, vehicle production saw a 22,000-unit bump, largely due to healthy export performance. India's forecast remains under pressure due to temporary plant shutdowns and inventory adjustments. The continued availability of rare earth elements remains a key watchpoint for future production stability.

Overall, while the 2025 outlook appears optimistic in several regions, the auto industry remains exposed to policy shifts, trade frictions, and material supply vulnerabilities. The real test for manufacturers may lie not in how they expand capacity in the near term, but in how they adapt to complex and politically charged global supply chain landscape.



UK car manufacturing slumps to levels seen in 1953 barring COVID

New vehicles declined 12% in first six months of this year as Trump's tariffs caused chaos

London, UK - British car and van manufacturing slumped in the first half of the year to its lowest since 1953 outside the COVID pandemic, as Donald Trump's US tariffs caused global industry chaos.

UK vehicle manufacturing declined by 12% to 417,200 units in the first six months of the year, figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), a lobby group, show.

Only 2020 was worse in the past 72 years, when factories were shut during pandemic lockdowns.

"It has been one of the toughest periods for UK automotive," said Mike Hawes, the SMMT's chief executive. He said he hoped the industry was "at the nadir" before a recovery. "The general view is that this is the bottom," he added.

Carmakers have struggled with slower than expected sales while trying to switch manufacturing from petrol and diesel to cleaner electric models, while Stellantis decided to close its Vauxhall van factory in Luton. Trump's tariffs of 25% on all car imports threatened to close off an important export market, particularly for Britain's luxury carmakers such as Bentley, Rolls-Royce and Jaguar Land Rover, the Range Rover maker.

Those carmakers paused shipments from April, hoping for lower tariffs. The second half of 2025 is expected to be better for British manufacturers, thanks to the UK's deal with the Trump administration to allow 100,000 exports a year at



the lower tariff of 10% from the end of June. Car and van production rose by 7% in June compared with the same month last year.

Hawes said the 100,000 quota would allow the industry to "keep the wolf from the door" by continu-

ing sales at about the same level as 2024, although it would not allow for growth beyond that level without another negotiation with the US's busy trade officials.

Some carmakers in Britain - including Japan's Nissan, which is due

to start producing its new Leaf electric car in Sunderland, northern England - are also expected to be among the main beneficiaries of the Labour government's decision to subsidise the sale of electric cars by up to £3,750.

Those subsidies, worth £650m, will be limited to cars priced at less than £37,000; rules on the carbon dioxide emissions associated with production will mean that imports from outside Europe, including from China and South Korea, will be unlikely to qualify.

While Hawes welcomed the decision to support electric car sales, after a three-year gap, he said the subsidies were "devised, developed by government without consultation with industry".

Some details of the scheme will not be announced for weeks, leaving carmakers unclear about

whether their vehicles will qualify. That confusion has thrown sales plans into disarray, as several companies are unable to say what their products will cost - and sales are expected to drop in the short term as buyers await clarity.

The subsidies could also make it harder for excluded carmakers to meet targets on electric car sales, known as the zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate, Hawes said.

The difficult conditions for the UK industry have meant that ambitions have had to be scaled back. As recently as 2017 the SMMT had hoped for production levels of 2m UK-made cars a year. The latest forecasts prepared for the lobby group suggest there will be only 755,000 cars made in 2025, down from an expectation of 815,000 in April, before the tariff chaos.

(The Guardian)



Changan UNI-K: Intelligent performance meets luxurious design and technology

Muscat - The Changan UNI-K continues to turn heads across Oman, offering a seamless combination of striking design, cutting-edge technology, and exhilarating performance. With monthly installments starting from just OMR 173 for 6 Years, the UNI-K makes intelligent luxury more accessible than ever. These EMI plans are based on a 20% down payment, subject to bank credit approval, and apply only to vehicles purchased for personal use.

The Changan UNI-K is a sleek, mid-size SUV known for its futuristic design and advanced features. It offers a spacious interior, a 360° HD camera, and a "space battleship" gear shifter.

The UNI-K comes with 2 variants Trend and Royal, at the core of the UNI-K is a 2.0-litre turbocharged engine that generates

233 horsepower, paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission for smooth yet responsive power delivery. An intelligent all-wheel-drive system ensures superior traction and stability, whether on urban roads or rugged terrain, making the UNI-K as capable as it is refined.

Key Features:

- Engine: 2.0 TURBO I4 with 233 horsepower and 390 Nm of torque.
- Transmission: 8-speed automatic.
- Drivetrain: 4WD.
- Design: Split LED headlights, 21-inch sports wheels, airship-shaped spoiler, and hidden door handles.
- Interior: Luxury Business Class seats, stylish fog lamps, and advanced technology.

- Technology: 360° HD camera, space battleship gear shifter.
- Safety: Impressive safety ratings.
- Other: Acoustic Hood, Multi Information Display, Radar and Advanced Safety Features.

Manufacturer Warranty : 6 years or Unlimited Mileage Warranty.

Its commanding presence is accentuated by a borderless front grille, sculpted LED headlamps, and a sleek fastback silhouette that communicates both elegance and athleticism. In Royal variant 21-inch alloy wheels enhance its bold design, giving the UNI-K an assertive road stance.

Inside, the UNI-K is a showcase of modern luxury. The cabin features premium materials, ambient lighting, and ergonomically de-

signed seating for optimal comfort. A multi-screen digital cockpit includes a 12.3-inch infotainment display and an advanced digital instrument panel, providing intuitive access to connectivity and controls. A panoramic sunroof bathes the cabin in natural light, adding to the feeling of openness and sophistication.

Technology plays a central role in the UNI-K's appeal.

Voice-activated controls, adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assist, and a 360-degree camera system are just a few of the advanced features that offer drivers convenience, safety, and peace of mind.

With its powerful performance, standout design, and thoughtful innovation, the Changan UNI-K redefines what a modern SUV can be—intelligent, elegant, and engineered to impress.

About AGAE

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE) offers state-of-the-art showrooms located in Al Qurum, Mawaleh, Sohar, Ibri, and Salalah, along with additional new showrooms in Nizwa, Barka and Sur. In addition, AGAE has established fourteen service centres across Oman, including its main service centre in Azaiba, Muscat, providing comprehensive maintenance and repair services. For more information, contact Changan Oman at the toll-free number 80050800, via WhatsApp at 96628909, or visit the newly launched showroom in Al Qurum. Customers can also visit www.changanoman.com to book test drives, request a callback, and explore the latest Changan models and Ramadan Offers.



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