

OMAN
عمان
DAILY

Observer



11
SHNAIDER STUNS
SABALENKA TO BOOK
CHWALINSKA SEMIS

VOL. 45, NO. 202
PAGES 20 | BAISAS 210

IN BRIEF

Nine Oman projects qualify for London science forum

The Research and Innovation Authority announced the nine qualifying projects to represent the Sultanate of Oman at the 67th edition of the London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF) this year, scheduled to take place from 19 July to August 1.

Oman's participation in this international forum is part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the presence of young national talents in global scientific gatherings.

The selection of projects was based on a rigorous competitive process that included 738 innovative projects in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

DETAILS ON P2

ISRAELI STRIKES KILL THREE IN GAZA



A woman carries a pot on her head as Palestinians gather to receive food from a charity kitchen in Gaza City. — Reuters

Israeli strikes killed three Palestinians in Gaza on Wednesday, health officials said, and Hamas said an end to such attacks was crucial to further talks on safeguarding a US-brokered ceasefire.

Medics said one Palestinian was killed in an air strike near the Mughraqa area in the central Gaza Strip. The Israeli military said it had struck a person acting suspiciously near forces operating in an Israeli-controlled area to remove the threat.

A separate Israeli air strike killed two brothers — Saqer and Moamen Khalil Abu Karim — in the courtyard of a house in the nearby Maghazi refugee camp, medics said.

Israel's military did not immediately comment on the incident.

The ceasefire brokered by US President Donald Trump has failed to halt Israeli attacks in Gaza, and left Israel in control of over half the enclave following the conflict that began with Hamas attacks on southern Israel in October 2023. — Reuters

Oman condemns attacks on Bahrain, Kuwait

Trump under pressure to bring down fuel prices while not making concessions to Iran

THE Sultanate of Oman has expressed its condemnation and denunciation of the attacks targeting the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Kuwait. Oman affirmed its categorical rejection of all military actions that undermine the security and stability of the region, particularly the targeting of civilian and vital facilities, which constitutes a violation of international law and threatens the safety of civilians.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday, the Sultanate of Oman expressed its full solidarity with the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Kuwait and its support for the measures they take to preserve their security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

The Sultanate of Oman reiterated its call for restraint, the avoidance of escalation, and recourse to dialogue and diplomatic means to address crises and disputes, thereby contributing to the consolidation of regional security and stability and sparing the region further tension and negative repercussions.

A drone strike on a passenger terminal at Kuwait's international airport killed an Indian national and wounded 63 people on Wednesday, as conflict escalated between Tehran and US forces in the Gulf.

Attacks on Kuwait damaged its airport and injured dozens while the US military carried out strikes near the Strait of Hormuz, with diplomacy to halt the war showing little sign of progress. The attacks are the latest to test a shaky ceasefire, sending oil prices up more than 2 per cent, as the strait remains largely closed more than three months after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran.



Iranian women walk past a banner with a picture of Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, on a street in Tehran, Iran, on Wednesday. — Reuters

A drone strike on a passenger terminal at Kuwait's international airport killed an Indian national and wounded 63 people on Wednesday.

Flights at Kuwait International Airport were suspended after an Iranian drone and missile attack damaged airport facilities and diplomatic missions, killing one person and injuring more than 60 others, according to Kuwaiti authorities and state media.

Earlier, Iranian media reported that Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards had attacked the headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain and a US airbase, as well

as a vessel identified as Panaya. US Central Command denied its bases had been hit and said Iranian ballistic missiles failed to strike their targets in the region.

CEASEFIRE STRAINED

Since the conflict began on February 28, Iran has repeatedly attacked targets in the Gulf region home to US military bases, hitting civilian and military targets. Hostilities have occasionally flared up in recent weeks despite a ceasefire agreed in early April, as the US has pushed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a route that handled roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments before the war.

Last week, Iran and the US signalled progress towards a tentative initial agreement to halt the war and reopen the strait, but the two sides have yet to sign off on the deal, which would leave more complex negotiations for later.

Mohsen Rezaei, military adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, said Iran would not allow the US to "overreach" either in negotiations or ceasefire arrangements. In a post on X, he warned that any aggression would be met with a barrage of missiles and drones.

Since mid-March, US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he is close to a deal to end the fighting and pave the way for negotiations on thorny issues including the future of Iran's nuclear programme.

Trump, who is under pressure to bring down US fuel prices while not making concessions to Iran, has said his top priority is to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran says its atomic programme is for peaceful purposes.

— ONA/Agencies

OMAN, BELARUS SIGN MOUS ON AI, FOOD SECURITY



MINSK: The Omani-Belarusian Business Forum, held in Minsk, saw the signing of seven Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on the sidelines of the Omani trade delegation's visit to the Republic of Belarus. The MoUs, signed by Omani companies with their Belarusian counterparts, pertain

to food security; the development of artificial intelligence prototypes for the water, agriculture, and soil sectors; knowledge transfer; joint mobilisation; manufacturing knowledge transfer; urban planning infrastructure; smart city solutions; and geographic information systems. — ONA

WHO warns Ebola had 'big head-start', response 'catching up'

GENEVA: The World Health Organization warned on Wednesday that the Ebola outbreak confirmed to have killed 61 people in central Africa had a "big head-start", and said "blanket travel restrictions" were hindering the response.

The outbreak was declared on May 15 in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, but the virus is believed to have been spreading under the radar for some time beforehand.

"The outbreak had a big head-start and we're still behind," WHO

chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters at the UN health agency's headquarters in Geneva, but voiced hope that "we're catching up".

To date, there have been 344 confirmed Ebola cases in the DR Congo in the ongoing outbreak, including 60 deaths, according to Congolese health authorities and the WHO.

Fifteen cases, including one death, have also been reported in neighbouring Uganda, according to the Ugandan Ministry of Health.



An official checks passengers' temperatures at Bunia Airport in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo on Wednesday. — AFP

The DRC is one of the world's poorest countries and has suffered decades of violent conflict in its restive east.

The first identified case in the outbreak was a nurse, who went to a health centre on April 24 in the city of Bunia, the capital of Ituri province. But the epicentre of the outbreak is about 90 kilometres (56 miles) away, in Mongbwalu, which suggests the outbreak originated there and that the cases then spread.

Efforts are underway to determine how and when the

outbreak began.

Tedros, who had just returned from a trip to DRC, where he travelled to the epicentre of the outbreak, stressed that there were many possible scenarios.

"It could be January, it could be February, March, April," he said, stressing the need to complete a "proper investigation".

"But I think the focus now should be on the response," he said, highlighting that "the virus is ahead of us... we need to move faster".

— AFP

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



This effort aims to promote public health concepts, sustainable development and improve quality of life. — ONA

WHO DELEGATION
REVIEWS YANQUL
HEALTH CITY
INITIATIVES

YANQUL: A delegation from the World Health Organization (WHO) reviewed a number of health and community initiatives and programmes being implemented by Yanqul Health City in Al Dhahirah Governorate. This effort aims to promote public health concepts, sustainable development and improve quality of life.

The delegation began its visit programme with a meeting at the office of Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed al Busaidy, Wali of Yanqul, attended by members of the Executive Office of Yanqul Health City and a number of officials and specialists from the wilayat.

The meeting included an extensive presentation on the most prominent events, activities and initiatives implemented by Yanqul Health City, along with an overview of the wilayat’s geographical location and its health and developmental indicators. The presentation also discussed programmes and projects implemented in accordance with approved Healthy Cities standards.

— ONA

OMAN ELECTED
CHAIR OF GLOBAL
ASSOCIATION OF
EXHIBITION

IZMIR: Represented by Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Sultanate of Oman was recently elected as chair of the UFI, “The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry”, for the period 2027-2028. The announcement was made during a meeting of the board of directors of the UFI in Izmir, Türkiye. The voting reflects Oman’s growing position on the map of global exhibitions, conferences and business events industry.

Eng Said bin Salim al Shanfari, CEO of Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, will assume the duties and mandates of President of the UFI with effect from November 2026.

Al Shanfari will officially take over as President of the “Global Association of the Exhibition Industry” during the UFI’s 94th World Congress in Guadalajara, Mexico, in November 2027. He will become the first Omani and first Arab person to hold this position since the UFI Association was founded more than 100 years ago.

The election of the CEO of Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre constitutes a step forward in consolidating the presence of the Middle East and Africa Region in the decision-making arena of the global exhibition industry. — ONA



ENG SAID BIN
SALIM AL
SHANFARI

45-49 AGE
GROUP
RECORDED
HIGHEST
PERCENTAGE
OF OMANI
PILGRIMS:
NCSI

MUSCAT: The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) has issued a statistical report on pilgrims from the Sultanate of Oman for 1447 AH/2026, highlighting key indicators related to the number of pilgrims, their demographic and geographic characteristics, and means of transport used.

The report indicated that the total number of pilgrims from the Sultanate of Oman reached approximately 14,000 during 2026, with a pilgrim rate of 3.6 pilgrims per thousand residents aged 18 years and above.

The report noted that males constituted 51 per cent of the total pilgrims, numbering 6,885, compared to 6,599 female pilgrims, representing 49 per cent. Omanis accounted for 97 per cent of the total pilgrims, compared to 3 per cent for expatriates.



Omanis accounted for 97 per cent of the total pilgrims, compared to 3 per cent for expatriates. - ONA

The data showed that the 45-49 age group recorded the highest percentage of total pilgrims during 2026, at 17 per cent, followed by the 40-44 age group at 16 per cent.

In terms of geographic distribution, the Governorate of Muscat ranked first among the governorates of the Sultanate of

Oman in the number of pilgrims, with a total of 3,397 pilgrims, followed by Al Batinah North (2,445) and Al Batinah South (1,683). The Governorate of Al Dhahirah recorded the highest rate of pilgrims per thousand residents aged 18 years and above, at 4.5 pilgrims.

Nine projects to represent
Oman at London forum

SAUD AL ANSARI
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

THE Research and Innovation Authority (RIA) announced the nine qualifying projects to represent the Sultanate of Oman at the 67th edition of the London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF) this year, scheduled to take place from July 19 to August 1.

The ceremony was presided over by Brigadier General Ahmed bin Khalfan al Hadidi, Dean of the Military Technological College (MTC), who honoured the nine projects qualified to participate in the London International Youth Science Forum.

The following individuals have qualified: Aya al Kindi with her project “Hares” – An AI-Powered Anti-Money Laundering System; Al Azhar al Azri with “Hydrogenix”; Aiham al Manthri with a project on converting methane emissions into ectoine through a sustainable biotechnological system; and Amina al Jabri with a project on converting sound energy into electricity using a thermoelectric model.

The selected projects emerged from a highly competitive process involving 738 innovative entries across Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. An initial screening shortlisted 30 projects that met the required scientific criteria, which were then evaluated by a specialised judging panel comprising experts from the Research and Innovation Authority, the University of Nizwa, and the Military Technological College. The panel ultimately selected the top nine projects to represent Oman at the prestigious forum.

Dr Salah al Zadjali, Acting Director-General of Programmes and Capacity Building at RIA, stated that these participations align with ongoing efforts to enhance innovation programmes and outputs in line with Oman Vision 2040, particularly in education, scientific research and national capabilities. He emphasised the Authority’s continued role in preparing



The ceremony was presided over by Brigadier General Ahmed bin Khalfan al Hadidi, Dean of the Military Technological College (MTC).

a generation of Omani researchers capable of competing globally through specialised training programmes.

He added that Omani participation in the forum has witnessed steady growth since 2016, with a total of 1,167 student projects submitted to date and 48 students having participated, while more than 200 students have competed for selection across different editions. These indicators, he noted, reflect the growing interest in scientific research and innovation among students, as well as the success of national programmes in identifying and nurturing talent. He also highlighted that Oman achieved notable recognition in 2025, with projects ranking among the top 13 globally at the forum.

Innovator Buthaina Bou Jarda, developer of the “Hydrogen Fuel Car” project, noted that her international participation provided an inspiring platform for exchanging expertise with global innovators, emphasising that passion for innovation is key to transforming environmental challenges into development opportunities.

In the field of cybersecurity, Mohammed bin Abdul Rahman al Shuhi, developer of

the “Synapse Cyber” project, said, “The project is a device that functions as an integrated firewall for networks, websites and applications using artificial intelligence, based on algorithms developed and innovated by the team.” He added that a prototype has been implemented and tested, demonstrating high efficiency.

Muhanad bin Said al Saqri, a student at the Military Technological College and developer of the “Health and Usage Monitoring System for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles”, explained that the project aims to transfer health monitoring systems used in conventional aircraft to drones in order to facilitate maintenance and improve operational efficiency.

“Analysing operational data helps extend the lifespan of UAVs and enables companies to maximise their utilisation,” he said.

In the field of social innovation, Tasneem bint Said al Farsi, developer of the “Smart Cane for the Blind”, said that the project focuses on developing a smart cane that alerts users when approaching obstacles and sends emergency text messages to their families along with real-time location data.

State Council reviews quality in private higher education

MUSCAT: The Education and Research Committee of the State Council hosted Dr Jokha bint Abdullah al Shukaili, Chairperson of the Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education, to review a study titled ‘Efficiency of Management of Private Higher Education Institutions: Government Oversight and Self-Governance.’

The meeting was chaired by Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Sarmi, Head of the Education and Research Committee of the State Council, and attended by the members of the committee and Khalid bin Ahmed al Saadi, Secretary-General of the State Council.



The meeting also addressed the Authority’s role in ensuring the quality of outputs from private higher education institutions.

During the meeting, the committee discussed several topics related to the quality assurance and academic accreditation system in private higher education institutions. It listened to the

Authority’s views on the impact of regulations and legislation governing public and private higher education institutions on enhancing academic accreditation standards and improving the quality

of institutional and programme performance over the past years.

The meeting also addressed the Authority’s role in ensuring the quality of outputs from private higher education institutions, the adequacy of legislation and laws regulating quality and governance within these institutions, and the mechanisms for monitoring their compliance with national standards and quality and academic accreditation requirements.

The Authority reviewed the most prominent challenges it faces in enhancing the impact of the quality and academic accreditation system on the

performance of private higher education institutions, in addition to the opportunities available to develop regulatory and legislative frameworks to improve the outputs of higher education, and enhance the competitiveness of academic institutions at the local and international levels.

Meanwhile, the State Council’s Legal Committee discussed the Social and Cultural Committee’s report on the Unified Draft Law for the Management of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, referred from the Council of Ministers.

SHORT TAKES



The meeting addressed the readiness of field units and the level of operational performance. —ONA

CDAА REVIEWS WORKFLOW, EXECUTIVE PLANS

MUSCAT: The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAА) held an extensive meeting to review workflow and executive plans, as well as to discuss ways to develop the system in line with the requirements of development across the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting addressed the readiness of field units, the level of operational performance, and developmental projects aimed at enhancing work efficiency, improving response speed, and elevating the quality of services provided to citizens and residents.

During the meeting, emphasis was placed on the importance of continuing to work as one team and strengthening integration between administrative and field formations to support the Authority’s mission of protecting lives and property and establishing an integrated safety system in accordance with best professional practices.

This meeting is part of the Authority’s approach to enhancing direct communication with executive leadership, monitoring performance indicators and exchanging perspectives to develop institutional work. — ONA

MEETING UNDERLINES IMPACTS OF TAJAWOB



The meeting featured discussions on several key themes related to operational performance indicators. — ONA

MUSCAT: Tajawob platform recorded over 2.6 million visits and 785,000 active users till the end of May 2026. The total number of requests submitted through the platform exceeded 235,000, comprising more than 85,000 complaints, approximately 90,000 reports, over 16,000 suggestions and more than 43,000 inquiries.

These statistics were announced during the “Second Response and Integration Meeting,” hosted by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT), with the participation of over 300 employees representing central and executive teams, as well as communications and media units from government institutions that have activated the national platform for suggestions and complaints “Tajawob.” The meeting is part of ongoing efforts to enhance integration. — ONA

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

Youth should be given value-oriented training and awareness from the childhood onwards so that their inclination towards drugs and psychotropic substances can be minimised effectively, according to experts.

“Value-oriented classes, assigning responsibilities, creating a purpose for life can deter youth from the clutches of drugs and other intoxicating and dangerous substances effectively,” said Dr Amira al Raidan, Supervisor for drug awareness and training at the Prevention Committee of the National committee for Narcotics and Psychotropic substances.



Creating a purpose for life can deter youth from the clutches of drugs and other intoxicating and dangerous substances effectively.

Speaking to the Observer on the sidelines of the ‘Train the Trainer’ programme organised by the Prevention Committee for Narcotics and Psychotropic substances in collaboration with Muscat Taafi

Center, she said the number of drug addicts is rising. “The rising number of drug addicts is the result of inappropriate caring and lack of timely intervention and needs to be addressed by the family,

society and the NGOs and social workers as everyone has a role to play in bringing them back to life.” The specialised training programme in the field of addiction awareness was presented by a select group

of specialists to prepare qualified lecturers in this vital field, such as Dr Asaad al Mousawi, Dr Amira al Raidan, Rashid al Wahaibi and Sulaiman al Kindi.

The one day programme comes in the wake of an increasing number of drug addiction among the youth, and to prepare qualified lecturers to raise awareness of the dangers of addiction and equip them with the necessary skills.

Major areas of attention were the role of the effective trainer, scientific planning, attracting and creating trainers, simplifying information and engaging trainees. The objectives of the programme involved preparing qualified lecturer, raising awareness of the dangers of addiction and equip them, with the necessary skills.

Over 181,000 invasive birds eliminated in Dhofar

SALALAH: The national campaign for combating invasive birds in Dhofar Governorate, launched in December 2022, has resulted in the elimination of 181,582 birds of the Myna and Indian Crow species across the governorate. A decline in the number of invasive birds has also been recorded in several vital locations due to efforts aimed at protecting biodiversity and curbing the spread of invasive birds.

This was announced during the first meeting of the Dhofar Governorate’s Sub-Committee for Combating Invasive Birds, held



A decline in the number of invasive birds has also been recorded in several vital locations.

on Tuesday at the Directorate-General of Environment in Dhofar Governorate. The meeting reviewed the campaign’s progress and the results achieved so far.

The meeting included a presentation on the number of invasive birds eliminated across the governorate along with indicators of their declining population in several vital locations.

The meeting also discussed the effectiveness of the adopted capture and elimination methods and explored ways to develop new tools and traps to achieve faster and more

sustainable results.

The committee stressed the importance of integrated efforts between the Directorate- General of Environment and relevant governmental and private entities, along with strengthening community participation to support control efforts. Through its periodic meetings, the committee seeks to protect the unique biodiversity of Dhofar Governorate, preserve the ecosystem, and mitigate the economic and health damage caused by invasive birds to agricultural crops and local wildlife. — ONA

Demand for travel from region has rebounded

VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

THE summer peak travel time is back amid rising political tensions in the region and uncertainties that crippled the travel sector with the closure of airspace and subsequent surge in ticket fares due to the aviation fuel crisis and reduced capacity by some airlines. However, VFS Global, the agency that handles visa processing for several countries, said that there was a temporary impact on visa services during March and April due to geopolitical shifts.

Since the resumption of travel routes, visa demand has rebounded and is now slightly higher than last year, according to Monaz Billimoria, Regional Head, VFS Global, who told the Observer that Overall demand has remained resilient. This indicates strong traveller confidence and sustains outbound travel interest from Oman. She added, “Visa appointment availability is determined solely by the respective embassies and consulates.

Many Schengen countries continue to accept applications up to six months ahead of travel and early planning remains the most effective way to secure appointments.

While demand is high, waiting periods vary by destination and visa category and applicants are encouraged to monitor the official VFS Global website for appointment availability. We urge travellers to the Schengen region to plan well in advance, as they would for flight and hotel deals, and not leave visa applications to the last minute, especially during peak seasons.”

On new destinations from the Middle East that the GCC and Oman travellers are exploring this year, Billimoria said, “While we



MONAZ BILLIMORIA

Since the resumption of travel routes, visa demand has rebounded and is now slightly higher than last year



VFS Global, the agency that handles visa processing for several countries, said that there was a temporary impact on visa services during March and April due to geopolitical shifts.

can comment on the destinations we serve, broader market observations suggest that travellers are increasingly exploring a wider mix of destinations beyond traditional routes. At the same time, demand for established destinations - particularly within the GCC and Schengen region remains stable, indicating that travellers are balancing familiarity with exploration when planning their journeys.” Travellers who are yet to plan their summer vacations should begin by preparing their visa applications alongside flight and hotel bookings, as early action is the most effective way to avoid last-minute challenges. Most countries accept visa applications up to 90 days (3 months) before your date of travel. You can apply for a Schengen visa up to 6 months before your date of travel.

Document checklists for each visa category are available on the official VFS Global website and applicants are strongly advised to review these carefully to ensure

all paperwork is complete before submission. Essential for a smooth application experience. Visa applications should be initiated as soon as travel plans are confirmed to avoid last-minute complications. Most countries accept visa applications up to 90 days before the intended date of travel, with Schengen accepting applications 180 days ahead. Remember, demand for appointments increases significantly during peak travel periods. Visa processing timelines vary by country and visa category and are determined solely by the relevant embassy or consulate. These timelines are published on official embassy websites and on www.vfsglobal.com. During high-demand periods such as year-end holidays or summer travel seasons, processing times may be longer than usual. Applying early helps minimise the risk of delays. Most Visa Application Centres operate on an appointment-only basis to ensure better crowd management and efficient service.

Give value to youngsters to save them from drugs

SPOTLIGHT

FROM AL JABAL AL AKHDHAR TO DHOFAR,
MOUNTAIN RANGES CONTINUE TO REGULATE CLIMATE, STORE WATER, SUPPORT AGRICULTURE
AND SUSTAIN TRADITIONAL WAYS OF LIFE, STANDING AS ENDURING SYMBOLS OF
THE DEEP CONNECTION BETWEEN NATURE AND SOCIETY IN OMAN.

M O U N T A I N S



THAT SHAPE OMANI LIFE

MOHAMED AL BATTASHI

FROM regulating climate and storing water to shaping agricultural villages and local traditions, Oman's mountains play a role that extends far beyond geography.

Between the towering peaks of Jabal Shams, the terraced landscapes of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar and the mist-covered highlands of Dhofar during the khareef season, a unique relationship between nature and people has helped shape patterns of settlement and daily life for centuries.

According to Al Muathir al Kindi, a geological explorer and researcher in Earth sciences, Jabal Shams and Al Jabal Al Akhdhar belong to the same geological structure within the Al Hajar Mountains, while the Dhofar highlands were formed through different geological processes.

He notes that the significance of these mountain ranges extends beyond their dramatic landscapes, encompassing their direct influence on climate and water distribution.

Al Kindi explains that higher elevations naturally experience cooler temperatures than surrounding areas, which is why Al Jabal Al Akhdhar and Jabal Shams enjoy milder weather during the summer months.

The Al Hajar Mountains also contribute to cloud formation and increased rainfall, helping to feed wadis and recharge underground aquifers. Their geological formations act as natural reservoirs that store and channel water, supporting the sustainability of water resources across many parts of the country. In Dhofar, the mountains play a different but equally important climatic role. Acting as a natural barrier against moisture-laden monsoon winds from the Arabian Sea, the highlands force the

air to rise and cool, producing the mist and light rainfall that characterise the annual khareef season. The result is a striking contrast between the lush green slopes of southern Dhofar and the arid landscapes to the north.

Life in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar reflects the close relationship between people and the mountains. Hamda al Saadi says the mountain villages continue to preserve their traditional character through old stone houses, narrow pathways and agricultural terraces carved into the slopes.

Pomegranate orchards, rose gardens, and farms growing apricots, peaches, figs, and apples, together with aflaj irrigation channels and natural springs, remain an integral part of daily life. At the same time, some heritage homes have been transformed into guesthouses that preserve local identity while welcoming visitors. She adds that life in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar remains closely

tied to farming seasons and community cooperation, with residents continuing agricultural practices passed down through generations. The mountain's mild climate has helped make it one of Oman's most important agricultural and tourism destinations.

Dr Mohammed bin Hilal al Kindi, CEO of the Earth Sciences Consultancy Centre, highlights the global scientific value of Oman's mountains. He notes that the Dhofar highlands contain fossil-rich sites, caves and geological formations that document different stages of the Earth's history. He stresses the importance of protecting these sites, regulating excavation activities and preventing pollution to preserve this natural heritage for future generations.

As Oman faces challenges related to climate change and water sustainability, its mountains remain a vital part of the country's environmental and cultural landscape.



SHORT TAKES



Several other governorates across the country also witnessed extremely high temperatures, with many areas touching 48°C.

Oman under extreme heat as Mahout touches 50°C

MUSCAT: Oman continued to experience intense summer heat on Wednesday, with Mahout recording a scorching 50°C, making it the hottest location in the Sultanate of Oman, according to the latest update from the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre under the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Several other governorates across the country also witnessed extremely high temperatures, with many areas touching 48°C, highlighting the severity of the ongoing heatwave sweeping across Oman.

The CAA reported 48°C in Al Ramayim, Nizwa, Dima W'attayeen, Bidiyah, and Qarn Al Alam, while Adam and Al Mudhaibi recorded 47°C.

High temperatures were also observed in parts of Al Sharqiyah North, Al Sharqiyah South, Al Dakhiliyah, and Al Wusta governorates. Even coastal areas were not spared, with parts of Muscat Governorate witnessing temperatures above 40°C, adding to discomfort levels due to humidity.

Authorities have repeatedly urged the public to remain cautious during peak afternoon hours as extreme heat raises the risk of heat exhaustion, dehydration and vehicle-related incidents, including overheating and fires.

UTAS Al Musannah to host ‘Open Data’ forum on Monday

AL MUSANNAH: The University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Al Musannah will organise the third edition of its Library Forum on Monday, June 8, under the theme ‘Open Data and the Future Economy’. The event will bring together academics, researchers, experts and specialists from various sectors across the Sultanate of Oman.

The forum is being held in alignment with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises the development of a knowledge-based economy driven by innovation and advanced technologies. It also reflects the university’s commitment to promoting digital transformation and leveraging open data to support scientific research, innovation and evidence-based decision-making.

The forum aims to explore the future of open data in Oman and its role in advancing national development priorities. It will also raise awareness of the concept and benefits of open data, particularly in enhancing transparency, fostering research collaboration and supporting innovation and scientific advancement.

OPAZ explores stronger Oman-Korea investment ties

MUSCAT: Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), and Head of the Omani side in the Oman-Korea Joint Committee met with Kim, Jung-Kwan, Minister of Trade, Industry and Resources and Head of the Korean side in the Joint Committee of the Republic of Korea, to strengthen and advance Omani-Korean relations towards an economic and investment partnership between the two friendly countries.

The discussions covered topics of mutual interest as part of ongoing efforts to expand economic and investment cooperation between the



The discussions covered topics of mutual interest as part of ongoing efforts to expand economic cooperation.

two friendly countries. The two sides reviewed promising opportunities for collaboration across several priority sectors, including oil and gas, green hydrogen, artificial intelligence (AI)

technologies, vehicle and automotive manufacturing, as well as the development and support of small and medium-sized enterprises. The meeting underscored the importance of strengthening

cooperation and integration in the field of special economic zones and free zones between the two countries and leveraging shared expertise and experiences to support economic and development objectives while reinforcing the strategic partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Korea. The two sides also discussed ways to facilitate operational and logistics activities for Korean companies operating in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), contributing to an enhanced business environment and attracting further Korean investments to the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman-founded WFC opens first African chapter

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

THE global Women Future Cities (WFC) initiative has announced the launch of its first African chapter in Cameroon during a special ceremony held at the Republic of Cameroon Pavilion on the sidelines of the World Urban Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan. The milestone marks a major step in the initiative’s international expansion and underscores its growing commitment to empowering women to play a leading role in shaping smarter, more sustainable, and inclusive cities and communities worldwide.

The newly established Cameroon Chapter, the first for Women Future Cities in Africa, will be led by Mirabel Nduum Mabeh, who has been appointed Head of the Women Future Cities Cameroon Chapter.

Under her leadership, the chapter aims to engage women from diverse sectors and backgrounds, promoting innovation, leadership, entrepreneurship, sustainability and community development across Cameroon.

Founded in the Sultanate of Oman, Women Future Cities has rapidly grown into a global platform dedicated to empowering women and creating opportunities for them to contribute meaningfully to the development of future-ready communities.

The initiative focuses on leadership development, knowledge sharing, capacity building and international collaboration.

Commenting on the launch, Laila al Hadhrami, Chairwoman of



Laila al Hadhrami with Mirabel Nduum Mabeh, at launch of its first African Chapter in Cameroon during the World Urban Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Founded in the Sultanate of Oman, Women Future Cities has rapidly grown into a global platform dedicated to empowering women and creating opportunities for them to contribute meaningfully to the development of future-ready communities

Women Future Cities, emphasised the significance of the initiative’s expansion into Africa.

“The launch of our Cameroon Chapter is an important milestone in our journey toward building a truly global network of women leaders and changemakers. Africa is home to tremendous talent, innovation, and potential, and we are excited to collaborate with women in Cameroon to drive positive impact within their communities and beyond,” she said.

The Cameroon Chapter will focus on advancing the four key pillars of Women Future Cities: Leadership and Community Development, Smart Technologies, Environment and Sustainability, and Entrepreneurship.

Through workshops, leadership programmes, community

initiatives, and strategic partnerships, the chapter seeks to equip women with the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to lead meaningful change and contribute to the development of smart and sustainable communities.

The launch follows the successful establishment of Women Future Cities chapters in Oman, Bahrain, Jordan, and Peru, reflecting the initiative’s expanding international footprint and its commitment to fostering cross-border collaboration among women.

As Women Future Cities continues its global expansion, the initiative remains focused on empowering women to become active contributors in shaping the future of cities and communities through innovation, sustainability and inclusive leadership.

RO 17.2 million Wadi Al Sahtan water project reaches 46% completion

STAFF REPORTER
AL RUSTAQ, JUNE 3

Nama Water Services continues the implementation of the Wadi Al Sahtan Water Transmission and Distribution Network Project in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq, an area where rugged mountainous terrain, winding routes and complex rock formations present unique engineering challenges. The project is being delivered through carefully designed engineering solutions that balance infrastructure development with environmental sustainability.

As part of the first phase, the project has reached 46 per cent completion, with a total investment of RO 17.2 million. The initiative forms part of Nama Water Services’ ongoing efforts to enhance the



Upon completion, the project will provide more than 840 household connections, benefiting approximately 4,200 residents and improving the reliability and accessibility of water services in the area.

efficiency and sustainability of water supply systems in mountainous and rural areas while supporting urban

expansion and future development requirements. Eng Saif bin Mohammed al

Gharbi, Project Manager, said the project reflects Nama Water Services’ strategic approach to developing a sustainable and efficient water infrastructure system, noting that implementing projects in geographically challenging environments demonstrates a high level of institutional readiness in managing resources and infrastructure.

He added that the project is part of Nama Water Services’ broader investment portfolio, which exceeds RO 1 billion across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, supporting the long-term development of the water sector and the sustainability of water supplies nationwide.

Construction activities currently involve approximately 300 engineers,

technicians and field personnel, who continue to carry out works in demanding terrain that requires continuous operational readiness and precision throughout all stages of implementation.

Designed to enhance water services and support community stability, the project will provide reliable and sustainable water supplies, reduce reliance on alternative water sources and strengthen the integration of essential services in the targeted areas.

Al Gharbi explained that construction activities require intensive engineering work due to the combination of steep slopes and complex geological formations, which pose significant challenges for excavation and network installation works.

HOSTILITIES FLARE IN MIDEAST



Iranian women walk through Enghelab Square in Tehran. — AFP

KUWAIT DENIES AIRSPACE USED FOR ATTACKS <i>Kuwait said that its territory and airspace were not used to attack “any country”, denying Iranian claims that the United States launched strikes from there.</i>	HEZBOLLAH CLAIMS ATTACK TARGETING TROOPS <i>Hezbollah claimed an attack on Israeli troops in northern Israel as officials began a second day of direct talks in Washington that Hezbollah opposes.</i>	TRUMP FOUL LANGUAGE WITH NETANYAHU <i>US President Donald Trump has confirmed a tense exchange with Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu in which he reportedly berated his close ally with expletives.</i>	KHAMENEI ADVISER VOWS ‘DELUGE OF MISSILES’ <i>The military adviser to Iran’s supreme leader on Wednesday warned of more missile and drone strikes should the United States renew its attacks on Iran.</i>	DEADLY ATTACK ON KUWAIT AIRPORT INJURES 63 <i>An attack on Kuwait’s airport wounded at least 63 people on Wednesday, the health ministry said, with authorities earlier reporting one person killed.</i>
--	--	--	---	--

WAR HOSTILITIES flared again on Wednesday as Iranian attacks on Kuwait damaged its airport and injured dozens while the US military carried out strikes near the Strait of Hormuz, with diplomacy to halt the war showing little sign of progress. The attacks are the latest to test a shaky ceasefire, sending oil prices up more than 2 per cent, as the strait remains largely closed more than three months after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran. Flights at Kuwait International Airport were suspended after an Iranian drone and missile attack damaged airport facilities and diplomatic missions, killing one person and injuring more than 60 others. The civil aviation authority said Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways were resuming flights after taking safety measures. Earlier, Iranian media reported that Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guards had attacked the headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain and a US airbase, as well as a vessel identified as Panaya. US Central Command denied its bases had been hit and said Iranian ballistic missiles failed to strike their targets in the region.

Flights at Kuwait International Airport were suspended after an Iranian drone and missile attack damaged airport facilities and diplomatic missions, killing one person and injuring more than 60 others. The civil aviation authority said Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways were resuming flights after taking safety measures.

Centcom said it had carried out a new round of “defensive strikes” in southern Iran, targeted missile launch sites and Iranian boats seeking to lay mines, and carried out strikes on Qeshm Island near the Strait of Hormuz after attempted Iranian attacks. **CEASEFIRE STRAINED** Since the conflict began on February 28, Iran has repeatedly attacked targets in the Gulf region home to US military bases, hitting civilian and military targets. Hostilities have occasionally flared up in recent weeks despite a ceasefire agreed in early April, as the US has pushed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a route that handled roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments before the war. Last week, Iran and the US signalled progress towards a tentative initial agreement to halt the war and reopen the strait, but the two sides have yet to sign off on the deal, which would leave more complex negotiations for later. Mohsen Rezaei, military adviser to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, said Iran would not allow the US to “overreach” either in negotiations or ceasefire arrangements. In a post on X, he warned that any aggression would be

met with a barrage of missiles and drones. Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, said repeated attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain required a firm and cohesive Gulf response. “The aggression does not target one country alone, but all of us,” he wrote on X. **COURSE OF TALKS** Since mid-March, US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he is close to a deal to end the fighting and pave the way for negotiations on thorny issues including the future of Iran’s nuclear programme. Tehran has conditioned a deal on an end to fighting in Lebanon. It also wants access to billions of dollars in oil revenues, waivers on sanctions on crude exports, a lifting of a US blockade on its ports and continued leverage over the strait. Trump, who is under pressure to bring down US fuel prices while not making concessions to Iran, has said his top priority is to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran says its atomic programme is for peaceful purposes. Trump has said negotiations are continuing, though Iran’s semi-official Tasnim news agency said on Wednesday that Iran had not responded to the US in recent days and that exchanges of texts

through intermediaries were suspended until Iran’s conditions on Lebanon are met. In a podcast interview released on Wednesday, Trump said Iran had agreed to not have a nuclear weapon and that Khamenei was involved in negotiations. “They’ve already agreed they’re not going to have a nuclear weapon,” he said. The war has killed thousands, mainly in Iran and Lebanon, while causing global economic pain by severely disrupting energy supplies and other shipping. It also sparked the latest round of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, with Israel pursuing its deepest incursion into Lebanon in 25 years. On Wednesday, Israeli drone strikes killed at least nine people in southern Lebanon and targeted a car just south of Beirut, Lebanese security sources said, while Israel said it intercepted a hostile aircraft likely fired by Hezbollah. In his podcast comments, Trump acknowledged having called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “crazy” in a reportedly expletive-filled phone exchange over the fighting in Lebanon as he sought a deal over the wider war. “At some point I said, Bibi, we got to stop this. We got to stop it,” Trump said, referring to Netanyahu by his nickname. — Reuters

Israel approves huge West Bank settlement push, many consider illegal

TEL AVIV: Israel’s hardline finance minister announced on Wednesday a major expansion by more than 2,000 homes of three Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank that Palestinians hope will be part of a future independent state. Most nations consider Israeli settlements there to be illegal under international law and a major obstacle to a two-state solution for long-term peace. Bezalel Smotrich, who holds authority over parts of Israel’s civilian administration in the West Bank, said a planning committee approved the construction of 2,162 new Jewish homes. They include 1,006 units in a new settlement near Jerusalem, 922 near the

Palestinian city of Nablus and 234 near Hebron. “We are continuing to build the Land of Israel in practice,” said Smotrich, an ultranationalist sanctioned by Britain, France and others who accuse him of inciting violence against Palestinians. Smotrich has denounced the sanctions against him, saying the measures would not change Israeli policy. The new homes would “strengthen our hold on the land, reinforce Israel’s security, and establish clear facts on the ground that prevent the creation of an Arab state in the heart of the country,” Smotrich said in a statement, without specifying when construction would begin. Since becoming a minister three years ago,



French Navy personnel approach an oil tanker, subject to international sanctions and sailing from Russia, in the Atlantic Ocean. — Reuters

Smotrich has sought to tighten Israel’s control and presence in the West Bank while advocating against the idea of a Palestinian state. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s right-wing government has overseen the significant expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the establishment of new settlements. Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent state that includes East Jerusalem and Gaza. Around half a million Israelis live in the West Bank among about 3 million Palestinians. US President Donald Trump’s administration has been far less critical of the fast-expanding Israeli settlements. However,

Trump did say last September that he would not allow Israel to annex the West Bank, angering some right-wing Israeli lawmakers. Condemning Wednesday’s announcement, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’ office warned that Israel’s “provocative” policies were pushing the region towards more rounds of violence and called on the US to stop the Israeli “madness”. Smotrich on May 19 said he would wage “war” on the Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited civic rule in the West Bank, after he said he was told the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor had sought a confidential arrest warrant against him. — Reuters

Lebanon says 9 killed as Israel pounds south

BEIRUT: Lebanon said Israeli strikes on Wednesday killed at least nine people in the country’s south, including two paramedics, while another raid hit a car near Beirut. The Israeli military, meanwhile, said it intercepted a “hostile aircraft” and two projectiles that crossed into Israeli territory from Lebanon. Israeli officials have warned the military will strike Beirut’s southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold, if the group targets northern Israeli communities, a stance they say has backing from Washington. Hezbollah said its fighters on Wednesday attacked Israeli troops who have invaded southern Lebanon, but the group has not claimed a cross-border attack since Monday. Israeli and Lebanese diplomats are to hold a second day of direct talks in Washington — the fourth round since the fighting erupted on March 2, when Hezbollah entered the Middle East war on the side of its backer Iran with rocket fire at Israel. Hezbollah is sharply opposed to the direct negotiations.



A relative of a man who was killed along with his son and daughter in an Israeli strike that targeted their car in southern Lebanon reacts as she mourns over their coffins during their funeral in the border village of Qlayaa. — AFP

Lebanon’s state-run National News Agency (NNA) said an Israeli strike targeted “a car on the Khaldeh road”. A correspondent saw an ambulance and onlookers gathering at the strike site, located on the main highway heading south from the capital. The NNA reported strikes on more than 20 locations in the south, some after Israel’s military warned residents of several villages to evacuate. The health ministry said an Israeli attack on Al Hawsh near the city of Tyre killed four Syrians and two Palestinians. But an Israeli military spokesperson said that Tel Aviv bureau that “we are not aware of any such attack having occurred in the area”. The health ministry said an Israeli strike elsewhere in the south targeted an ambulance, killing two paramedics. The ministry circulated images of a badly damaged ambulance, with medical masks spilling out of the vehicle and scattered on the road. At least 130 emergency and health workers have been killed since the fighting began.

The health ministry said an Israeli strike elsewhere in the south targeted an ambulance, killing two paramedics. The ministry circulated images of a badly damaged ambulance, with medical masks spilling out of the vehicle and scattered on the road. At least 130 emergency and health workers have been killed since the fighting began

At least 130 emergency and health workers have been killed since the fighting began. Lebanon’s army said a soldier was also killed in an Israeli strike, while an officer and a soldier were wounded in a separate attack on a military vehicle. The force decried Israel’s “deliberate targeting of army personnel, vehicles and positions”. On Tuesday, Israel’s military alleged that Hezbollah members were operating in Tyre’s Christian quarter — an area so far spared Israeli evacuation warnings and strikes targeting the rest of the city — and warned it would order people to leave should the group remain there. A correspondent said the situation in Tyre was relatively calm on Wednesday morning, adding that some people who had been sleeping in cars or tents at the edge of the Christian quarter left for other parts of the city. The mayor toured the area late on Tuesday alongside a Lebanese army intelligence officer and a member of the Christian clergy,

seeking to reassure residents. A petition calling for Tyre to be declared an “open city” free of any armed presence and urging Lebanon’s military to deploy there has garnered more than 180 signatures, including local lawyers and intellectuals. Hezbollah has a strong presence in Tyre, and some signatories have since been attacked on social media for their stance. More than 200 people have signed a similar petition concerning Nabatieh, another large south Lebanon city that has come under Israeli attack. Israel has recently escalated its attacks and is staging its deepest ground offensive into Lebanon in two decades. US President Donald Trump said he had brokered a deal that Lebanon said would at first halt Israeli attacks on Beirut and Hezbollah attacks on Israeli territory, before expanding in scope. Senior Hezbollah official Mahmud Qomati said on Tuesday that the group “will not accept a partial ceasefire”. — AFP

SHOWCASE RESPONSIBILITY



Vessels in the Strait of Hormuz are visible near the beach of Bandar Abbas, Iran. — Reuters

EU OFFERS ‘PRIMARY ROLE’ IN CLEARING HORMUZ MINES

BRUSSELS: The European Union has proposed that the bloc’s Aspides naval mission take “the primary role” in clearing mines in the Strait of Hormuz “when conditions allow” as part of a Franco-British-led initiative, according to a document seen by reporters. The European External Action Service wrote in a note dated May 26 and sent to member states that “the situation requires the Union to provide a meaningful contribution” to a coalition led by France and Britain “to be materialised once conditions allow and separated from the belligerents”. Changing the Aspides mission’s mandate would require unanimity, and it remains unclear if the EU’s 27 member countries would back such a change. The mission was established in 2024 to protect ships from attacks by Yemeni’s Ansar Allah group in the Red Sea. Around a fifth of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas supplies pass through the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway that effectively closed after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has “immense shared consequences for the region and Europe, with Iran selectively allowing passage,” the EU’s diplomatic arm wrote in its note. France and Britain have taken the lead in putting together a coalition of countries that could help ensure safe transit through the Strait once the situation there stabilises or the conflict is resolved. It is unclear if Iran has placed mines in the waterway. The EU’s diplomatic service said that a European contribution would serve “to showcase EU-wide ownership and responsibility in addressing a situation affecting all Member States” and “vis-a-vis Nato Allies”. An Aspides role would also “allow all Member States to financially support, via the Operation’s common costs, those willing and able to contribute,” it wrote. — Reuters

OPINION

Environmental language now carries a weight



RUMAITHA
AL BUSAIDI

LinkedIn:
@RumaithaAlBusaidi

The writer
is an Omani
environmental
strategist advancing
Middle East climate
action and women's
leadership

SOMEONE SENT me an image this week, passed around as a joke. The premise was simple: slap environmental protection fees in negotiations, and watch it begin to sound like an act of stewardship. Others passed it on with a laugh. I went looking for why it landed, and the answer was that it no longer sounds far-fetched.

What the joke admits is that environmental language now carries a weight it never used to hold. A decade ago, dressing fees in green would have fooled no one.

Today, it reads as a position a serious negotiator might actually take, because protection of the environment has become one of the few claims almost no one wants to be seen refusing.

For most of my working life, the environment lived in the language of appeal. We made the moral case, signed pledges no one was forced to keep, and trusted that goodwill would carry us.

Somewhere along the way, it became something we also charge with, and it began to travel the same routes that carry the

world's goods, setting terms as it went.

At the European border, the carbon inside steel and cement is now written into the price of bringing them in, so a factory in one country answers to the climate rules of another to reach a buyer.

At sea, governments have spent years negotiating the first global charge on the emissions of every large vessel afloat, and what tells you how much is at stake is how hard it has been fought. Approved in principle in 2025, its adoption was pushed back a year amid sharp disagreement among states, and it may not bind until the end of the decade. No one fights that hard over a gesture.

Nowhere is it plainer than at the chokepoints. When drought drained the lake that feeds the Panama Canal, the authority there cut daily crossings by roughly a third and auctioned the few slots that remained, and shipping companies paid extraordinary sums to move ahead of the queue, one of them close to four million dollars for a single passage.

Water, an environmental fact, decided who crossed a corridor the world depends on and

What the joke admits is that environmental language now carries a weight it never used to hold. A decade ago, dressing fees in green would have fooled no one. Today, it reads as a position a serious negotiator might actually take, because protection of the environment has become one of the few claims almost no one wants to be seen refusing.

who waited. I think of the strangeness of it, one of the great works of human engineering slowed to a crawl by a shortage of rain, while ships and their crews idled offshore for weeks, waiting on water that would not come.

What unsettles me is where that cost finally lands. It rides into the price of the grain, the fuel and the medicine the ships are carrying, and it comes to rest in kitchens and clinics far from any negotiating table, paid by people who had no part in the choices that set it.

A household stretching its food budget feels the higher number at the till without ever seeing the ship behind it.

What I keep returning to is the unease underneath the joke. A vocabulary built to speak for the planet now carries economic and political weight, and the same words can serve very different ends, real care in one moment and calculation in the next.

The questions that matter are about who gets to define this language, who gains when it is invoked, and who is left paying for it. None of those has a settled answer yet, and I am not sure we will like all of them when they come.

Trump administration proposes 25% tariff

DAVID LAWDER AND
LISANDRA PARAGUASSU

The Trump administration has proposed a new punitive tariff of 25% on many imports from Brazil, after deciding its practices were unfair on a range of issues from digital trade to illegal deforestation, top trade official Jamieson Greer said late on Monday.

The measures, under the Section 301 trade statute, cover areas such as electronic payment services, preferential tariffs, intellectual property protection and ethanol market access as well, the Office of the United States Trade Representative said.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva reacted to the newly proposed tariff on Tuesday, accusing US Secretary of State Marco Rubio of being anti-Latin America.

The president also said that US and Brazilian trade negotiators have met three times in recent weeks, with no deal reached so far. Lula added that while the Trump administration sought to tariff Brazil, China, on Tuesday, declared the country free of foot-and-mouth disease.

The US Embassy in Brazil did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The proposed new tariff, subject to public consultation ahead of a July 15 deadline, would exclude some items, such as beef, coffee, rare earths, other metals, energy and aircraft parts.

The USTR said its unfair trade practices investigation into Brazil, started last year under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, had found practices that “are unreasonable and burden or restrict US commerce,” opening the door for a punitive tariff.

Greer called the Brazil action “quite nuanced” because of the broad exemptions. He said that the trade agency will release the findings of several more Section 301 unfair trade practices investigations in the coming weeks, adding that substantial tariffs were needed to correct a “giant” US trade deficit.

Two Brazilian officials familiar with the matter said the justifications for a new US tariff ignored many of the arguments presented by Brasilia in recent months, suggesting the motives were political rather than technical.

Despite a White House visit last month by Lula, bilateral relations have turned chilly.

Rubio designated Brazil’s two biggest criminal gangs as terrorist organisations over objections from Brasilia, opening the door for more aggressive interventions in the country.

Days earlier, Lula’s main rival in the October election, Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, had argued in favour of the terrorist label during a tour of Washington that included meetings with Rubio, Vice-President JD Vance and President Donald Trump. — Reuters

‘Breakneck’ Ebola epidemic outpaces world’s response

JENNIFER RIGBY, AARON ROSS &
EMMA FARGE

IN AN EBOLA outbreak, hours matter. Yet the response to the deadly and fast-spreading epidemic in the Democratic Republic of Congo is weeks if not months behind - and missing thousands of people who may be at risk. Interviews with global health officials and documents from a meeting led by the World Health Organization and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention show how behind the curve authorities are in fighting the latest outbreak.

Caused by a strain of the virus known as Bundibugyo for which there is no vaccine or treatment, the outbreak has already caused a suspected 220 deaths and 900 cases, according to the WHO. It has spread to Uganda, where there are seven cases.

Health teams are racing to find thousands of people who may have been exposed to the virus while also grappling with myriad challenges that make it difficult to contain.

Problems at a local level include lack of basic supplies as well as mistrust from a community scarred by previous outbreaks. Globally, the response is hampered by the withdrawal of the US from the WHO and wider funding cuts, many health sources said.

Documents from Friday’s virtual coordination meeting show that, as of last week, only 7 per cent of the 1,261 people identified as contacts of suspected Ebola patients had been found and followed up. The WHO put the number at more than 2,000.

The outbreak is “outpacing the response”, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus posted on Wednesday.

“Attacks on health facilities make tracking cases and their contacts nearly impossible.”

In eastern Congo, the worst-hit area, hospitals have been attacked and isolation tents burned by angry



Workers from the Uganda Red Cross Society don protective suits as they prepare to evacuate the body of a suspected Ebola victim in Kampala. — AFP

- Teams struggle to trace thousands potentially exposed
- Experts warn outbreak spread undetected for weeks
- Community mistrust and attacks on health workers hinder response

mobs reclaiming bodies of loved ones, apparently unaware of risks from infectious corpses.

That is hindering the operation to stop the spread of the virus and track those at risk in an area already wracked with conflict and with poor health infrastructure, three experts said. In a document summary of the meeting on Friday, the partners agreed that reaching more contacts is now the key priority as funding and emergency response personnel trickle in.

“Bottom line: No vaccine exists. No therapy exists. The virus circulated undetected for six weeks. Cross-border spread is confirmed. Healthcare workers are dying. Every day without a fully resourced response is a day the outbreak gains ground,” a presentation by the WHO Africa team from the meeting reads.

Prof Salim Abdool Karim, a leading South African epidemiologist and one of the key figures advising Africa CDC, said the outbreak was moving at “breakneck speed”.

“If you had to choose a bad place for this to happen, it would be Ituri,” he added of the province at its epicentre.

While Congolese officials are well-versed in fighting Ebola - this is the 17th outbreak since 1976 - shortages remain a problem, including of the right tests to detect Bundibugyo rather than other Ebola viruses. This was also

a factor delaying initial detection.

“There are very few people on the ground - and there are other problems as well, like getting fuel for the vehicles. It goes on and on,” Karim said.

Several sources, including one US official briefed on the Ebola response and another working with WHO, said problems would have been solved more easily and quickly in the past, when the US worked with WHO and often co-led the international response to outbreaks.

The US left the organisation in January and has cut international aid funding more broadly, alongside a number of other wealthy countries.

“The organisations that would have been able to do this work are not there anymore,” said one US official briefed on the response.

Amadou Bocoum, CARE’s country director, said his emergency response team had been cut by a third.

US Department of State spokesperson Tommy Pigott said the country had responded within 24 hours of the first confirmed cases, mobilising a range of medical, humanitarian, operational and consular resources to rapidly respond. “Our highest priority remains protecting the health and security of the American people by working to prevent this outbreak from reaching our shores,” he said.

With the scale and origins of the outbreak unclear, it was a “hell of a job” to find all potential cases and contacts, said Marion Koopmans, a Dutch virologist on the WHO’s emergency committee.

Ebola spreads through direct contact with the bodily fluids of infected people once they have symptoms, contaminated materials, and bodies of those who have died with the illness. The contacts of Ebola patients need to be found and then watched over for 21 days, the incubation period of the virus. If they get symptoms, they can isolate, stopping further spread. — Reuters

Monitoring drug trafficking trends



SONIA AMBROSIO

The writer is a journalist, academic and researcher in media studies

NOT ONLY is the temperature scorching in Oman, but so is the persistence of people attempting to smuggle illegal substances into the country. I have just returned from an overseas trip to celebrate my wrinkles and read the news about the two failed smuggling attempts in May. It is not even the middle of 2026, and there is a surge in cross-border trafficking attempts. Over 1,000 smuggling cases may have been busted by authorities thus far. Two recent cases suggest the use of a ‘mule’ when someone is hired to transport substances. We need to talk without denial or misrepresentation about the manufacturing and trafficking of illegal drugs in the country. Although law enforcement authorities have intensified their efforts to combat drug trafficking, resulting in arrests during 2025 and early 2026, traffickers appear to be prepared with innovative strategies to evade detection. Illegal drugs are artfully concealed within legitimate cargo. Captagon pills are hidden inside electrical bobbins and fuel tanks; amphetamine is disguised within boxes of coffee creamer. Heroin is buried within metallic scrap and psychoactive substances in boxes, pottery, machinery, and furniture shipments. These methods reflect the sophistication of trafficking rings. Studies by international institutions suggest that synthetic drugs have become the new business model for criminal groups. This change is because synthetic drugs are harder to detect and more resistant to

climate fluctuations than agricultural opiate products. Additionally, studies suggest that the Gulf countries have emerged as an appealing market and a central hub for re-exports, highlighting an increasing domestic appetite for substances such as Captagon. Alongside Captagon, there is a growing increase in the production and illegal trade of various synthetic narcotics. In March, the authorities dismantled an international network involved in the manufacturing and smuggling of narcotics for both local and regional distribution, seizing drugs valued at RO 1.3 million. In February, individuals were arrested in different areas of the capital for possessing and selling drugs. According to public information, the substances were concealed in various residential neighbourhoods. In January, authorities prevented multiple major drug trafficking attempts across maritime and land borders. Pharmaceutical ingredients and chemicals are also being smuggled to produce new products in kitchen laboratories. This trend suggests that the variety in composition and packaging can meet consumer preferences regarding potency, price, and target demographics. In the region, methamphetamine is found in multiple forms, predominantly crystal, liquid, powdered, and tablet. Compiling totals for seizures, substance types, or offenders’ nationalities was challenging. The figures collected were often incomplete or unsystematic.

Studies by international institutions suggest that synthetic drugs have become the new business model for criminal groups. This change is because synthetic drugs are harder to detect and more resistant to climate fluctuations than agricultural opiate products.

Foreign traffickers’ nationalities upon arrest were widely reported in local media as Asian, although there were some exceptions. It appears there is a diplomatic sensitivity surrounding the issue. Local news coverage indicates that drug enforcement operations primarily focus on coastal areas. Smugglers have been known to use misleading tactics, such as sending a smaller, detectable shipment to distract authorities while a more substantial shipment passes through a different or less-examined point. The tense geopolitical situation and heightened naval blockade in the Gulf are forcing drug smugglers to adopt bolder tactics, including small high-speed boats and large-volume dhows to evade disruptions caused by maritime forces. Smugglers are also expanding their network of rerouting and repackaging. Despite Oman’s strict laws and enforcement, its vast land borders and extensive coastline make it challenging, but not impossible, to monitor all entry points, aerial borders, and residential zones. The manufacturing and trafficking of illegal drugs pose a threat to safety, public health, and social stability. Addressing this problem requires collective action and a clear understanding of its impact on society. This article is based on months of gathering information from law enforcement authorities on drug trafficking operations. While it does not fully capture the extent of drug use, smuggling, and manufacturing within the country, it offers a general indication of the situation.

UK POLICE UNDER PRESSURE AFTER DYING STUDENT WAS HANDCUFFED

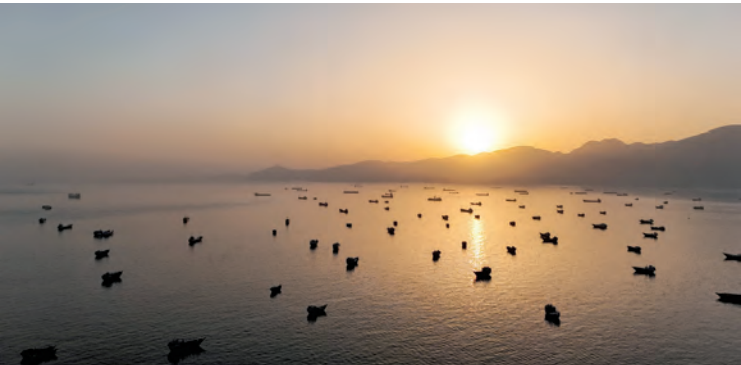
SARAH YOUNG

British police faced a national backlash over the inflammatory case of an 18-year-old student who was handcuffed as he lay dying from stab wounds after his killer falsely alleged a racist attack. Henry Nowak died after the knife attack in the southern England city of Southampton in December last year. His murderer Vickrum Digwa, a 23-year-old man, was sentenced to life in prison on Monday, having lied to police at the time that Nowak had assaulted him. In police bodycam footage, Nowak is seen lying on the street saying “I’ve been stabbed” and “I can’t breathe” while an officer responds “I don’t think you have mate”. Nigel Farage, whose anti-immigration Reform party leads opinion polls, said it was an example of the rights of ethnic minorities trumping those of white British people. “The fear of being called racist was greater than dealing with Henry Nowak’s murder,” he said in a statement. “We should respond to this with pure cold rage.” Judge William Mousley acknowledged in court on Monday that the case had stirred racial tension across Britain. A protest was expected in Southampton on Tuesday evening, with anti-immigrant activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon - known as Tommy Robinson - rallying supporters to attend. Digwa stabbed Nowak with a knife he said he was permitted to carry due to exemptions for Sikhs to have ceremonial daggers. When the police arrived, Digwa said his turban had been knocked off and he had an injury to his eye. Nick Thomas-Symonds, Cabinet Office minister, said that “the conduct of the police when you look at it at the scene is shocking”. Nowak’s family called his treatment by police “inhumane and degrading” but in a statement outside court, his father said his death should not be “used to create further division, hatred or tension.” That was echoed by Britain’s interior minister, Shabana Mahmood, who told parliament on Tuesday that everyone was equal before the law and urged calm during an investigation. Mahmood acknowledged that the footage released was “disturbing and tragic” but said the case had brought unacceptable threats against police officers and that inflammatory commentary was making a dreadful situation worse. “We must condemn those who seek personal political profit from tragedy,” she said. Mahmood added that for public services, the only consideration they should weigh is the risk a person poses, not race or religion. — Reuters

A residual culture that navigates amid the noise

“POWER TENDS to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Lord Acton’s warning feels increasingly relevant in an age where unpredictability itself has become a political instrument. What we are witnessing in the US under President Donald Trump is not merely populism or nationalism in their traditional sense. It is a more accentuated form of personalised power: intensely transactional, emotionally disruptive and strategically unpredictable. Each time observers conclude that the rhetoric cannot become harsher, the pressure cannot become greater, or the behaviour cannot become more erratic, another surprise emerges. Whether through threats against allies, abrupt policy reversals, economic coercion, or pressure campaigns directed externally and internally alike, the governing pattern increasingly appears to be one of perpetual escalation.

The recent remarks threatening Oman over the Strait of Hormuz issue should therefore not be viewed merely as an isolated outburst. They should be understood within this broader pattern: a politics that increasingly uses shock, pressure, uncertainty and public intimidation as negotiating tools. For smaller states, this creates a dangerous temptation: to react emotionally to emotional politics. That would be a mistake. Oman’s strategic tradition has never been built on noise. It has been built on disciplined calmness. The first lesson for Oman is therefore epistemic: go placidly amid the noise. In a world flooded with media storms, threats, intelligence leaks, diplomatic signalling and market panic, the first responsibility of a state is not reaction but discernment. What is real policy? What is negotiation theatre? What



A drone view of vessles anchored in the Strait of Hormuz. — Reuters



AHMED AL MUKHAINI

The author is a policy analyst

A state that responds emotionally to every signal eventually loses control over its own strategic judgment. Nations survive not only through military capability or economic resilience, but through deeply rooted cultural instincts accumulated across generations.

is temporary pressure? And what merely seeks to provoke reaction? A state that responds emotionally to every signal eventually loses control over its own strategic judgment. This is particularly important in moments such as the current one. Oman should neither ignore threatening rhetoric nor amplify it emotionally. Instead, it should convert noise into structure. Publicly, Muscat should remain calm, dignified and legally grounded: affirming sovereignty, commitment to freedom of navigation, regional stability and international law. Privately, however, it should seek precision: is the rhetoric official policy, negotiation pressure, or political theatre intended for domestic audiences? The distinction matters strategically. The second lesson comes from both Machiavelli and Sun Tzu: sovereignty is preserved not merely through defiance, but through indispensability. Power respects usefulness more than sentiment. Oman should therefore continue shaping itself into a state that major powers may pressure rhetorically, but cannot afford to alienate strategically. Geography, maritime access, mediation credibility, logistical connectivity, energy routes, financial stability and diplomatic trust must all operate together as one strategic proposition.

Yet there is another dimension often overlooked in discussions of strategy: residual culture. Nations survive not only through military capability or economic resilience, but through deeply rooted cultural instincts accumulated across generations. Oman’s residual culture has historically favoured restraint over spectacle, mediation over impulsiveness, dignity over theatricality and social cohesion over emotional mobilisation. This cultural inheritance matters strategically. Omanis should not join the drums of war, hysteria, or emotional escalation — not out of fear, weakness, or submission, but out of reason and responsibility. A society that loses its internal composure during moments of external pressure becomes easier to manipulate from abroad. In volatile times, strategic calmness becomes a form of national power. The objective therefore is simple: to remain sovereign without becoming isolated; to remain principled without becoming ideological; and to remain calm while others become increasingly erratic. Britain may still offer some value as a stabilising interlocutor with institutional memory, security depth, and a longstanding understanding of Gulf political culture. Yet Oman must recognise that no external actor can substitute for its own strategic resilience. That resilience ultimately depends on one principle: never allowing another state’s unpredictability to dictate Oman’s behaviour. The emerging international order may become more volatile, more personalised and less restrained by institutional norms. But smaller states do not survive such eras through outrage. They survive through composure, strategic depth and the ability to remain rational when others are not. That may ultimately become Oman’s greatest strategic advantage.

SPORTS

FIRSTCAPTAIN



Oman captain Sufyan Mehmood in action.

SUFYAN LEADS OMANI DEBUTANTS TO ASIAN GAMES

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
@anuroop_ath

All-rounder Sufyan Mehmood has become the first Omani captain to guide his all-Omani team into the 20th Asian Games in Japan after Oman sealed the qualification berth with their second win in the Asian Games Men's Qualifier in Singapore.

After beating Singapore in their opening match of Group B, Oman defeated Bahrain by 20 runs at the Singapore National Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

Captain Sufyan told Oman Observer that it was a brilliant effort from the team, which consisted of 13 debutants. "We had 13 debutants in the team, I am proud of our players who showed no stage-fear in clinching two back-to-back wins against hosts Singapore and Bahrain."

Oman players came early enough in Singapore to acclimatise to the local conditions and the first win against the hosts was a great start.

"We beat Singapore at their home and we got used to the conditions quickly as we had landed early in the city," the Oman skipper said.

Sufyan said Wednesday's victory against Bahrain, who had earlier beat Oman in a series in Muscat, was special.

The medium pacer also took a wicket against Bahrain and that made him share the most T20I wickets for Oman in the last one year with Jiten Ramanandi. Both have 17 wickets to their credit.

Next aim is to claim the title of the Qualifiers, Sufyan, who remained 40 not out against Bahrain, said. "We want to win the championship in Singapore. Our players are upbeat and confident for the semifinal," he added.

The team, coached by former Oman skipper Sultan Ahmed, has been prepared through Oman Cricket's all-Omani team project launched in March 2025.

"We have been training for almost two years and thanks to our coaches and the Oman Cricket officials, the players are in great shape and technique for the Qualifiers," he said.

Oman men script history, secure Asian Games spot

OMAN'S all-home-grown squad scripted history on Wednesday as the Men in Red secured their place at the Nagoya-Aichi 2026 Asian Games next year.

Under the captaincy of Sufyan Mehmood, Oman locked in back-to-back victories in Group B of the Men's T20I Asian Games Qualifier as they outplayed Bahrain by 20 runs at the Singapore National Cricket Ground.

Mohammed al Balushi smashed a brilliant 81 as Oman cruised to victory, their second in as many matches, to advance to the semifinals along with Hong Kong, who routed Singapore on Wednesday, to seal their berth in the Asian Games from the group.

Oman would now meet Hong Kong on Friday to decide the group topper with their semifinal opponent to be either Nepal or Malaysia. Both Nepal and Malaysia have already booked their berths in the semifinals with respective wins over China in the three-team group.

Asked to bat first on Wednesday, Oman were handed a flying start by Mohammed and Shuaib al Balushi, who put on 101 runs for the opening wicket.

Mohammed dominated the Bahrain attack with a scintillating 81 off 51 balls, striking seven fours and six sixes, while Shuaib contributed 32 from 30 deliveries with two fours and two sixes. The pair laid the perfect platform for Oman after racing to 100 in just 11.2 overs.

Following Shuaib's exit, captain Sufyan Mehmood ensured the momentum was maintained, finishing unbeaten on 40 from 27 balls with five boundaries. After Mohammed's dismissal in the 15th over, Sufyan added a valuable 32 runs with Zubair al Balushi (10) as Oman posted a formidable 184 for



Oman team players celebrate during the match.

Opener Mohammed al Balushi hits explosive 81 as Sufyan Mehmood's men defeat Bahrain to make it two-in-two at the Men's T20I Asian Games Qualifier in Singapore



Oman's Mohammed al Balushi with his Man of the Match award.

4 from their 20 overs.

Muhammad Adil was Bahrain's most successful bowler with 2 for 20, while Sameer Yousuf and Abid Ullah Shah claimed one wicket apiece.

Bahrain's chase suffered an immediate setback when Shuaib removed Numan Yousuf without a run on the board. However,

captain Junaid Aziz and Abdulla Pervaiz steadied the innings with a 50-run partnership for the second wicket.

Oman struck back through Sameer Othman, who dismissed Pervaiz for 27, but Bahrain remained in the contest as Junaid and Mohammed Sameer added 65 runs for the third wicket. Mohammed Sameer blasted 43 from just 24 balls, including three fours and three sixes, while Junaid made 46 from 36 deliveries.

The turning point came when Othman removed the dangerous Sameer at 115 for 3, halting Bahrain's momentum. Othman finished with figures of 2 for 34 from four overs, while Sufyan delivered another key breakthrough by dismissing Junaid and returned economical figures of 1 for 27. Nawed al Balushi also chipped in with 1 for 35 as Bahrain were restricted to 164 for 5.

Oman's Mohammed al Balushi was named the player of the match for his 81.

The victory follows Oman's opening win over Singapore and underlines the growing confidence of a squad made up entirely of Oman-based players, who have now made history by qualifying for the Nagoya-Aichi 2026 Asian Games.

At the Asian Games, the all-Omani team will now compete alongside heavyweights India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. Japan have sealed their berth as host nation.

Brief scores: Oman 184-4 (Mohammed al Balushi 81 (51), Sufyan Mehmood 40 not out (27), Shuaib al Balushi 32 (30); Muhammad Adil 2-20) beat Bahrain 164-5 (Junaid Aziz 46 (36), Mohammed Sameer 43 (24), Abdulla Pervaiz 27 (24); Sameer Othman 2-34, Sufyan Mehmood 1-27, Nawed al Balushi 1-35) by 20 runs.

Oman deaf futsal team set for historic Asian debut in Kyrgyzstan

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

Oman national deaf futsal team is preparing for its first-ever appearance in the Asian Deaf Futsal Championship, which will be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, from June 26 to July 5.

The participation marks an important milestone for deaf sports in the Sultanate of Oman, reflecting the growing efforts to provide athletes with hearing impairment greater opportunities to compete at regional and continental levels.

Oman have shown clear progress in recent years, taking part in the U20 World Championship in Kazakhstan in 2024 before claiming first place at the Gulf Friendship Championship later the same year. Those achievements have given the squad strong motivation ahead of their maiden Asian campaign.

Othman al Anbouri, assistant coach of the team, said preparations are progressing well, with the squad now in its third week of training. The team had already played two friendly matches and delivered encouraging performances. "This is the first participation for Oman deaf team



Oman national deaf futsal team players pose with the officials during a training session at Al Amal Club in Muscat.

in Kyrgyzstan, and the players are fully focused. We started our training programme well, played two friendly matches, and the performance was good," Al Anbouri said.

He explained that the current programme includes morning and evening sessions at Al Amal Club. The morning sessions focus on physical fitness, while the evening sessions are dedicated to tactical work, including set pieces, counter-attacks, building play under pressure and individual and two-player situations. Al Anbouri added that the team will hold a one-week training camp in Sur next week, during which they will play several friendly matches to improve match

readiness before the championship.

"The camp in Sur will be important for us. We will play a number of matches there to ensure that the players reach the best possible level before the tournament," he said.

GULF CHAMPIONS

The assistant coach pointed out that the squad includes a strong mix of experienced players and new faces. He said most of the players who won the Gulf title in late 2024 remain with the team, with the addition of three or four new players, giving the squad more balance and options.

Player Abdullah al Riyami expressed his pride in representing



Players train at Al Amal Club as Oman gear up for their first Asian Deaf Futsal Championship appearance.

Oman in the continental event, saying the players are determined to raise the national flag and compete strongly. "Our training is going well. We have morning and evening sessions, and the coaches are helping us with planning, organisation and tactics. Our aim is to raise the flag of the Sultanate of Oman and achieve a good result," Al Riyami said. He added that the players had benefited greatly from the technical staff and would seek to apply what they learned during the tournament.

Meanwhile, player Ibrahim al Hadhrami said the team are focused on working together and proving that athletes with hearing impairment are capable of

achieving success at international level. "We are developing our skills through training, and our goal is to show that people with hearing impairment can achieve success like everyone else."

Speaking about wearing the number 10 shirt, he said the number does not create pressure for him. "I do not look at the number; I look at Oman. What matters is that we cooperate as one team. Success does not come from one player only, but from team spirit," he added.

Sayyida Naila bint Hamad al Busaidy, Chairperson of the Oman Deaf Sports Committee, praised the efforts of the players and technical staff, noting that the team had been training for three months as part of a preparation programme.

The squad includes Abdullah al Riyami, Ibrahim al Hadhrami, Hassan al Ghafri, Marwan al Salmani, Mohammed al Maamari, Ali al Rahbi, Maytham al Ghammari, Osama al Amri, Ayoub al Hinaï, Radhi al Araiimi, Ayman al Aufi and Khalid al Shabibi. The team is coached by Younis al Fahdi, assisted by Othman al Anbouri with Majid al Wardi as physiotherapist.

CLOSECONTEST



Suhail Khan, KK Girish and Shanawaz KK finished with identical scores and were declared joint champions of the championship.

ISC ANNUAL TT LEAGUE ENDS IN 3-WAY TIE FOR TITLE

MUSCAT: The Indian Social Club (ISC), Oman, successfully concluded its Annual Tennis League Championship, bringing together 20 enthusiastic players for a highly competitive and entertaining tournament that showcased exceptional talent, sportsmanship, and camaraderie.

The championship was played in the popular Americano doubles format, where every participant partnered with and competed against every other player during the league stage. This unique format tested not only individual skill and consistency but also adaptability, teamwork, and strategic play, making for an engaging and closely contested competition.

After a series of exciting matches, the tournament concluded with a rare and remarkable result. Suhail Khan, KK Girish and Shanawaz KK finished with identical scores and were declared joint champions of the championship. Rathish secured fourth place following a strong and consistent performance throughout the event.

The semifinalists who narrowly missed a place among the top finishers were Ganesh Swaminathan, Hemchandra Ail, Junaith Kassim, and Arun Ganesan, all of whom demonstrated outstanding tennis and competitive spirit.

A Plate Championship was also conducted to provide additional playing opportunities for participants. Atul Saggar emerged as the Plate Champion, while Noushih, Narendra Kumar, and Anurag secured the subsequent positions with commendable performances.

GALA PRIZE CEREMONY

The tournament was meticulously organised by Shanawaz KK, whose dedication and efficient management ensured the smooth and successful conduct of the championship. Participants appreciated the well-structured format and the friendly yet competitive atmosphere that characterized the event.

The championship concluded with a gala prize distribution ceremony, during which trophies and prizes were presented to the champions, finalists, and top performers.

The Indian Social Club continues to be one of Oman's leading venues for sporting and recreational activities, offering members and residents opportunities to participate in a wide range of sports. The club remains committed to promoting fitness, discipline, friendship, and community engagement through sport.

The ISC Tennis Section has witnessed growing participation in recent years and is supported by professional tennis coach Sivan Govind. Coaching programmes are available for both children and adults across various skill levels. Individuals interested in enrolling are encouraged to contact the ISC Reception for registration and details.



Russia's Diana Shnaider celebrates after winning her French Open quarterfinal against Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka in Paris. — Reuters

Shnaider stuns Sabalenka to book Chwalinska semis

ARYNA SABALENKA saw her golden opportunity to claim a maiden French Open title go by on Wednesday as the world number one fell into a “deep, dark hole” against Diana Shnaider to crash out of the tournament in the quarterfinals.

After battling back from a set down and being led by a double break of serve in the second by the world number one, Shnaider prevailed to set up a last-four meeting with Polish qualifier Maja Chwalinska.

“I screw up, and then she stepped in and she played great. I feel like mentally I couldn't really recover after the second set,” Sabalenka said after her 3-6, 7-5, 6-0 loss.

“I don't know when was the last time that happened to me that I lost 10 games in a row. I don't know. I guess mentally I got into very deep, deep, dark hole over there, and I just couldn't get back mentally on track.”

Sabalenka's collapse on Court Philippe Chatrier was reminiscent of last year's final when Coco Gauff battled back to beat the four-time major winner in three sets.



Poland's Maja Chwalinska plays a forehand return to Anna Kalinskaya. — AFP

Shnaider's best previous performance in a major was a fourth-round run at the US Open in 2024. But now the 22-year-old finds herself the favourite to reach the final at Roland Garros. “Definitely super happy I managed to finish on a good note rather than start on a good note,” Shnaider said of her battling comeback.

“(It's) definitely a special tournament for me here. It's going be a lefty battle so I'm looking forward (to the semifinal).”

QUALIFIER POWERS INTO LAST 4

Earlier, world number 114 Chwalinska continued her stunning Roland Garros run by becoming just the second women's qualifier to reach the last four at Roland Garros in the Open era.

The 24-year-old Pole again defied the odds to down Russian 22nd seed Anna Kalinskaya 7-6 (7/3), 6-3. “I honestly don't know what's going on. I know I repeat myself but every single match here is kind of crazy for me so I'm very grateful,” Chwalinska said on court.

It was her eighth win at the tournament after she battled through three qualifying rounds to reach the main draw of a major for just the third time in her career.

Prior to her run in Paris, Chwalinska had only ever won two tour-level matches on clay in her career, now she stands one victory away from competing for the biggest title the surface has to offer.

“I feel like I just, for some reason, I don't process it, you know,” Chwalinska said.

“I'm just focusing on every single match. I honestly don't feel like it's, like, a huge, huge moment for me.” — AFP

Oman women defeat China to begin ACC Premier Cup campaign

MUSCAT: The Oman women's cricket team launched its ACC Women's T20 Premier Cup 2026 campaign on a winning note on Wednesday, securing a 16-run victory over China at the YSD-UKM Cricket Oval in Bangi, Malaysia.

Fuelled by a disciplined defensive bowling display, Oman successfully defended a modest total of 105 as they bowled out their rivals for 89.

After losing the toss and being put in to bat by China, Oman faced early pressure on a tricky, slow surface as they were down to 25/2 in 5 overs after Nitya Joshi's 15.

Experienced Fiza Javed (12) and captain Priyanka Mendonsa (16) steadied the ship before a run-a-ball 27 from Amanda D'Costa provided the crucial anchor her team after



Oman's Amanda D'Costa and Sameera Khan during the match.

both Fiza and Priyanka were run out adding to the run out of Nitya.	impetus and shared the highest 29-run partnership with Amanda to help Oman cross the 100-mark as they
Sameera Khan's 14 added late	

finished at 105/7.

Ma Ruike and Zhao Yihan picked up two wickets each.

Defending 105 required precision and Oman's bowling unit delivered exactly that. Led by Priyanka, and aided strongly by Sushanthika Ashok and Jayadhanya Gunasekar, China were bowled out for 89 as four batters were run out.

Sushantika's spell of 2/11 stood out while Priyanka (2/24) and Jayadhanya (2/19) were the other wicket-takers.

Captain Zhu Mingyue top scored with 18 and Gong Yuting made 15. Ma Ruike contributed 12 as China collapsed to 89 in 18.4 overs.

This hard-fought victory grants Oman maximum points early in Group B. The event features 18 competing nations divided into four

distinct groups battling it out.

Besides Oman and China, other teams in Group B are the UAE, Saudi Arabia and the Philippines. Oman now meet the UAE on Thursday.

The top two teams from each group will advance directly to the quarterfinals. The winners will advance to semifinals with the four teams also ensuring a spot in the Women's Asia Cup.

BRIEF SCORES: Oman 105/7 (Nitya Joshi 15, Fiza Javed 12, Priyanka Mendonsa 16, Amanda D Costa 27, Sameera Khan 14; Ma Ruike 2/16, Zhao Yihan 2/16) beat China 89 in 18.4 overs (Zhu Mingyue 18, Gong Yuting 15; Sushanthika Ashok 2/11, Priyanka Mendonsa 2/24, Jayadhanya Gunasekar 2/19).

SPORTS

AL FAISAL UNVEILS FERRARI 296 GT3 AHEAD OF 2026 GT SEASON

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

OMANI racing driver Al Faisal al Zubair officially launched his 2026 international racing programme and unveiled his new Ferrari 296 GT3 during a special event hosted by Ferrari Oman, represented by Alfardan Motors, in Muscat on Tuesday.

The launch marked the beginning of a new chapter for Al Manar Racing as the Omani driver prepares for another campaign in international GT3 competition following one of the most successful periods of his career.

Al Faisal will begin his 2026 season this weekend at Italy's Misano World Circuit, where he will compete in a sprint race alongside Italian driver David Fumanelli with technical support from Dragon Racing. The Omani driver will race in the highly competitive Pro category.

The programme also includes rounds at Circuit Paul Ricard in France from July 17-19 and Monza in Italy from September 25-27, before concluding with the Qatar endurance race on December 11-12.

Earlier this year, Al Faisal and Al Manar Racing competed in Abu Dhabi, finishing second in the Pro category, while also taking part in the Dubai 24 Hours.

Speaking during the event, Al Faisal expressed confidence ahead



Al Faisal al Zubair poses alongside Ferrari 296 GT3 during the launch of his 2026 international racing programme. — Faisal al Balushi

of the new season.”We have officially launched our 2026 season, which consists of six rounds. The first race takes place this weekend in Italy, followed by events in France and Qatar. We hope to make a strong start and continue on the right path throughout the season,” he said.

The event also showcased Al

Manar Racing’s new strategic direction, commercial partnerships and digital platform developed in collaboration with Omani technology company Rihal.

Al Faisal said partnering with Ferrari represents a significant milestone both personally and for Omani motorsport.

“It is something we are proud of as Omanis. Ferrari is an iconic and historic brand, and we are honoured to be associated with it. We hope to achieve the results we are targeting this season,” he added.

Over the past 15 years, Al Faisal has established himself as one of Oman’s most successful racing

drivers, recording more than 110 podium finishes across various international categories.

His 2025 campaign was widely regarded as the strongest of his career after securing 15 podium finishes and becoming the first Omani driver to claim overall victory in the prestigious Dubai 24 Hours race.

Al Faisal remains the only Omani and Arab driver currently competing in the Gold category of GT racing, one of the sport’s highest professional classifications.

Looking ahead to the new campaign, the Omani driver reiterated his ambitions despite the level of competition.

“The objective is always the same to fight for victory. The competition will be extremely tough because there are many strong drivers on the grid, but our ambition is to win this weekend’s race and challenge for the championship,” he said.

The evening also featured the announcement of several strategic partnerships for Al Manar Racing, including Ferrari Oman, Shell V-Power Racing 98 and Rihal, alongside the unveiling of the team’s new digital platform and 2026 racing calendar.

As part of his wider community initiatives, Al Faisal was also introduced as an ambassador for Dar Al Atta’a, supporting programmes aimed at assisting families in need across the Sultanate of Oman.

Ministry of Information

May 31
June 07

الدختر طومس

Don't miss the chance
to watch the film in cinemas

Grand Mall – Muscat , 04:00 PM | Oman Mall – Muscat , 04:00 PM
Salalah Oasis Mall 06:30 PM | Grand Mall – Nizwa ,04:00 PM | City Centre Sohar ,04:00 PM

Free Tickets

Abdulmonem to officiate at Asian Open Water swimming

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

Oman’s international swimming referee, Abdulmonem bin Khamis al Alawi was appointed as the head referee for the Men’s 5 km race event at the 12th Asian Open Water Swimming Championships, which will take place in Bali, Indonesia, from June 13 to 15.

The appointment marks another significant milestone in Al Alawi’s distinguished officiating career and reflects the growing confidence of the Asian aquatic community in Omani sports officials. Al Alawi currently serves as the vice-chairman of the Open Water Swimming Technical Committee of the Asia Aquatics and remains one of the most experienced open water swimming referees in the continent.

The Asian Open Water Swimming Championships will bring together many of Asia’s highest-ranked swimmers, who will compete in the scenic waters of Bali in one of the continent’s premier aquatic events. The three-day championship is expected to showcase elite-level competition, endurance, and technical excellence as athletes strive for continental honours while representing the future of Asian aquatic sports.

Speaking to Oman Observer about his participation, Al Alawi expressed his pride at being entrusted with such an important role in the championship. “This championship is considered

ABDULMONEM
AL ALAWI
International Referee

one of the leading open water swimming events in Asia. I am honoured to officiate in this prestigious competition and recently I was involved in officiating duties at major Asian events, including Asian Beach Games competitions which was held in Sanya, China. I am pleased to continue contributing to the development and success of aquatic sports in the region,” he said.

Al Alawi explained that the Asia Aquatics, in coordination with the championship organising committee, already distributed the official competition program to all participating national federations. “The technical meeting will be held on June 12 at the Fox Hotel in Bali, followed by a referees’ meeting during which responsibilities will be assigned and officials will be briefed on the latest competition regulations and operational updates,” he added.

The championship will commence on June 13 with the 5 km races. In the following day, the swimmers will compete in the mixed 4x1500m relay event. The competition will conclude on June 15 with the

demanding 10 km races for both categories men’s and women’s races.

75 SWIMMERS

A total of 16 Asian national federations confirmed their participation in the championship, with approximately 75 swimmers set to compete at Moya Beach, one of Bali’s renowned coastal venues. The event is expected to feature some of the strongest open water swimmers from across the continent.

Al Alawi’s latest international appointment continues a remarkable officiating journey that spans nearly four decades. Hailing from Sur, he began his involvement in swimming in 1986 before becoming the first Omani referee to obtain an international swimming officiating license in 1995. Since then, he has played a pioneering role in elevating Oman’s presence in international aquatic sports.

His extensive resume includes participation in numerous world, Asian and Olympic events. Al Alawi had officiated at his third consecutive Olympic Games when he was appointed Chief Referee for the Men’s and Women’s 10 km Marathon Swimming events at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, following previous appointments at the Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Last year, he had also represented Oman at the 2025 World Aquatics Championships in Singapore, further strengthening his reputation as one of Asia’s leading open water swimming officials.



MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
7,671.429

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$96.93
BRENT \$98.30
LIGHT \$96.10



SHORT TAKES



645 industrial licences were issued across Dhofar Governorate in Q1 2026, reflecting continued investment inflows into the manufacturing sector.

DHOFAR ACTION PLAN UNVEILED AHEAD OF KHAREEF

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

Dhofar Governorate has recorded significant economic development in the first quarter of this year, underpinned by strong momentum in commercial and industrial licensing activities, alongside clear growth in the construction and services sectors.

This reflects the vitality of the investment environment and the continued flow of economic activities across the governorate’s various wilayats, according to statistical data published by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP).

Mohammed bin Khalifa al Badrani, Director-General of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in Dhofar Governorate, said the Directorate has developed an integrated field action plan ahead of the Khareef season.

The plan aims to intensify monitoring and inspection activities to ensure establishments comply with applicable regulations, monitor the availability of strategic food stock reserves, and ensure the readiness of fuel stations and essential services.

These efforts contribute to market stability, enhance the quality of services provided to visitors and residents, and support the governorate’s comprehensive development objectives, he noted.

The indicators showed the registration of around 1,059 new commercial registrations (CRs), with Salalah leading economic activity with 924 CRs, followed by Taqah with 29 CRs, Mirbat (26) and Dhalkut recording notable growth of 275%. As a result, commercial registrations in the governorate increased to 70,195 by the end of the first quarter, reflecting the continued expansion of the commercial base.

With regard to commercial licences, the governorate recorded advanced levels of efficiency in processing transactions, with 7,448 commercial licences completed during the same period, bringing the total to 73,052 licences. Licences automatically issued also saw significant growth as part of efforts to facilitate the business environment, reaching 8,656 licences during the first quarter and bringing the total to 113,368 licences.

3.4 billion strengthens Oman’s logistics edge

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

THE Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), represented by its Transport and Logistics Committee, in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, organised a workshop entitled “Enhancing competitiveness in the transport and logistics sector.”

The workshop aimed to highlight the Sultanate of Oman’s efforts in developing the sector’s infrastructure, review available investment opportunities, and discuss mechanisms to improve Oman’s ranking in international transport and logistics indicators.

The workshop was held under the auspices of Eng Khamis bin Mohammed al Shammakhi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Transport, as part of a series of workshops organised by the Chamber to enhance partnership and integration between the public and private sectors.

In remarks, Al Shammakhi described the transport and logistics sector as a key enabler of economic development and a fundamental driver for various productive and service sectors, given its pivotal role in facilitating trade and investment, connecting markets, and enhancing the competitiveness of the national economy.

He also mentioned that the Ministry continuously monitors national and international indicators related to the transport and logistics sector.

Eng Hamoud bin Salem al Saadi, Second Vice Chairman of the Chamber’s Board of Directors, emphasised that the workshop was held at a time when the transport and logistics sector in Oman is witnessing rapid development, supported by a clear strategic vision and significant investments in infrastructure projects, including ports, airports, roads, and economic and logistics zones.

This has strengthened the



The workshop aimed to highlight the Sultanate of Oman’s efforts in developing the sector’s infrastructure.

During the workshop, the targets and indicators for the transport and logistics sector for 2025 were reviewed. Financial returns from the maritime affairs sector recorded a growth of 9.4%, while government revenues from the ports sector increased by 16%. The volume of cargo handled exceeded 5.1 million TEUs of containers and more than 143 million tonnes of goods, while investments in the logistics sector reached approximately RO 3.4 billion.

Sultanate of Oman’s position as a regional logistics hub capable of connecting global markets and leveraging its strategic geographic location.

During the workshop, the targets and indicators for the transport and logistics sector for 2025 were reviewed. Financial returns from the maritime affairs sector recorded a growth of 9.4%, while government revenues from the ports sector increased by 16%.

The volume of cargo handled exceeded 5.1 million TEUs of containers and more than 143 million tonnes of goods, while investments in the logistics sector reached approximately RO 3.4 billion.

Regarding the 2025 logistics performance indicators, out of 21 indicators measuring logistics performance, Oman achieved a leading global ranking.

It ranked first globally in the Export Supply Chain Initiation Indicator, ninth globally in the Import Supply Chain Completion Indicator, and 25th globally in the Number of Shipping Alliances Indicator.

Work is also underway on the Hafeet Rail project, which will connect the railway network in Suhar to the national network in the United Arab Emirates.

This will contribute to reducing transportation costs between the two countries by up to 50% for both freight and passenger

services. Each train is expected to have a capacity of up to 276 containers or approximately 15,000 tonnes of general cargo.

The forum also reviewed the initial features of the Muscat Metro project, which includes a proposed 55-kilometre route with 43 stations and two maintenance depots. It is projected to serve over 400,000 passengers daily by 2040.

The workshop featured an extensive panel discussion in which speakers highlighted key opportunities in the ports and maritime services sector, including port support services projects, specialised logistics facilities, shipping, warehousing, and re-export services, as well as opportunities related to developing maritime industries and services.

In the land transport sector, the session discussed investment opportunities related to developing logistics hubs and truck parking areas, smart transport services, smart weighbridge projects, and projects related to transport tracking systems and developing the infrastructure supporting the movement of goods and passengers.

The session also explored investment opportunities in the trade and logistics sector, particularly in e-commerce, supply chains, warehousing, and distribution.

Oman, Belarus strengthen cooperation in agriculture and food security

MINSK: Oman and Belarus have reaffirmed their commitment to expanding cooperation in agriculture, food production and food security as the two countries seek to strengthen economic ties and unlock new investment opportunities.

The discussions took place during a meeting in Minsk between Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and Yuri Gorlov, Belarusian Minister of Agriculture and Food.

The two sides reviewed the growing bilateral relationship and explored opportunities for collaboration across agriculture, livestock, fisheries and food industries.

Discussions also focused on attracting investment, exchanging expertise and adopting advanced technologies to enhance agricultural productivity and food



The two sides reviewed the growing bilateral relationship and explored opportunities for collaboration across agriculture, livestock, fisheries and food industries.

security in both countries.

Officials highlighted the importance of building stronger partnerships between businesses and institutions in Oman and Belarus, noting that closer

cooperation could contribute to sustainable development goals while supporting the long-term resilience of food supply chains.

Both ministers stressed the value of continued coordination,

technical exchanges and reciprocal visits to advance joint initiatives and deepen cooperation in sectors of mutual interest.

They also welcomed the positive momentum in bilateral relations and expressed their commitment to expanding economic and investment links.

The meeting was attended by Hamood bin Salim al Towaiya, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation and non-resident to the Republic of Belarus; Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and head of the Omani trade delegation; and Dr Abdullah bin Masoud al Harthy, Honorary Consul of Belarus to Oman.

As part of his visit to Belarus, Al Habsi also toured the Belarusian National Biotechnology Corporation, where he was briefed on the organisation’s operations

and its contribution to agricultural development and food security.

The minister and accompanying delegation inspected production facilities and biotechnology applications used in feed manufacturing and agricultural inputs, gaining insights into advanced technologies that support higher productivity and value creation within the agricultural sector.

The visit reflects Oman’s efforts to identify new partnership and investment opportunities in biotechnology and agri-food industries, while encouraging knowledge transfer and technological cooperation.

Such initiatives are expected to support the Sultanate of Oman’s broader food security objectives and strengthen collaboration with international partners in sustainable agricultural development. — ONA

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The campaign pairs an advanced vehicle lineup with a comprehensive suite of ownership benefits.

BYD Oman launches ‘Drive Your Dream. Charged With Innovation’ campaign

MUSCAT: Your chance to drive your dream is finally here. Step into a world charged with innovation this summer with BYD as the brand introduces an initiative designed to redefine the driving experience in the Sultanate of Oman. From May 10 to July 10, 2026, the “Drive Your Dream. Charged With Innovation” campaign pairs an advanced vehicle lineup with a comprehensive suite of ownership benefits. This seasonal programme emphasises BYD’s global leadership in new energy mobility, ensuring that every journey is supported by world-class technology and exceptional value.

The campaign delivers significant ownership advantages, including free one-year insurance through Liva Insurance and complimentary three-year roadside assistance.

New owners will also receive a free EV charger and a dedicated service package—covering one year or 20,000 km for all-electric models, and one year or 15,000 km for plug-in hybrids (PHEVs).

Adding a spark of excitement to each purchase is an assured Scratch & Win gift offering customers the chance to secure premium technology and automotive gifts, ranging from Apple Watches, Apple AirPods and exclusive 3M window tinting.

The current lineup showcases the latest Super Hybrid Icons: the all-new Sealion 5 DM-i and the Seal 6 DM-i. The Sealion 5 DM-i is a full-sized SUV blending the “Ocean X” design language with a spacious, passenger-centric cabin, while the Seal 6 DM-i redefines performance through an aerodynamic silhouette and premium, ventilated power seating.

These icons are joined by the flagship ATTO 8, a 480 hp luxury seven-seat SUV featuring intelligent AWD and integrated massage seating. For those prioritising hybrid sophistication, the SEAL 7 DM-i provides a remarkable combined range of up to 850 km within an elegant, ocean-inspired cabin.

The selection also features the highly efficient Qin Plus DM-i, capable of a 990 km total range, and the versatile Song Plus DM-i, which offers a 360° camera and a signature 15.6-inch rotatable entertainment hub. Adventurers can explore the Shark 6, a hybrid pickup with Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) capability, or the all-electric ATTO 3, powered by the ultra-safe Blade Battery.

The campaign benefits extend across a wide model range, including the SEAL, HAN and the luxurious DENZA B5 and B8.

Enthusiasts are invited to visit BYD showrooms throughout Oman to experience these innovative models first hand and explore the future of the automotive industry.

Nissan Patrol wins 2026 iF Design Award

NISSAN is proud to announce that the Nissan Patrol has received the internationally acclaimed 2026 iF Design Award. The recognition follows a comprehensive evaluation across five key criteria: idea, form, function, differentiation, and sustainability.

Established in 1954, the iF Design Award is sponsored by the iF International Forum Design GmbH (iF International Forum Design Inc.) in Hannover, Germany.

Recognized as one of the world’s most prestigious design awards, this year 129 design experts of 21 nationalities judged more than 10,000 works – including products and projects – from 68 countries.

The all-new Patrol represents the seventh generation of Nissan’s flagship SUV, building on more than 70 years of heritage, capability, and trust.

It blends advanced technology with Japanese craftsmanship, defined by precision, quality, and attention to detail.

Signature design elements, including the distinctive Double C lighting motif mirrored in the front headlamps and rear light bar, and the sculpted side vents, reinforce its bold character.

The exterior projects an unbreakable presence and bold dignity, while the intuitive cockpit and spacious eight-seat interior create a refined sanctuary designed for comfort across every journey.

In the Middle East, the Patrol line-up spans V6 and V6T engine variants, including Titanium and Platinum grades, and is



The all-new Patrol represents the seventh generation of Nissan’s flagship SUV.

further distinguished by the region’s first Patrol PRO-4X and the race-inspired Patrol NISMO.

The iconic Patrol embodies premium presence and refined strength, with its widened V-motion grille, striking lighting signature, available 22-inch alloy wheels, and a silhouette that balances prestige with rugged capability.

The Patrol PRO-4X introduces a more purposeful and adventure-ready aesthetic. Exclusive Lava Red accents, a heritage-inspired three-slot grille, darkened exterior elements, all-terrain tires, and functional skid plates amplify its off-road character while maintaining the Patrol’s unmistakable

road presence.

At the pinnacle of performance-inspired design, the Patrol NISMO delivers a bold, motorsport-infused interpretation.

Featuring aerodynamic enhancements, a reimagined V-motion grille with honeycomb mesh, layered rear diffusers, extended rear spoiler, and signature NISMO red detailing, it reflects precision engineering shaped by regional customer insights.

Together, the Patrol, Patrol PRO-4X, and Patrol NISMO demonstrate how a single design language can evolve to express a premium presence, adventure, and performance, while retaining the core DNA that has defined the Patrol for generations.

Unimoni Exchange opens new branch on Ruwi Street

MUSCAT: Unimoni Exchange has inaugurated its new branch near Nesto on Ruwi Street, further strengthening its presence in Oman’s financial services sector.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by management representatives, employees, customers, and distinguished guests. The branch was officially inaugurated by Abdul Jaleel al Sadjali in the presence of Tony George Alexander - Director and Boban M P - CEO Unimoni Exchange.

The newly opened branch is Unimoni’s third branch in Ruwi, while the company currently operates around 60 branches across the country. Management representatives stated that the new branch was launched to provide more convenient money exchange services to the expatriate and Omani



The newly opened branch is Unimoni’s third branch in Ruwi.

community in the Ruwi area.

Officials further explained that Unimoni ensures faster personal, business, and education transactions to all countries with competitive exchange rates.

In addition, Unimoni’s branches can meet customers’ currency requirements through the country’s first currency wholesale division, which deals in around 50 currencies. Customer-friendly services will

also continue to be ensured across all branches.

Unimoni Exchange has received several prestigious awards.

Last year, the company received recognition as an Elite Category Company from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. Unimoni has also won awards for Oman’s Most Trusted Brand, Best Remittance Service, and Foreign Exchange Services.

Unimoni is the first exchange company in Oman to launch a mobile application for remittance services.

It is also the only exchange company in Oman with SWIFT membership.

As part of the inauguration ceremony, management representatives welcomed customers and guests who attended the event.

Amouage welcomes Suede Ibri & Tonka Misfah to its Attars collection

MUSCAT: Every single perfume created at the esteemed House of Amouage is, to some extent, based on Oman. Some of the compositions may have drawn inspiration from places that are thousands of miles away from the country, but even these, to some degree, reflect the spirit of Oman.

However, when it comes to Amouage’s highly-acclaimed attars, the connection with the country is explicit – each one is inspired by a specific, but perhaps relatively unknown Omani locale and attempts to represent its distinctive identity.

The latest additions to the attar collection – Suede Ibri and Tonka Misfah – are no exception.

“One of the most inspiring activities I’m fortunate enough to be able to enjoy,” says Amouage’s Chief Creative Officer, Renaud Salmon, “is to explore the varied geography of



When it comes to Amouage’s highly-acclaimed attars, the connection with the country is explicit.

Oman.

One of my favourite ways to do this is by car, driving from one place to another, observing how the shapes and colours shift before my eyes.”

It was while planning one of these expeditions that Salmon was moved to visit two contrasting places on the same day.

“For some reason, I was drawn to the idea of going from Ibri to Misfat Al Abriyeen, also known as Misfah, in the same trip.

I already had some knowledge of how distinct they were from each other – one is calm and ancient, while the other is full of life – so I wanted to sharpen the differences between them by going straight from one to the other.”

In terms of the distance covered, the travelling was not especially dramatic – it involved only around

150 km of driving. However, as an internal journey experienced by Salmon, the day could not have been more moving.

SUEDE IBRI

The archaeological site of Ibri, 250 km west of Muscat, is remarkable for its all-pervasive stillness.

A witness to over 5000 years of life, it is home to the Unesco-listed Beehive Tombs, among the most iconic remnants of Oman’s ancient civilisation.

Once a major centre for trade and education - it haunts the visitor with its ability to conjure the past while remaining timeless.

To help him express Ibri’s sense of immortal elegance, Salmon turned to perfumer Theo Belmas, who chose to interpret the town’s character through a heart-stopping combination of Violet and Suede.

“Leather compositions,” explains Salmon, “can be placed on a spectrum, with the more animalic fragrances at one end, and the softer creations at the other.

For this attar, we wanted to veer towards the latter, in order to convey the ancient worldliness of the place that had inspired us.”

TONKA MISFAH

In order to convey Misfat Al Abriyeen’s warmth and openness, Salmon enlisted the talents of Suzy Le Helley, who employed the golden-wood personality of Tonka Bean introducing almond-like, vanillic facets in order to conjure the generosity of the village.

“Few materials are as amicable as Tonka,” says Salmon. “We felt it was the perfect match with the affection that fills the air itself in Misfat Al Abriyeen.”

SHORTTAKES



The MoU was signed at the annual Oman Capital Market Conference in Muscat.

Pact signed to support growth of Oman’s capital markets

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

State Street Corporation has announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Jadwa Investment, a prominent investment management and advisory firm in the Middle East, to collaborate strategically in the Sultanate of Oman. The two firms will jointly identify and develop opportunities to expand their offerings to institutional clients in Oman, with a focus on advanced asset servicing and global custody capabilities.

The MoU was signed at the annual Oman Capital Market Conference in Muscat on June 1, 2026, marking a further step in the established relationship between State Street and Jadwa. State Street has a longstanding presence in Oman, including a local office in Muscat, and has been servicing institutional clients in the Sultanate of Oman for over two decades.

“This memorandum reflects our continued commitment to the Middle East and to working alongside strong regional partners,” said Jack Keshishian, Head of Middle East and North Africa (ex KSA & Bahrain) at State Street.

“We see significant opportunity in combining our global asset servicing expertise with Jadwa’s regional insights and investment capabilities to better support Omani clients, aligned with our efforts to support the continued development of Oman’s capital markets under the country’s Vision 2040 agenda.”

“Oman is an important market for Jadwa,” Tariq al Sudairi, Managing Director & CEO at Jadwa Investment, said. “By leveraging Jadwa and State Street’s combined strengths, we aim to broaden access to high-quality investment solutions for institutional clients and support the continued growth of Oman’s financial ecosystem.”

Energy security shift puts Oman in spotlight

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

THE Sultanate of Oman is well placed to strengthen its role as a strategic energy and infrastructure hub as global markets increasingly prioritise security of supply, resilience and diversified trade routes alongside decarbonisation, industry leaders and investors said during the Global Energy Debate at the 2nd Oman Capital Market Conference.

The discussion, which featured executives from Shell Oman, Oman LNG, OQ, BlackRock and Saudi Arabia-based Vision Invest, reflected a growing consensus that the global energy sector is entering a new phase in which reliability and resilience are becoming as important as affordability and sustainability.

Panellists noted that recent geopolitical tensions and supply disruptions have exposed vulnerabilities in global energy systems, prompting governments, investors and consumers to rethink long-standing assumptions about energy security.

Ali Janabi, Country Manager of Shell Oman, said energy markets are undergoing a fundamental shift as customers increasingly seek assurances that supplies will remain available during periods of uncertainty.

“Markets don’t just value energy supply anymore; they value the security of supply,” Janabi said, noting that countries and industries are reassessing supply chains, infrastructure requirements and investment priorities.

He said the traditional



The global energy sector is entering a new phase in which reliability and resilience are becoming as important as affordability and sustainability.

“just-in-time” model of energy delivery is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain in a world characterised by geopolitical fragmentation and supply-chain risks.

According to Janabi, future energy systems will require greater redundancy, diversified supply routes and stronger infrastructure networks to ensure uninterrupted flows of oil, gas and electricity.

The debate highlighted Oman’s growing strategic importance within this evolving landscape. Speakers pointed to the Sultanate’s location outside the Strait of Hormuz, its extensive port infrastructure, expanding logistics capabilities and ambitions in renewable energy and hydrogen production.

Zaki Sumar, Deputy Chief Investment Officer of Vision Invest, described Oman as one of the region’s most strategically positioned countries from an infrastructure perspective.

“The significance of Oman from an infrastructure and strategic infrastructure perspective is unparalleled,” Sumar said.

He argued that the region’s recent challenges have reinforced the importance of investing in critical infrastructure before crises occur, rather than reacting afterwards.

“Had critical infrastructure such as alternative pipeline systems not existed, the consequences for global energy markets would have been severe,” he said.

Sumar also highlighted Oman’s role in strengthening regional and international connectivity, particularly through ports, terminals and transport corridors linking the GCC with Africa and Asian markets.

He said Oman’s historic ties with East Africa could become increasingly valuable as demand grows for critical minerals and alternative supply-chain routes.

Another major theme emerging from the discussion was the growing role of private capital in financing the next generation of energy and infrastructure projects.

Ehsan Khoman, Senior Portfolio Specialist at BlackRock, said years of underinvestment in traditional energy systems are now colliding with rising demand driven by artificial intelligence, data centres, electrification and industrial growth.

“We need an all-of-the-above approach,” Khoman said. “The sheer scale of investment required means that the private sector will play an increasingly important role in financing future infrastructure and energy projects.”

He argued that investors are beginning to view energy less as a cyclical commodity sector and more as a strategic asset class capable of delivering long-term returns amid persistent supply constraints.

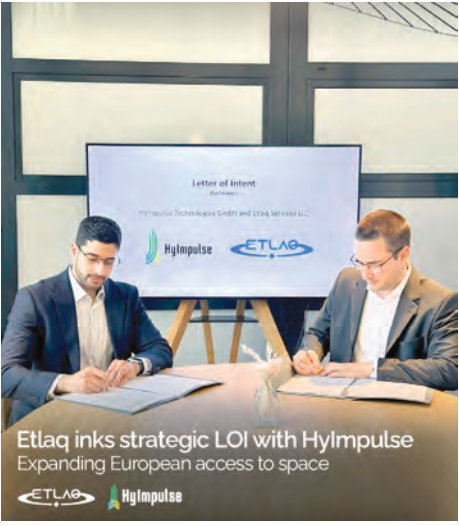
Rocket firm eyes Oman launch operations through Etlaq Spaceport

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

Further strengthening Oman’s emergence as an international hub for commercial space launches, European launch services company HyImpulse Technologies GmbH has entered into a partnership with Etlaq Spaceport to explore future launch-related operations from the latter’s facility in Al Duqm.

The collaboration was formalised through the signing of a Letter of Intent (LoI) during the recent SmallSat Europe conference held in Amsterdam.

Headquartered in Germany with operations in both Germany and the United Kingdom, HyImpulse specialises in commercial suborbital and orbital launch services.



Representatives of Etlaq Spaceport and HyImpulse Technologies at the signing in Amsterdam.

The company is known for its hybrid propulsion technology that combines oxygen and paraffin-based fuel in small satellite launch vehicles designed for efficient and sustainable access to low Earth orbit and beyond.

Under the proposed collaboration, HyImpulse will evaluate both near-term mission opportunities and the feasibility of establishing a longer-term operational presence at Etlaq Spaceport.

Beyond offering an alternative launch base outside northern Europe, the arrangement is expected to capitalise on Oman’s advantageous geographic latitude, enabling access to a broader range of orbital inclinations and enhancing mission flexibility for customers across the GCC, Asia

and, potentially, emerging African markets.

The two sides also plan to assess the possibility of supporting future launch campaigns involving HyImpulse’s SR75 and SL1 launch vehicles from Oman.

Etlaq would provide access to launch infrastructure, operational facilities and mission-support capabilities as the European company studies deployment opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman.

The agreement is viewed as another vote of confidence in Etlaq’s ambitions to position itself as a globally competitive commercial spaceport capable of attracting international launch operators seeking regional expansion opportunities.

Commenting on the collaboration, Julanda al Riyami, Chief Commercial Officer of Etlaq, said the spaceport aims to provide not just a launch location, but a complete operational ecosystem encompassing infrastructure, coordination and mission support services needed by launch companies.

Dr Christian Schmierer, Co-Founder and CEO of HyImpulse, described the agreement as an important step in expanding HyImpulse’s launch footprint beyond Europe into the Middle East.

He noted that diversified access to multiple spaceports would enhance operational resilience and strengthen the company’s long-term competitiveness while opening pathways to new orbital opportunities and regional markets.

ENERGY MARKETS

Oil climbs on renewed tensions



Oil prices rose more than 2 per cent on Wednesday, extending earlier gains as renewed hostilities in the Middle East and limited progress in US-Iran talks heightened supply concerns.

Brent crude climbed to \$98.30/barrel, while US crude reached \$96.10. Analysts said escalating tensions and warnings of tightening global oil inventories ahead of peak summer demand were adding support to prices. — Reuters

TRADE DISPUTE

US proposes tariff on India



The US has proposed an additional 12.5 per cent tariff on imports from India, citing concerns over goods allegedly produced with forced labour.

The proposal emerged during ongoing trade talks and could complicate efforts to reach a broader trade agreement. India’s commerce ministry said the measure is not final and remains subject to further review and public consultation. — Reuters

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

China’s services growth strengthens



China’s services sector expanded at its fastest pace in three months in May, supported by stronger demand and a rebound in export-related business.

The S&P Global Services Purchasing Managers’ Index rose to 54.4 from 52.6 in April, remaining well above the 50-point growth threshold. However, businesses faced mounting cost pressures from higher fuel prices, procurement expenses and wage increases. — ONA

OPINION

Why supporting industry-ready national talent is key



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

The writer is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for CBO and OCCI

OMANI public and private institutions are seeking to benefit from the administrative, industrial, service, and technical capabilities available in the Duqm Special Economic Zone (SEZAD) by utilising them for the training in these important fields.

In the coming days, a new summer training programme will be launched jointly by SEZAD and Sultan Qaboos University, with the participation of 18 male and female students from various academic disciplines.

This initiative aims to enhance the readiness of national talent and align educational outcomes with the requirements of the labour market in promising economic and industrial sectors.

There is no doubt that utilising national talent in future projects is not merely about providing employment opportunities for citizens, rather it aims to build an integrated system in which Omani professionals become key partners in planning, implementation, and innovation.

Such initiatives can contribute to several important objectives, including aligning education with the needs of future projects. This would enable government entities and companies to access qualified professionals when implementing new projects, while also linking job seekers directly to available opportunities.

Furthermore, this approach would connect employment policies with national

development plans by establishing specific quotas for the employment of Omani citizens in major projects. Such cooperation would encourage investment in continuous training programmes and the provision of specialised training before the commencement of major projects.

It would also facilitate sending Omani professionals to leading international centers to acquire advanced expertise and encourage them to obtain internationally recognised professional certifications.

This collaboration could further result in the establishment of business incubators and accelerators for innovators and entrepreneurs. It would also make use of Omani expertise abroad by creating networks that connect with Omani professionals working in international institutions and attracting them to contribute to strategic projects.

The presence of this group of university students within major institutions operating in Al Duqm will strengthen partnerships between the public and private sectors, help identify future skill requirements, encourage companies to adopt cooperative training programmes for students and graduates, and develop early employment initiatives in promising sectors.

In line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, significant opportunities are emerging for Omani professionals and graduates across a range of sectors, including renewable energy, green hydrogen, manufacturing

There is no doubt that utilising national talent in future projects is not merely about providing employment opportunities for citizens, rather, it aims to build an integrated system in which Omani professionals become key partners in planning, implementation, and innovation.

industries, tourism, and logistics services. Additional opportunities exist in the digital economy and advanced technologies, as well as in mining and mineral resources, food security, and fisheries.

It is widely expected that this cooperation will yield positive results if national talent is properly utilised. Such outcomes would include the creation of more employment opportunities for Omani professionals, increased productivity and innovation, reduced dependence on foreign expertise in certain sectors, enhanced value added to national projects, and greater economic and social stability in the long term.

Ultimately, this collaboration will help prepare Omani citizens to lead, manage, and develop future projects, and ensure the sustainability of economic development for the nation's long-term strategic objectives.

Also, it is also very important for professional associations, entrepreneurship organisations, and other relevant institutions to engage children and involve them in training programmes during the summer season and school and college holidays.

This will enable them to gain knowledge of administrative, financial-saving, and technical skills that can help them organise their future lives.

In this way, we can prepare them from an early stage to join the workforce in the future while already possessing valuable experience and practical skills that will benefit them in their professional careers.

FORCED TATA SONS IPO AIMS TO FIX WHAT ISN'T BROKEN

SHRITAMA BOSE

Forcing an initial public offering of the Tata conglomerate's holding company would be a clumsy application of rules designed to reduce shadow banking risks. It could also sting the Indian government as it would curb the financial flexibility of the \$270 billion cars-to-chips group when New Delhi most needs agility from its corporate behemoths.

A listing risk has hung over Tata Sons since 2021, when the Reserve Bank of India refreshed its rulebook, following the collapse of Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services, a major non-bank lender.

The RBI enhanced capital requirements for large shadow banks and mandated listings to increase transparency. Tata Sons is registered as a core investment company, which the RBI counts as a category of shadow banks.

Tata Sons has since taken extensive steps to address potential risks. Last year it completed a \$13 billion IPO of Tata Capital, a small non-bank financial company; cut its quasi-lending exposure by reducing the value of so-called "letters of comfort" issued to subsidiaries' creditors by 60% in the two years to March 31, 2025; and moved from a net debt to net cash position as of March 2024.

Yet the RBI's latest update implies Tata Sons will still need to list after July 1.

The latest pushback comes from Noel Tata, chair of Tata Trusts which owns 66% of Tata Sons. He's written to the RBI saying a listing would shift the holding company's priorities from long-term institution-building to catering to shorter-term market expectations, Moneycontrol reported on June 1. That's a real risk; Tata's big bet on building an indigenous chip industry may not have materialised if Tata Sons was a public company.

What's more, a Tata Sons IPO would not significantly increase transparency. Most of its large investments already trade as public companies, including \$85 billion Tata Consultancy Services, \$38 billion Titan and \$15 billion Tata Motors. But a forced IPO would crystallise a huge conglomerate discount. For investors, owning a holding company is usually less attractive than buying listed subsidiaries that provide direct exposure to a desired industry.

In Asia, these discounts can be as high as 50%: Tata Sons held assets worth an estimated 1.75 trillion rupees as of March 2025. — Reuters

Major accountancy firm plans 30% graduate hiring

GRANT Thornton accountancy firm plans to increase UK graduate recruitment by 30 per cent this year, reversing a trend among professional services firms under a growth strategy fuelled by private equity giant Cinven.

Grant Thornton will hire 340 graduates and school leavers in the UK this year, which is the highest number in three years and up 30 per cent from last year, according to Abigail Fisher, its chief public officer.

"We remain invested in trainees and we've increased our numbers compared with last year," Fisher said. With AI set to disrupt the professional services industry, it has been a brutal job market for new graduates in recent years.

Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC have cut 1,100 entry-level roles in the UK over the past two years, with their combined intake of graduates and apprentices falling from 6,500 in 2023 to 5,400 in 2025, as previously reported.

PwC and KPMG declined to comment on their 2026 graduate intake. EY and Deloitte said entry-level hiring would be broadly in line with last year at around 1,600 and 1,500, respectively.

Figures from student careers research firm High Fliers show that accounting and professional services firms in the UK plan to hire 3.5 per cent fewer graduates in 2026 than last year.

The graduate push at Grant Thornton, which will hire across its audit, tax and advisory businesses, comes after the firm announced plans in November to add 160 managing directors to its 280-strong partnership in two years.

It has appointed 26 new partners in the first quarter of the year.

Fisher returned to the firm in a newly created role in February after 12 years at law firm Eversheds Sutherland.

Other senior appointments this year include chief digital officer David Gartside, who joined from



ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK.



Accounting and professional services firms in the UK plan to hire 3.5 per cent fewer graduates in 2026 than last year. — Reuters

McKinsey and chief commercial officer Frederik Vinten, previously at FTI consulting.

Cinven acquired a majority stake in Grant Thornton's UK business in April 2025 and also bought its German arm in a deal announced in September.

Fisher said the firm is currently redesigning its three-year graduate programme in the age of AI and changing client expectations.

"We are doing work behind the scenes," she said. "What does the future partner look like? What do we need to recruit for? And how are we evolving our learning and development programmes to make sure that we are supporting our people to develop their future skills?"

Other accountancy firms, often backed by private equity, have been ramping up entry-level hiring to drive growth.

Azets, backed by Hg and PAI Partners, took on 384 graduates and school leavers across its UK business in 2025, marking a 15 per cent increase year-on-year.

A spokesperson for Azets said the firm is aiming for graduate hiring this year to be "in line with or potentially above" 2025.

Cooper Parry, owned by Lee Equity Partners, hired more than 140 new trainees in its largest trainee cohort in 2025, a 40 per cent rise from the previous year.

Meanwhile, a growing number of directors and aspiring partners are also leaving the Big Four firms to join rival accountancy and advisory firms, in search of better career progression.

"A lot of people are talking to us because they are a bit stilted where they are. It's not the case here," said Fisher. "We are accelerating partners – there are a number being promoted in their early to mid 30s." All of its new partners have equity in the business.

She added: "We are not in the kind of professional services, stuffy environment where you have to wait for this partner to leave for another partner to take their place. We are very open to bringing people through."

CLASSIFIEDS

SIT. WANTED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

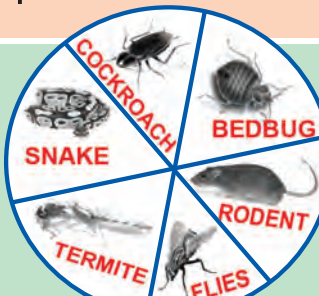
LOOKING for warehouse manager role. Indian male, 14 years GCC experience with driving licence. Available to join immediately. Please contact: 92991621

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

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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



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

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

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

WJ Towell Group Company
Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
Choose from a wide range of brands & models
PDC, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease
Quality car rentals at competitive prices.
Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

FOR RENT

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

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

SIT. WANTED

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

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

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



SIT. WANTED

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

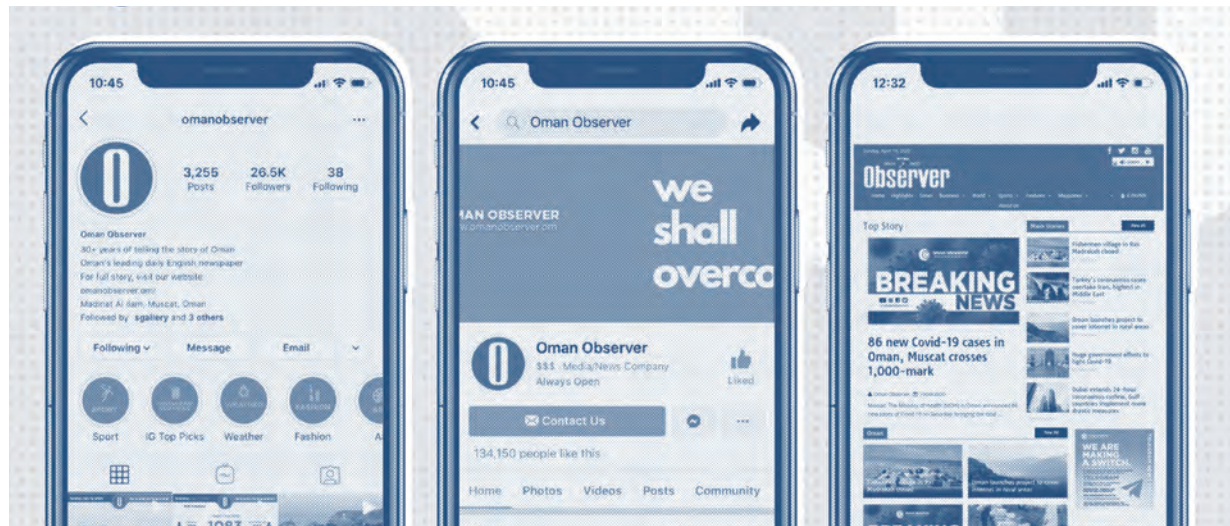
LOOKING for part time or full time Accounts/ Finance job. 20yrs experience in Muscat. Upto finalization & Audit. Please contact: 92065499

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

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

SIT. WANTED

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



OMAN DAILY Observer

FREE* CLASSIFIEDS

• **SITUATION WANTED**

* **NOW FREE CLASSIFIED IN OMAN DAILY OBSERVER ON THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ONLY**

Send your advertisement (Only one per coupon & no photocopies), either by mail or in person, with your local identity.

To advertise please contact:
Tel: 71455532/ 71455531/ 71455530
Email: adv@omaninfo.om

To advertise in Ministry of Information channels



To advertise

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

ازديهار
izdihar



ART/LIFE



CHANGING WORLD EMBRACING OUR SUMMER: A GUIDE TO 49 DEGREES



**SHADDAD
AL MUSALMY**
*The writer is a
Senior Editor at
Oman Daily Observer*

My friends from other parts of the world ask me, “How do you handle the heat?” I laugh because the question is wrong.

You don’t handle the Omani summer. You grow up with it. It’s in your bones by age five, when you learn that metal slides are for winter and that the best football games start after Maghrib.

I’ve never known a June that didn’t feel like opening an oven. The heat and I were never strangers. We were introduced when I was a kid, chasing cousins across the sabla at noon because we didn’t know better. We learned. We all learn.

Nobody here needs to tell you that life starts early. Before school let out, my grandfather would already be back from the corniche walk by 7 am, newspaper in one hand, miswak in the other. By 10 am, the whole country has quietly negotiated a truce with the sun. Shops lower their shutters. Work shifts gear. You don’t fight it. You built your day around it.

Fajr to 9 am is for errands, visits, and getting things done. Dhuhr to Asr is for being still. After sunset, Muscat breathes again. The corniche fills up. Karak stalls do their best business. This isn’t laziness. It’s timing. The heat taught us that.

I’ve owned the same white dishdashas for a long time and they still work harder than any AC. This is because white is for the day. This is part of physics. My non-Omani friends suffer in jeans in July and I want to tell them: the country already gave you the uniform. Wear it. Sandals are not a weekend thing. They’re infrastructure.

Growing up, summer was when time slowed and patience grew. School was out, but the lessons weren’t. You learn to move without rushing. You learn that every majlis has a jug of water and a plate of dates for a reason. That cold laban at 2 pm isn’t a drink. It’s a reset.

That the best conversations happen when it’s too hot to do anything else. The heat strips the day to what matters: shade, family, water, and not complaining about things you can’t change. My mother called it sabr (patience). The weather just enforces it. You don’t survive fifty summers without knowing the cool pockets. You go up to Al Jabal Al Akhdhar when Muscat feels like a stovetop, and remember what 25 degrees feels like on your skin. You hit Wadi Al Shab at dawn before the tour buses, and the water feels like it came from another country.

Even in town, you have the rituals. Al Mouj after 9 pm when the sea finally turns the fans on. A drive to Al Qurum Beach with the windows down, because night air is a blessing you don’t waste. Summer has gradients. We’ve mapped them since childhood. Do I still avoid touching the car door at noon? Of course. That’s not surrender. That’s muscle memory. Do I still plan my parking like it’s a chess move? That’s heritage.

I’m not “embracing” the Omani summer like it’s a new trend. I was born into the embrace. It’s strict, it’s hot, and it’s ours. It clears the schedule, slows the noise, and reminds you that some things — family, timing, shade — are not up for debate.

When that first October breeze comes through the window at night, we don’t just feel relief. We feel, truly and deeply, like we’ve kept a promise. To the season, and to ourselves. Till next time, enjoy summer.

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



PREMIERE
US actor Patrick Wilson and US actress Amy Adams attend Apple TV’s “Cape Fear” premiere at the Directors Guild of America in Los Angeles. — AFP



EVENTS
Cast member Emily Blunt poses during a photocall for the premiere of the film “Disclosure Day” in Paris, France. — Reuters

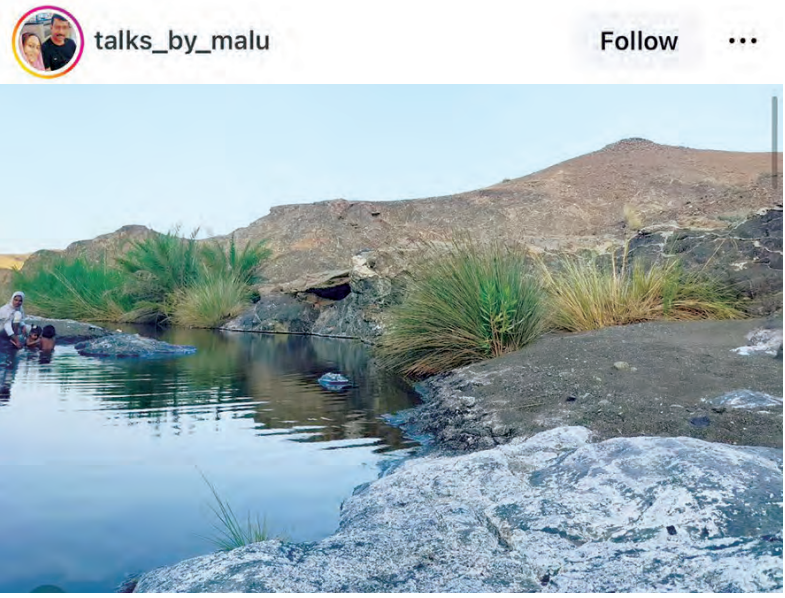


TECHNOLOGY
RT corp’s food-picking collaborative robot Foodly demonstrates at a food processing technology expo in Tokyo, Japan. — Reuters

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Tourist poses with Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque



Wadi Hibi Sinkhole in Suhar

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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

FRENCH MUSEUM REPORTS THEFT OF ARTY BANANA



A museum in eastern France on Sunday reported to police the theft of a banana that forms a core part of a multimillion-dollar artwork by Italian visual artist Maurizio Cattelan.

The missing fruit — which was taped to a wall to form the provocative work by Cattelan called “Comedian” — was noticed by a guard on Saturday to have gone missing.

The Pompidou-Metz museum, which is a branch of the famous Pompidou Centre in Paris, said in a statement it had lodged a criminal complaint for theft against persons unknown.

It also said it had replaced the banana.

It is not the first time damage has been dealt to the conceptual artwork, whose perishable banana centrepiece is replaced every three days to keep it contemporary.

In July last year, a visitor to the museum ate the fruit.

But guards quickly intervened and stuck up a replacement banana.

Cattelan said at the time he was disappointed the hungry

visitor had consumed only the banana and not the tape as well. The museum did not take legal action in that instance.

This time, though, it decided to make its criminal complaint because the perpetrator was unidentified and therefore “there is no possibility of dialogue”.

It also said that “this is the second time this has happened” and it felt it was an issue of respect for the artwork.

Cattelan’s edible creation, which aims to question the notion of art and its value, has sparked controversy ever since it made its debut at the 2019 Art Basel show in Miami Beach with an asking price of \$120,000.

A performance artist, David Datuna, ate “Comedian” at that 2019 show, saying he felt “hungry”.

But the work’s value has only risen.

Chinese-born crypto founder Justin Sun in 2024 forked out \$5.2 million for one iteration of the work, then days later ate it in front of cameras in Hong Kong.



‘Backrooms’, based on YouTube horror series, breaks box office records



A24’S “Backrooms”, a big-screen adaptation of the viral YouTube horror series, has opened with a record-breaking \$81.5 million in North America, according to US media reports.

Directed by 20-year-old Kane Parsons, who originally created the series as a teenager, the film has achieved the biggest opening ever for an original horror movie and more than doubled A24’s previous domestic debut record. Parsons also becomes the youngest director ever to debut at number one with a feature film.

Starring Oscar nominees Chiwetel Ejiofor and Renate Reinsve, the film follows a furniture store owner who discovers a vast, mysterious labyrinth beneath his shop. When he disappears, his therapist enters the eerie “liminal space” in search of him.

The movie expands on the viral “Backrooms” online universe, which began in 2022 as a creepypasta phenomenon. The story grew through shared Internet posts, evolving with added monsters, alternate dimensions, and collaborative storytelling across the web.



In second place, Focus Features’ “Obsession” continued its strong performance, earning \$26.4 million and bringing its global total close to \$150 million on a budget of under \$1 million. Directed by 26-year-old Curry Baker, the film has gained praise for both critical reception and audience response.

Disney’s “Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu” fell nearly 70 per cent in its second weekend, taking in \$25 million and placing third. The film marks a return of the Star Wars franchise to theaters after 2019’s “The Rise of Skywalker”, and serves as a continuation of the hit streaming series.

Lionsgate’s “Michael”, the Michael Jackson biopic directed by Antoine Fuqua and starring Jaafar Jackson, remained in the top five for a sixth week, adding \$11.7 million. It has now earned \$340 million domestically and over \$845 million globally.

Sony’s comedy “The Breadwinner” debuted in fifth place with \$7.5 million, starring Nate Bergatze as a father navigating childcare while his wife is away.

The rest of the top 10 included “The Devil Wears Prada 2,” “Pressure,” “The Sheep Detective,” “Passenger,” and “Mortal Kombat II.”

FEATURES



MASIRAH’S KITESURFING SEASON HAS BEGUN

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

ACROSS the island’s coastline, colourful kites have once again appeared over the water as riders from Oman and around the world arrive to take advantage of the strong and reliable summer winds that have made Masirah one of the region’s premier kitesurfing destinations.

For those familiar with the island, the sight is an unmistakable sign that one of the most anticipated periods of the year has arrived. Beaches, lagoons, and camps that lie relatively quiet through much of the year are once again welcoming a community brought together by a shared passion for wind, water, and adventure. Among them are windsurfers and kitesurfers who have been coming to Masirah for decades, building deep memories and lasting connections to the island. For many, returning each season is not simply about reconnecting with a place that has become an important part of their lives.

The season is shaped by the south-west monsoon, which delivers consistent winds from June through September. These

conditions have helped establish Masirah as a destination that attracts returning visitors year after year, many of whom travel thousands of kilometres specifically to experience the island’s unique combination of wind, space and natural beauty.

Yet the season is about more than kitesurfing alone. It brings visitors, stories, friendships and a renewed energy to the island. Local businesses welcome guests, accommodation providers prepare for a busy summer, and familiar faces reconnect as another season unfolds.

There is also a sense of anticipation for what lies ahead. The months to come will bring memorable sessions on the water, spectacular sunsets, quiet moments along the shoreline, and the excitement that accompanies every new arrival. For many who return each year, Masirah offers something increasingly rare: an opportunity to disconnect from the pace of everyday life and reconnect with nature.

As kites once again fill the skies above the island, Masirah enters a season defined by movement, adventure and serenity. For residents, returning riders, and first-time visitors alike, the season has begun.



As summer winds sweep across Masirah Island, kitesurfers and windsurfers from around the world return to its shores. Driven by the annual monsoon, the season brings adventure, community and renewed energy to one of the region’s premier wind sports destinations.

