

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



The participation aims to facilitate the exchange of expertise among member states. — ONA

MOAFWR AT LONDON GRAINS COUNCIL MEETINGS

LONDON: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR) participated in the meetings of the International Grains Council (IGC) held in London. This participation reflects the ministry’s commitment to enhancing its presence in international organisations and forums concerned with food security, as well as monitoring global developments in grain markets and essential food commodity markets.

The meetings addressed a number of topics related to developments in global grain markets, production forecasts, international trade trends, challenges associated with supply chains, climate change, and their impact on global food security.

This participation aims to strengthen international cooperation and facilitate the exchange of data and expertise among member states.

Such efforts support initiatives designed to ensure the stability of food markets, improve supply chain efficiency, and enhance the capacity to address global challenges and crises.

The meetings included a review of the latest reports and studies issued by the Council concerning global grain conditions and food markets. They also explored future trends in production, consumption and international trade.

These insights support the Sultanate of Oman’s efforts to develop policies and programmes related to food security and to enhance the strategic stock of essential commodities. — ONA

SQUH SETS MILESTONE IN UROLOGY SURGERIES

MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH) has successfully localised the operation of implanting artificial urinary control devices for men. The medical procedure is deemed the first of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman.

The hospital recently conducted a similar operation at its premises in the University Medical City. The surgery was carried out by a fully integrated multi-specialty medical team led by Dr Intisar bint Mohammed al Hashmi, Consultant Urologist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, University Medical City.

Such an operation, which emerges as an advanced treatment for severe urinary incontinence in men, requires a high level of surgical precision and specialised expertise.

The operation contributes to improving the quality of life of patients. It benefits from a variety of advanced treatment options in Oman.

This accomplishment embodies the constant pace of localisation of advanced medical procedures in Oman. — ONA

OMAN, UKRAINE MARK 34 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

MUSCAT: A series of ceremonial, educational and cultural events were held in Odesa, Ukraine, to mark the 34th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Sultanate of Oman.

The commemorative programme began with a symphony concert at the Odesa National Philharmonic Hall and continued with a range of initiatives in the field of educational diplomacy. The International Humanitarian University in Odesa hosted a presentation titled ‘Ukraine-Oman: The Historical and Diplomatic Foundation of Interstate Partnership’.

The event brought together members of the diplomatic corps, local authorities, academics, media representatives, members of the Arab diaspora in Odesa and



The event brought together members of the diplomatic corps, local authorities, academics and media representatives.

university students.

The ceremony opened with the national anthems of Ukraine and Oman, followed by welcoming remarks from Olga Selykh, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the

Sultanate of Oman, and Jamal bin Hassan al Mousawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum.

In their addresses, both dignitaries highlighted the importance of strengthening political, economic and cultural

cooperation between the two countries, while emphasising the role of educational and humanitarian exchanges in deepening mutual understanding between the peoples of Ukraine and Oman.

GCC-Canada ministerial meet discusses cooperation

THE Sultanate of Oman participated in the joint GCC-Canada ministerial meeting hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain in Manama today. The Omani delegation was led by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister. The meeting was chaired by Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid al Zayani, Bahrain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, current president of the Ministerial Council, and attended by GCC foreign ministers, as well as Anita Anand, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the GCC Secretary-General.

The ministers discussed ways to strengthen and expand cooperation across economic, scientific and cultural fields, as well as exchanging expertise and stimulating growth and innovation opportunities for the mutual benefit of both sides.

They also reviewed regional and global developments and the resulting challenges and repercussions threatening security and stability, affirming the importance of political and peaceful solutions through meaningful dialogue and negotiations aimed at containing and preventing escalation, while prioritising the supreme interests of peoples in security, stability and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Faisal bin Harib al Busaidy, the Sultanate of Oman’s Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain and Shaikh Ahmed bin Hashel al Maskari, Head of the GCC and Regional



The ministers discussed ways to strengthen and expand cooperation. — ONA

The ministers discussed ways to strengthen and expand cooperation across economic, scientific and cultural fields, as well as exchanging expertise and stimulating growth and innovation opportunities for the mutual benefit of both sides

Neighbourhood Department at the Foreign Ministry.

GCC Ministerial Council The Sultanate of Oman participated today in the 167th session of the GCC Ministerial Council, which was held today in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain and Chairman of the current session of the Ministerial Council.

The Ministerial Council discussed the latest developments in joint Gulf action and the progress made in implementing decisions and initiatives aimed at enhancing integration and inter-connectedness among member states across various political, economic, security, and developmental fields, thereby strengthening the position of the

Cooperation Council and its pivotal role in consolidating security and stability and advancing the paths of development and prosperity for the Council’s countries.

The meeting reviewed the rapid developments on the regional and international arenas, foremost of which are the challenges imposed by the Israeli-American war on the Islamic Republic of Iran and its dangerous repercussions on regional security and stability.

The Council emphasised the necessity of an immediate halt to the ongoing military targeting, and the intensification of political and diplomatic efforts aimed at containing the crisis and addressing its causes through peaceful means, in a bid to preserve the security of the region and safeguard the interests of its countries and peoples. — ONA

‘Together, let’s break the silence and build a healthier community’

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

AN inspiring evening recently featured stories of falling into addictions and the power of family support while unravelling the complex dynamics of the path to recovery and sustaining it.

The programme titled ‘Rebirth’ had the theme stating, ‘Together, let’s break the silence and build a healthier community.’ This year, Not Alone Stories collaborated with Positive Vision Association and was sponsored by Sohar International.

The Positive Vision Association was founded in 2025 to raise awareness about addiction, support prevention efforts, reduce stigma and provide care for affected individuals.



This year, Not Alone Stories collaborated with Positive Vision Association and was sponsored by Sohar International.

The evening explored the theme of rebirth through powerful, real-life stories of resilience, recovery and

hope. The event featured courageous individuals who had overcome substance misuse, a family member

shared the impact of a loved one’s recovery journey, and a mental health professional who facilitates support groups and provides guidance to individuals in recovery shared expertise.

They shed light on the realities of addiction, the importance of support systems, and the transformative power of healing and second chances.

Founder of the Not Alone Campaign, HH Sayyidah Basma al Said, noted that many a time people only consider the person who is going through addiction and do not realise what the family members and individuals around the person are going through. The situation could even ignite anger, and they tend to actually leave the person because they don’t know what to do. Speaking to the Observer, she

said, “We are collaborating with another organisation, and we are showcasing the mental health side of it. A lot of people may not be aware, but addiction actually has a lot to do with mental and physical health. While going through a recovery path, they can weaken at any point, and when they weaken, they automatically feel like they need to go back, but because there was support between their family and the group support, there were a lot of things that told them not to go back.”

She pointed out that some people think they have done the needful and that they are fine, but they need to check in, even if it is once a month or something similar.

The speaker shared how quickly his life changed once he committed to recovery.

SHORT TAKES



Oman participates in the regional meeting of the Regional Commission for the Certification of Poliomyelitis Eradication of WHO. — ONA

OMAN REMAINS FREE OF POLIO

SHARM EL SHEIKH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Health, participated in the 40th regional meeting of the Regional Commission for the Certification of Poliomyelitis Eradication of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The meeting is held in Sharm el Sheikh, the Arab Republic of Egypt, during the period from June 9 to 11.

The meeting reviewed reports from countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region and discussed progress achieved as well as challenges facing polio eradication programmes.

During the meeting, the Commission confirmed that the Sultanate of Oman remains free of polio. This achievement reflects the Sultanate of Oman's steadfast commitment to protecting public health and strengthening national gains in prevention and immunisation.

The Commission commended Oman's integrated national efforts that have contributed to sustaining this public health milestone for more than three decades, in line with the highest internationally adopted standards and practices.

This confirmation reflects the advanced position the Sultanate of Oman holds in the field of communicable disease prevention and the strengthening of health security. — ONA

Musandam eyes RO 17m in food security projects

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

THE Musandam Governorate is accelerating efforts to strengthen food security through a series of strategic investments aimed at increasing local production, achieving self-sufficiency and positioning the governorate for future export opportunities.

Speaking on the governorate's food security agenda, Eng Ali bin Ahmed al Maashani, Director-General of Housing and Urban Planning in Musandam, said the primary focus is on boosting domestic production across key sectors, including aquaculture, fisheries, agriculture, livestock and water resources development.

“Our priority is to increase local production and reach self-sufficiency. The next stage will be to expand towards export markets and create sustainable economic value from Musandam's natural resources,” he said.

The governorate's strategy is being implemented through a comprehensive annual investment plan overseen by a joint committee comprising representatives from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The committee is responsible for monitoring project implementation and ensuring that development objectives are achieved according to established timelines.

According to Al Maashani, 45 per cent of the targeted projects were completed or



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advancing according to schedule. “This achievement reflects the commitment of all stakeholders involved in the implementation process and demonstrates the governorate's determination to translate plans into tangible outcomes that support national food security objectives,” he noted. Among the flagship initiatives receiving particular attention are aquaculture projects, which are expected to play a central

role in expanding seafood production and strengthening Musandam's contribution to Oman's fisheries sector. Benefiting from its strategic location and rich marine resources, the governorate is regarded as one of Oman's most promising destinations for aquaculture investment.

In parallel, efforts are underway to enhance agricultural and livestock production through modern farming techniques and sustainable resource management practices. Water resource projects are also being prioritised to ensure long-term sustainability and support the expansion of productive activities across the governorate.

Al Maashani revealed that Musandam aims to attract high-quality food security investments valued at RO 17 million during the current year. Several agreements have already been signed, while additional projects are in the final stages of preparation before being formally launched.

“We have completed the signing of a number of projects and are currently finalising the remaining initiatives under preparation. We are optimistic that the total investment value will exceed the targeted RO 17 million by the end of the year,” he said.

The planned investments are expected to strengthen local supply chains, increase food production capacity and create new economic opportunities for communities across the governorate. They also align with Oman's broader vision to enhance food security, diversify the economy and attract sustainable private-sector investment.

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NOTICE AND INVITATION TO ATTEND THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of Oman International Development and Investment Co SAOG ("Company") is pleased to invite the shareholders to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting ("EGM") scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 1 July 2026 at 4:00 PM virtually through the electronic platform for general meetings accessible through the Muscat Clearing & Depository SAOC ("MCD") website ([www.mcd.om](#)).

In the event the required quorum is not met to hold the first meeting, the second meeting shall take place on Wednesday, 8 July 2026 at 4:00 PM via the same electronic platform set out above to discuss the following agenda items:

- to approve certain amendments to be made to the terms and conditions (the "**Conditions**") of the outstanding OMR 13,367,308.500 Mandatory Convertible Bonds (the "**Bonds**") issued by the Company to adjust the 'Conversion Ratio' upon a bonus share issue as an anti-dilution protection event, so that each Bond shall be converted into 0.42 ordinary shares instead of 0.35 ordinary shares currently applicable under the Conditions;
- to approve the insertion of a new Condition 8.3 into the Conditions of the Bonds to introduce certain anti-dilution protections for holders of the Bonds in connection with mandatory conversion of the Bonds upon the issuance of bonus shares by the Company; and
- to approve such amendments to the Conditions, the Declaration of Agency relating to the Bonds, and to such of the other Transaction Documents (as defined in the Declaration of Agency), as are necessary or desirable to implement and give effect to paragraphs 1 and 2 above and to ensure compliance with the relevant laws (specific amendments and disclosures are more particularly detailed in the attachments hereto).

In accordance with the Company's Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the Financial Services Authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- Legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCD.
- The Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder's shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information please contact Ms. Hana Al Maani on telephone No 98104167 or email: hana.almaani@ominvest.com

Transforming Businesses
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مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع
Muscat Clearing & Depository

Notice and agenda of the General Meeting of the holders of Mandatory Convertible Bonds with the value of OMR 13,367,308.500 (to be referred to as the "Bonds" and the holders of such Bonds to be referred to as "Bondholders") issued by Oman International Development and Investment Company SAOG (the "Company").

The agent of the Bondholders, Muscat Clearing & Depository SAOC ("MCD"), has the pleasure to invite all Bondholders to attend the General Meeting ("EGM") of the Bondholders scheduled to be held virtually through the electronic platform for general meetings accessible through the MCD's website ([www.mcd.om](#)), on Wednesday, 1 July 2026 at 5:00 PM.

In the event the required quorum is not met to hold the first meeting, the second meeting shall take place on Wednesday, 8 July 2026 at 5:00 PM via the same electronic platform set out above to discuss the following agenda items:

- to approve certain amendments to be made to the Conditions of the Bonds issued by the Company to adjust the 'Conversion Ratio' upon a bonus share issue as an anti-dilution protection event, so that each Bond shall be converted into 0.42 ordinary shares instead of 0.35 ordinary shares currently applicable under the Conditions;
- to approve the insertion of a new Condition 8.3 into the Conditions of the Bonds to introduce certain anti-dilution protections for holders of the Bonds in connection with mandatory conversion of the Bonds upon the issuance of bonus shares by the Company; and
- to approve such amendments to the Conditions, the Declaration of Agency relating to the Bonds, and to such of the other Transaction Documents (as defined in the Declaration of Agency), as are necessary or desirable to implement and give effect to paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and to ensure compliance with the relevant laws (specific amendments and disclosures are more particularly detailed in the attachments hereto).

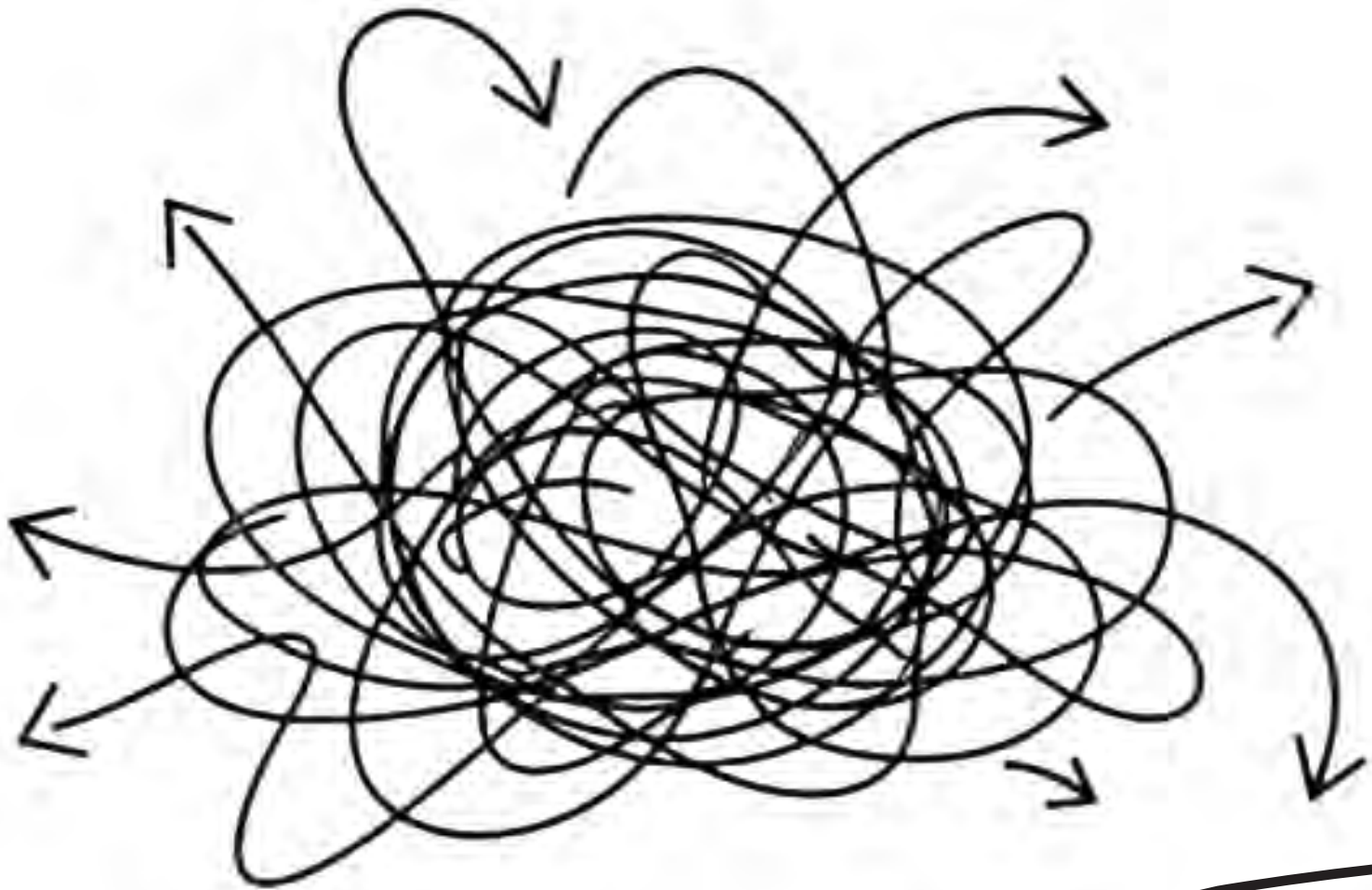
In accordance with the Declaration of Agency, the agreements and the Financial Services Authority Rules Governing General Meetings through electronic means, please note the following:

- Only a juristic / corporate entity may appoint a natural person to act on its behalf in connection with the meeting and any adjournment of the meeting, provided that the authorisation should be made in writing using the proxy form available at MCD or the Company and must be submitted electronically not less than 48 hours before the scheduled time of start of the meeting, i.e. by 5:00 PM on 29 June 2026 and the proxy should have an Investor Number from MCD in order to vote.
- The voting on any of the items on the agenda shall begin through the online MCD platform from 5:00 PM on 28 June 2026 and until the voting is completed on the day of the meeting.

The specific amendments are more particularly detailed in attachments hereto which will be circulated to the Bondholders and will be available at the offices of the Company and the Bondholders' Agent from the date of this notice to the conclusion of the Meeting (or any adjourned Meeting).

For any inquiries, please contact Mr. Wadhah Al Hooti at MCD on +968 24822268 or W.alhooti@mcd.om

SPOTLIGHT



Chronic stress can contribute to anxiety, burnout, sleep disturbances and a decline in overall quality of life.

Encouraging men to prioritise their mental health may be one of the most important investments society can make

BALQEES AL ORAIMI

FOR generations, men have been expected to embody strength, resilience and emotional control. From an early age, many are taught to suppress vulnerability, carry responsibilities without complaint and remain composed regardless of the pressures they face. Yet as conversations around mental health continue to evolve globally, an important question is gaining greater attention: How are men really coping?

Observed in June, Men’s Mental Health Awareness Month serves as a reminder that mental well-being is not a gender issue. While public discussions on mental health have become more common in recent years, many men still struggle in silence, often reluctant to seek support or openly discuss emotional challenges.

Mental health extends far beyond the absence of illness. It encompasses emotional balance, healthy relationships, resilience and the ability to navigate everyday challenges. However, societal expectations often create barriers that discourage men from expressing distress or acknowledging emotional difficulties.

According to mental health specialists, many men experience psychological stress differently from women. Rather than verbalising emotions, they may immerse themselves in work, withdraw socially or internalise their struggles.

“Silence should never be interpreted as well-being,” said Dr Abdulla al Mujaini, a psychiatrist. “Many men have been conditioned to believe that seeking help is a sign of weakness. In reality, recognising a problem and reaching out for support requires courage and self-awareness.”

He noted that men frequently encounter multiple sources of stress, including financial responsibilities, professional expectations and family obligations. While these pressures are not unique to men, societal perceptions often place additional expectations on them to remain emotionally strong regardless of circumstances.

The modern workplace has also become a significant contributor to stress. Long working hours, performance targets, job insecurity and the pressure to maintain financial stability can gradually affect emotional well-being.

Mental health experts warn that chronic stress,

MEN ARE NOT MADE OF STONES

Observed in June, Men’s Mental Health Awareness Month serves as a reminder that mental well-being is not a gender issue. While public discussions on mental health have become more common in recent years, many men still struggle in silence, often reluctant to seek support or openly discuss emotional challenges.

when left unaddressed, can contribute to anxiety, burnout, sleep disturbances and a decline in overall quality of life. Yet many men delay seeking professional help until symptoms become severe.

Family counsellor Noorah Bint Abdulla believes that social stigma remains one of the biggest obstacles preventing men from accessing mental health support. “Despite growing awareness, there is still a perception in some communities that emotional vulnerability is incompatible with masculinity,” she said. “This misconception prevents many men from speaking openly about their struggles or seeking professional guidance when they need it.”

She emphasised that mental health should be treated with the same importance as physical health, noting that early intervention can make a significant difference in preventing more serious psychological difficulties.

Experts point out that warning signs are often overlooked. Persistent irritability, changes in sleeping patterns, social withdrawal, loss of motivation and difficulty concentrating may all indicate underlying mental health concerns. Recognising these signs early can help individuals access support before challenges escalate.

Beyond professional assistance, strong social connections remain a crucial protective factor. Friends, family members and colleagues can play an important role by creating safe spaces for open conversations and encouraging help-seeking behaviour without judgement.

The role of families is particularly important. Mental health professionals stress that supportive home environments

foster emotional resilience and enable individuals to communicate their concerns more freely. A culture of listening, understanding and empathy can significantly improve psychological well-being.

At the same time, awareness campaigns across schools, workplaces and community organisations are helping to challenge outdated stereotypes surrounding masculinity and mental health. Such initiatives encourage men to view emotional well-being not as a weakness, but as an essential component of a healthy and productive life.

Maintaining good mental health also involves everyday habits. Regular physical activity, adequate sleep, healthy relationships and balanced lifestyles all contribute to emotional well-being. Experts note that preventive self-care can be just as important as professional treatment.

As Men’s Mental Health Awareness Month shines a spotlight on these issues, the conversation extends beyond statistics and diagnoses. It raises broader questions about how society defines strength and whether enough space is being created for men to speak honestly about their experiences.

The answer may vary from one individual to another. However, one message remains clear: mental health is not a luxury, nor is it a private issue affecting only a few. It is a fundamental aspect of overall well-being, influencing families, workplaces and communities alike.

In a world where pressures continue to mount, encouraging men to prioritise their mental health may be one of the most important investments society can make. After all, true strength is not found in silence, but in the willingness to seek support, foster connection and acknowledge that everyone, regardless of gender, deserves the opportunity to thrive.

Awareness campaigns help to challenge outdated stereotypes surrounding masculinity and mental health

A culture of listening, understanding and empathy can significantly improve psychological well-being

WORKSHOP DISCUSSES ROLE OF LEARNING CITIES IN SOCIAL INNOVATION

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), organised a workshop on Wednesday titled “Supporting Social Innovation in Learning Cities.” The event was held under the auspices of Dr Intisar bint Abdullah Ambosaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Supporting Educational Programmes and Vice-Chairperson of the Oman



The workshop aimed to raise awareness about the concept of social innovation. — ONA

National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

The workshop aimed to achieve several key objectives, namely raising awareness about the concept of social innovation and its vital role in local community development.

Dr Mahmoud bin Abdullah al Abri, Secretary-General of the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and

Science, emphasised the importance of elevating learning cities into active platforms that support lifelong learning and sustainable development amidst rapid global transformations.

He pointed out that the inclusion of the wilayats of Muscat, Sur and Nizwa into the Unesco Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) represents a significant milestone. — ONA

Tender Notice for the purchase of used light vehicles, light equipment, and used/unused project materials.

Al Watanyiah United Engineering and Contracting Co. LLC hereby announce following Tenders for the purchase of used light vehicles, light equipment and used/unused project materials, as described in the table below, on an “as is, where is” basis. Those wishing to submit Bids must obtain the Tender documents from the Company's Head Office (HO) in Ghala Industrial Area after paying the specified Tender Fee in the Company's Bank Dhofar account: 01040605344006 (IBAN NO: OM080250001040605344006).

S. No.	Tender No.	Description	Location	Tender Fee Inc. VAT 5% (ر.ع.)	Earnest Money Deposit (ر.ع.)	Period for purchase of Tender	Last date for submission of offer
1	AW/T/ PH3/ 01/2026	For the purchase of 80 no. used light vehicles (3 Ton Trucks, Saloon cars, Pickups, Buses, Station Wagons).	Ghala/ Barka Yard	75/-	10% of the submitted offer	10/06/2026 To 23/06/2026	30/06/2026 5.00 PM
2	AW/T/ PH3/ 02/2026	For the purchase of 157 no. used light equipment (3 Ton Tandem Rollers, 2 Ton Dumpers, Generators, Skid Steer Loaders etc).	Ghala/ Barka Yard	50/-	10% of the submitted offer	10/06/2026 To 23/06/2026	30/06/2026 5.00 PM
3	AW/T/ PH3/ 03/2026	For the purchase of used / unused M.S., G.I. items, HDPE, PVC, UPVC, D.I. pipes & fittings, D.I. manhole covers, RCC pipes, items for High Tension electrical work, building materials, furniture, water tanks, etc.	Ghala/ Barka Yard	25/-	10% of the submitted offer	10/06/2026 To 23/06/2026	30/06/2026 5.00 PM

- The last date for submission of offers accompanied by an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) issued by any local bank in Oman (equivalent to 10%) of the total offered value is on 30/06/2026, 5 PM, detailed date on the above table.
- The EMD must be valid for 30 days from the last date of submission of offer and the original EMD along with the offer must be submitted in the tender box at the reception of our HO Ghala, Muscat, Oman on or before the date or time mentioned above.
- Contact details: 2450 2581 / 82 - Extn. 149 / 150, GSM: 9294 7637 / 7722 8166

Medical City for Military opens medical fitness centre



MUSCAT: The Medical City for Military and Security Services on Wednesday inaugurated a medical fitness centre at its hospital in Muscat Governorate.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Eng Odai bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of the Medical City for Military and Security Services.

The Centre serves as an additional facility that enhances the Recruitment Medical Tests System that keeps pace with approved global standards.

The Centre achieves the highest levels of medical readiness and it emerges as a platform that operates in accordance with a precise practical methodology. It is run by professional personnel who harness top technical capabilities. — ONA

محافظة مسقط
Muscat Governorate

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (17/2026)

Muscat Municipality invites Companies specialized in the field and registered with Projects, Tenders and Local Content Athority, to participate and obtain prequalification documents from the website via the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Project Number	Description of Project	Last Date to Collect	Bids Return Date
(PRE/26/081)	Prequalification for Construction Projects of Roads, Bridges, and Box Culverts	04/07/2026	21/07/2026

1. Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.
2. Clarification and Support:
 - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
 - For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@PTLC.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).

رؤية عمان 2040
Moving Forward with Confidence

وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية
Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of **Ministry of Social Development** hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
148/2026 Re-submission	Providing supplies and tools for depositors at the Juvenile Affairs House	Companies specialized in the field of food and food services and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Tuesday 30-06-2026 02:00 PM	Monday 20-07-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
257/2026	Construction of hydrotherapy unit at Sumail	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting Interior decoration implementation works Garden construction and maintenance Specialized foundation and structure works registered primarily with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the first degree	Tuesday 30-06-2026 02:00 PM	Monday 20-07-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
259/2026	Pharmaceutical needs of the boarding unit (home for the severely disabled)	Companies specialized in the field of supplying medical supplies and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Tuesday 30-06-2026 02:00 PM	Monday 20-07-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On **Thursday 11/06/2026**.

❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry"

www.mosd.gov.om

US, IRAN EXCHANGE FIRE

UN WARNED OF THE RISK OF RETURN TO “FULL WAR” IN THE MIDEAST



Flames engulf vehicles following an Israeli airstrike that hit a car in Sidon. — AFP

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday said that Iran has taken too long to negotiate a deal over the conflict in the Middle East and will now “have to pay the price.” Trump’s social media post, in which he asserted that the Iranian military has been “completely defeated,” came after the United States and Iran exchanged fire, straining a ceasefire that took effect in April. “The Bully of the Middle East is DEAD!!! They’ve taken too long to negotiate a deal that would have been great for them, now they will have to pay the price!!!!” Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Separately, Trump told Fox News journalist Trey Yingst in a phone interview that because peace talks have failed to make progress, he is getting closer to targeting Iran’s power plants and bridges. “I may keep going,” Trump was quoted by Fox as saying. “They had a chance to sign a deal and survive.” It marked a contrast with his comments to reporters on Tuesday that negotiations on an enduring settlement to end the war were in their “final throes,” and could be wrapped up in “two or three days.”

In another social post on Wednesday, Trump praised the US blockade of Iranian shipping, calling it “the most successful” in history while labelling it a “steel wall.” He claimed that the blockade had halted Iranian business and prevented it from paying military wages, while still allowing other countries to export “lots of oil.” “Praise be to Allah!” Trump wrote.

US forces said they carried out strikes against Iran in retaliation for the downing of an American helicopter, with explosions reported by Iranian media along its southern coast. The US Air Force and Navy had command and control, defence and surveillance stations. Iran said it had attacked American bases in Jordan and Bahrain



A man sits in front of a poster with a portrait of Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, at Vanak Square in Tehran. — AFP

Late on Tuesday, US forces said they carried out strikes against Iran in retaliation for the downing of an American helicopter on Monday, with explosions reported by Iranian media along its southern coast. US Central Command later said that the US Air Force and Navy had command and control, defence and surveillance stations. Iran said it had attacked American bases in Jordan and Bahrain on Wednesday. Trump accused Iran of taking too long to negotiate a peace deal and warned it would now “have to pay the price”, a day after suggesting an agreement was in the offing. The remarks came after Iran and the US once again traded fire following the downing of an American helicopter, further straining a ceasefire that took effect in April but has been

marked by sporadic flare-ups of violence. The exchange drew international calls for restraint on the eve of the World Cup, which the US is co-hosting and Iran is participating in. Trump said in a social media post that Iran had been “completely defeated”, just a day after saying talks to bring about a definitive end to the Middle East war were in the “final throes.” “Iran is all talk and no action,” he said on Wednesday. “They’ve taken too long to negotiate a deal that would have been great for them, now they will have to pay the price!!!!” The war, which began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, threw the region into chaos and rattled global markets before the shaky truce began. Iran said it attacked American bases in Jordan and Bahrain on Wednesday after

the US carried out strikes on the Islamic republic in retaliation for the downing of a helicopter. The Apache was the second crewed aircraft that Washington confirmed was shot down by Iran during the war. Its two crew members were rescued, the US military said. Bahrain said it intercepted and destroyed “a number of Iranian aerial attacks”, and a correspondent in the capital Manama heard several loud explosions. Jordan’s military, meanwhile, said it shot down five missiles, with no casualties or material damage. Elsewhere, the Kuwaiti military said its air defences were engaging “hostile aerial targets”. Iran has recently carried out deadly attacks there too.

Tehran’s foreign ministry “reiterated the legal and moral responsibility” of its neighbours “to prevent the US military and Israel from using their territory or facilities to plan, organise, execute, or support hostile actions against Iran”. US Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees American forces in the Middle East, said on X that it had earlier “struck Iranian air defence, ground control stations, and surveillance radar sites near the Strait of Hormuz”. United Nations chief Antonio Guterres warned on Wednesday of the risk of a return to “full war” in the Middle East after Iran and the United States traded strikes. “We should not minimise the risks of a lesser fire becoming full fire, or in another word — full war”, Secretary-General Guterres said at a meeting of the UN Security Council on the situation in the tinderbox region. — AFP

ISRAELI STRIKES ON SOUTH LEBANON KILL 12

Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon killed at least 12 people on Wednesday as Israel carried out strikes across the south including the coastal city of Sidon

FIRST OIL TANKER FROM GULF HEADING TO EUROPE

A tanker carrying two million barrels of crude oil is heading towards Europe having left the Gulf at the end of May, the first such shipment since March.

TRUMP ACCUSES IRAN OF TAKING ‘TOO LONG’

US President Donald Trump accused Iran on Wednesday of taking too long to negotiate a peace deal and warned it would now “have to pay the price”.

US STRIKES DAMAGE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Iran’s foreign ministry said that the United States had damaged the ongoing international diplomatic effort to end the war, after more US strikes in southern Iran.

KUWAIT DEFENCES ENGAGE AERIAL TARGETS

Kuwait’s military said its air defences were engaging “hostile aerial targets”, as the United States and Iran traded attacks after the downing of an American helicopter.

AGGRESSIONPROVOCATIONS



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

ERDOGAN SAYS ISRAEL’S ATTACKS THREATEN TÜRKİYE

ANKARA: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that Israel’s attacks on Syria and Lebanon had reached a point where they also threaten Türkiye, adding Israel’s “aggression” posed a threat to the whole world and must be stopped. Nato member Türkiye has been one of the fiercest critics of Israel’s assaults on Iran, Gaza, and Lebanon, saying Israel was the biggest obstacle to regional peace. It has halted all trade with Israel and called for measures against it at international courts.

“The attacks by (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu and his network of murder on Lebanon and Syria have brought the issue to a point where it also threatens Türkiye,” Erdogan told lawmakers from his ruling AK Party in parliament, and added that Ankara’s security was tied to that of these two countries. Erdogan also said Israel was leading a “sneaky effort” to destabilise African countries and the Mediterranean by igniting “the fire of discord” on the ethnically-split island of Cyprus. “These small entities, whose ambitions far exceed their size, have boarded Israel’s boat of mischief, taken on the role of Zionist subcontractors, and are pursuing some pipe dreams in the Eastern Mediterranean,” he said, without elaborating.

“Nobody should chase adventures... I want everyone to know that if the rights of Türkiye and Turkish Cypriots are violated in the Eastern Mediterranean, our response will be very clear and very strong.” Türkiye, Iran’s neighbour, has blamed Israel’s “provocations” for starting the US-Iran war. Erdogan on Wednesday urged world powers to take a more clear stance against Israel, saying it was emboldened by the “silence of international community”. “Pulling Israel back to within the bounds of the rule of law has become a shared duty not just for certain countries, but for all of humanity,” he said. — Reuters

IAEA BOARD PASSES RESOLUTION



The UN nuclear watchdog’s 35-nation Board of Governors passed a US-backed resolution on Wednesday telling Iran to declare its remaining enriched uranium stocks and let inspectors verify them, which could complicate Washington’s talks with Tehran. The resolution submitted by the United States, Britain, France and Germany was passed with 21 votes in favour, three against and 10 abstentions, diplomats at the closed-door meeting said. — Reuters

DIPLOMATIC TRACK

Qatari negotiators travel to Tehran for talks



Qatari negotiators travelled to Tehran to address remaining differences between the US and Iran, a diplomat said, as talks between the warring sides appeared stalled. “Following consultations with the US, Qatari negotiators travelled to Tehran this morning to meet with the Iranians in an effort to bridge the remaining gaps,” the diplomat with knowledge of the situation said to discuss sensitive talks. The diplomatic effort came after Iran and the US exchanged fire. — AFP

China warns EU on new sanctions over Ukraine war

BEIJING: China warned the European Union on Wednesday against sanctioning its companies, after Brussels proposed a fresh wave of measures over Beijing’s support for Russia in its war with Ukraine. The EU’s latest sanctions since Moscow’s 2022 attack on Ukraine seek, among other aims, to complicate commercial activities by companies in third countries that allegedly support the Russian military.

The 27-member bloc has previously implemented measures targeting Chinese firms for their alleged support for Russia’s military industrial complex.

The sanctions must be debated and unanimously approved by the EU’s 27 member states to come into force. Officials said that the measures include adding 14 companies from mainland China and Hong Kong to a list of firms banned from buying EU goods.



A Ukrainian rescuer stands on the porch of a damaged building following an air attack in Kharkiv. — AFP

Asked about the proposed sanctions, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said that Beijing “has always firmly opposed illegal unilateral sanctions that lack basis in international law”. “China has several times lodged serious

representations with the European side, urging it to correct its wrong practices,” Lin told a regular news conference. He warned that China will “closely follow” developments and “take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard its legitimate

rights and interests”, without providing further detail.

Particularly sensitive is Moscow’s drone technology, which has played a crucial role in the Russia-Ukraine war — now in its fifth year. Chinese firms dominate the global market for civilian drones, though a grey area for some products with potential military uses presents hurdles for the enforcement of export controls. Beijing presents itself as a neutral party in the Ukraine war and says it is not sending lethal assistance to either side.

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on social media on Tuesday that “brick by brick, we are collapsing the foundations of Russia’s war economy”.

The latest package marks “the largest set of listings in over two years... notably on the financial sector, energy and drones’ production”, she wrote. — AFP

UN to probe Israel law breaches in Lebanon

GENEVA: The UN rights chief said on Wednesday that he would send a mission to Lebanon to collect evidence on alleged rights abuses since the war began between Hezbollah and Israel. “Accountability cannot be overstated. Prompt and independent investigations into alleged violations of international humanitarian law must be conducted,” UN high commissioner for human rights Volker Turk told journalists. “This is why I have agreed with the government of Lebanon to conduct an impartial and independent assessment mission in the country. “I will soon be deploying a team to collect information and evidence on alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law, and violations of international humanitarian law and related law committed by the parties to the armed conflict in the country since March 2.”

Lebanon was drawn into the wider Middle East war on March 2 when Hezbollah launched rockets at Israel to avenge the February 28 killing of Iran’s supreme leader in US-Israeli attacks. The rocket attacks prompted Israeli strikes and a ground invasion. Lebanese authorities say Israel’s attacks have killed more than 3,600 people and displaced more than one million others. On the Israeli side, 29 soldiers and one civilian contractor have been killed in Lebanon, according to the army. Neither side has respected a ceasefire first announced in mid-April.

Turk said that amid the “unimaginable civilian harm, suffering and displacement” caused by dozens of conflicts, “we have seen the economic and environmental consequences of fighting reverberate across the world”. “The world needs to contain this fallout — de-escalation, restraint and the protection of civilians must be the priority,” he said.

Meanwhile, Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon killed at least 12 people on Wednesday, a Lebanese



I will soon be deploying a team to collect information and evidence on alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law, and violations of international humanitarian law and related law committed by the parties to the armed conflict in the country since March 2

VOLKER TURK
UN rights chief

medical source said, as Israel carried out strikes across the south including the coastal city of Sidon. Earlier, Israeli forces seized a municipal councillor and a worker from the border town of Kfarshuba, according to Lebanon’s state-run National News Agency, while Israel said it “apprehended” two people who approached its soldiers.

A ceasefire in Lebanon meant to have gone into force in April was never observed, and a new conditional truce announced after Lebanese-Israeli talks in Washington last week was rejected by Hezbollah and both sides have continued to trade fire. The agreement did not mention a halt to Israeli attacks.

“The number of martyrs from the Israeli air strikes in the town of Tayr Dibba is eight, and in Deir Qanun al Nahr it is four,” the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The NNA had reported at least four Israeli strikes on Tayr Dibba and two on Deir Qanun al Nahr. It also reported an Israeli drone strike on a vehicle in Sidon, a city relatively spared from major Israeli attacks and which hosts a large number of displaced people. A correspondent

heard an explosion in the area before seeing a car burning as rescuers and firefighters headed to the scene. The correspondent saw rescuers pull two people from the targeted vehicle.

The NNA said on Wednesday morning that “an Israeli patrol took away Kfarshuba municipal council member Mohammad Hassan al-Hajj and worker Ahmad Salah Diab, taking them to an unknown location”. “The two men were working to pump water to the town of Kfarshuba when the Israeli patrol stopped them and took them away,” it added.

On Tuesday, the association of Christian border villages in southern Lebanon issued a statement urging the Lebanese government to “immediately open safe humanitarian and medical corridors to ensure the access of citizens, aid, and medical and relief teams to the affected and isolated villages”. They pointed to “a dangerous decline in health services due to the disruption or closure of a number of health centres and clinics,” with most roads leading to their villages now “cut off or extremely dangerous”. — Reuters

BATTLE ZONE

Tanker on fire near Hormuz: UK maritime



A tanker’s engine room caught fire near the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday, a UK maritime agency said. Earlier, British maritime security company Vanguard Tech said the Palau-flagged tanker Setebello had “transmitted a distress call stating that its engine room had been struck by a missile. “Local authorities have reported a tanker has experienced a fire in their engine room and are on the scene assisting with the evacuation of the crew,” it said. — AFP

OPINION

What ICV can teach us about energy transition



RUMAITHA
AL BUSAIDI

The writer is environmental strategist and advocate for sustainable development

It began as a single line in a meeting. One of the leaders said, almost in passing, that Oman needs to embed decarbonisation the way it embedded In-Country Value, tied directly to corporate scorecards. I cannot say much about the conversation, but I can tell you what happened in my head the moment I heard this statement. Of course. We have solved a version of this problem before, and we know the shape of the answer.

The gap it would close sits everywhere. Companies have announced net-zero targets, governments have published strategies, industries have produced road maps, and a wide distance still separates what gets announced from what gets done. We talk about decarbonisation constantly, without the machinery that makes organisations answer for it.

ICV is the proof that we can in Oman. Before In-Country Value worked its way into procurement, project approval, and corporate reporting, keeping economic spend inside our borders was a worthy idea that lived mostly in speeches. Today, no major project moves forward in Oman without a serious accounting of employment, domestic sourcing, and

research and education. ICV crossed from aspiration onto the scorecard, and once it was measured and leaders answered for it, it shaped the decisions they made.

The energy transition stands at the same door. Many organisations still file decarbonisation under sustainability, at arm’s length from the decisions that move capital and set priorities. The investors and regulators we answer to have stopped accepting the announcement as an achievement. Money now follows proof: verified emissions data, real capital moving toward credible projects. An ambitious target with nothing behind it has begun to read as a liability.

Here is where the comparison earns its keep, and also where it strains. Carbon is not local content. Local content is countable, and it belongs to someone. You can trace a contract, a salary, a supplier, and assign it cleanly to a single project.

Emissions are slipperier. They scatter across supply chains and borders, into the murk of Scope 3, and they resist that kind of ownership. A scorecard built on a number this soft invites the oldest corporate reflex there is, which is to manage the metric and let the problem drift. ICV worked partly

Today, no major project moves forward in Oman without a serious accounting of employment, domestic sourcing, and research and education. ICV crossed from aspiration onto the scorecard, and once it was measured and leaders answered for it, it shaped the decisions they made.

because its unit was hard to fake.

Carbon will reward whoever plays it best, unless we design against that from the start.

What transfers from ICV is the governance. A national priority begins to change behaviour the moment it becomes a measurable expectation built into how decisions get made, the way a company’s ICV certification shapes what it bids for and how it is judged. Oman has staked real ambition on renewables, on green hydrogen, on a net-zero economy by 2050. Those remain announcements until a scorecard stands behind them, indexed to progress a board has to report and an executive has to own.

I keep returning to the part where the comparison cannot settle. ICV had a clean unit to count, and carbon does not, which means any scorecard we build will carry weight the metrics cannot yet bear, and it will tempt the people measured by it. We already know that what enters the scorecard enters the culture. The question the idea left me with is whether we can write this one honestly enough, and soon enough, before the habit of managing the number hardens into the culture itself.

AMNESTY ACCUSES ISRAEL OF ‘ETHNIC CLEANSING’

LOUIS BAUDOIN-LAARMAN

Amnesty International accused Israel on Wednesday of conducting an “ethnic cleansing” campaign against Bedouin and herding communities in the occupied West Bank, saying the measures were designed to accelerate the annexation of the Palestinian territory.

A new report by the rights group found that these rural Palestinian communities are bearing the brunt of Israeli settler violence and forced displacement.

“Israeli authorities are accelerating annexation through a state-driven campaign of ethnic cleansing targeting Palestinian Bedouin and herding communities” of the West Bank, said the report released on Wednesday.

Amnesty said its research showed that 27 Bedouin and herding communities comprising hundreds of Palestinians were forcibly displaced between 2023 and 2025 or were at risk of displacement in the West Bank’s Area C, which encompasses 60 per cent of the territory and is under Israeli control under the 1990s Oslo agreements.

In the report titled “Erasing anything Palestinian: Israel’s ethnic cleansing of West Bank Bedouin and herding communities”, Amnesty accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government, one of Israel’s most right-wing to date, of catering to the settler movement’s religious nationalist agenda.

“It has accelerated settlement expansion and land grabs, increased financial and logistical support to settlements, and it has armed settlers, thereby enabling a brutal state-sanctioned campaign of settler violence,” the report said.

In an apparent effort to counter arguments by Israeli officials that settler violence is caused by bad actors in that community, Amnesty pointed to “explicit calls by Israeli officials for settlement expansion” and “measures aimed at minimising Palestinian presence in Area C”.

The “ethnic cleansing campaign is state-led, and state-sponsored, not driven by rogue settlers or so-called extremist ministers”, the report concluded.

Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who himself lives in a settlement, is a vocal proponent of West Bank’s annexation and on Tuesday was banned from France for actively promoting it.

In May 2026, the UN rights office had also decried indications of “ethnic cleansing” in Gaza and the West Bank. Amnesty pointed to Israel’s legal responsibilities as an occupying power in the West Bank, and its violations of international humanitarian law. — AFP

The ocean century, the Indian Ocean opportunity

For most of human history, oceans were seen as barriers. Today, they are increasingly understood as connectors, enablers and strategic assets. They regulate the climate, sustain biodiversity, support food security, facilitate trade and provide livelihoods for billions. According to UNCTAD, the sustainable ocean economy contributes trillions of dollars to global economic activity, while the oceans themselves cover more than 70 per cent of the Earth’s surface.

Yet the significance of oceans extends beyond economics. They are becoming the organising geography of a changing world.

The recent World Ocean Day webinar, organised jointly by the National Institute of Maritime Affairs of Pakistan and the Research Centre Indian Ocean at the German University of Technology in Oman, brought together policymakers, researchers, maritime specialists and heritage practitioners, the event highlighted a simple but profound reality: the future resilience of many societies will depend as much on their relationship with the ocean as on developments on land. The Indian Ocean emerged not merely as a maritime space, but as an ecological, economic, cultural and strategic system whose future will shape the fortunes of billions.

The Indian Ocean is arguably the oldest continuously navigated body of water in human history. Long before the rise of modern nation-states, long before the Atlantic became the centre of global commerce, the Indian Ocean connected East Africa, Arabia, India, Southeast Asia and China through predictable monsoon winds and sophisticated maritime knowledge. Goods moved across its waters, but so did ideas, religions, technologies,



AHMED AL
MUKHAINI

The author is a policy analyst

In an increasingly uncertain world, perhaps the most forward-looking idea is also one of the oldest. That the countries of the Indian Ocean, working together through a revitalised and ambitious IORA, can once again transform a shared geography into a shared future.

languages and people.

In many respects, the Indian Ocean was the world’s first truly international economic system. This holds true today, too.

The Indian Ocean carries nearly one-third of global container traffic and a substantial proportion of global energy trade. It links some of the world’s fastest-growing economies, hosts critical maritime chokepoints, and sits at the intersection of Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Australia. Few regions possess such a combination of geography, demographics, resources and strategic relevance.

Yet the true promise of the Indian Ocean lies not in what passes through it, but in what can be built around it.

The countries of the Indian Ocean Rim collectively possess enormous natural and human capital. They are endowed with energy resources, fisheries, agricultural capacity, strategic minerals, renewable energy potential, manufacturing hubs, financial centres, entrepreneurial talent and some of the world’s youngest populations. Together, they possess many of the ingredients required to become one of the principal centres of gravity of the twenty-first century.

The challenge is not one of resources. It is one of imagination, coordination and institutional ambition. This is where the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) acquires renewed significance.

Too often, IORA is viewed primarily as a diplomatic forum. That perception understates both its origins and its potential. The organisation was conceived as a platform through which Indian Ocean countries could cooperate economically, socially and culturally while leveraging their shared maritime geography for

mutual prosperity and stability.

In many ways, IORA was ahead of its time. The world that exists today—marked by supply-chain realignment, economic fragmentation and growing uncertainty—is precisely the kind of environment for which IORA was originally designed.

The association should therefore be revitalised not as another international organisation issuing declarations, but as a practical platform for economic integration, maritime connectivity, blue economy development, scientific cooperation, cultural exchange, food security and sustainable development.

This is entirely consistent with the concept of open regionalism recognised within the multilateral trading system and supported by the WTO. Regional cooperation need not imply exclusion. Properly designed, it can strengthen global trade, resilience and connectivity while remaining open to partnerships beyond the region.

Rather than becoming a geopolitical counterweight to the West, the Indian Ocean can serve as a bridge linking major centres of growth across the Global South while maintaining productive engagement with Europe, North America and the wider international economy. A revitalised IORA would therefore complement, rather than displace, emerging institutions and partnerships, such as BRICS.

For Oman, this conversation carries particular resonance.

Oman is not merely a state overlooking the Indian Ocean. Historically, it was one of the founding members of IORA and a great ocean-crossing civilisation of the region. The Indian Ocean is therefore not an abstract geopolitical concept for Oman. It is part of the country’s historical memory and strategic identity.



Football festival ready to roll out

THE World Cup kicks off on Thursday with Fifa betting that the enduring appeal of the greatest footballing show on earth can rise above mounting anger at ticket prices and a US immigration crackdown that has seen fans, a top referee and team officials barred from the tournament.

A record 48 teams and millions of fans are set to descend on the United States, Canada and Mexico for the first World Cup co-hosted by three nations, the largest and most logistically complex edition of the tournament ever staged.

The action gets under way at Mexico City's iconic Estadio Azteca on Thursday, with co-hosts Mexico taking on South Africa at 1:00 pm local time (1900 GMT), launching a sprawling, nearly six-week-long spectacle that will culminate in the final at New Jersey's 82,500-seat MetLife Stadium on July 19.

Can Lionel Messi, at the age of 38, settle any lingering debate about his status as the greatest player of all time by leading Argentina to a second consecutive World Cup title?

Or can Messi's great rival, the 41-year-old Cristiano Ronaldo, defy father time by inspiring a talented Portugal team to its maiden World Cup win?

Those questions and more will be answered over the course of a tournament that Gianni Infantino, the president of world football's governing Fifa, has bullishly hyped as "the greatest show that the planet has ever seen."

EXPANDED FIELD

On the field, the decision to expand the tournament to 48 teams — up from 32 in 2022 — is likely to strip the group stage of any sense of jeopardy.

The tournament will see a range of other innovations.

For the first time in World Cup history, every game will feature cooling breaks in the middle of each half, a measure designed to mitigate the effects of searing heat and humidity expected at many of the tournament's 16 venues.

Players and referees will need to adjust to several new rules being rolled out at the World Cup, including teams being required to make substitutions inside 10 seconds to prevent time-wasting.

A crackdown on racist abuse will see players risk a red card for covering their mouth with a hand, arm or shirt during a confrontation with an opponent.

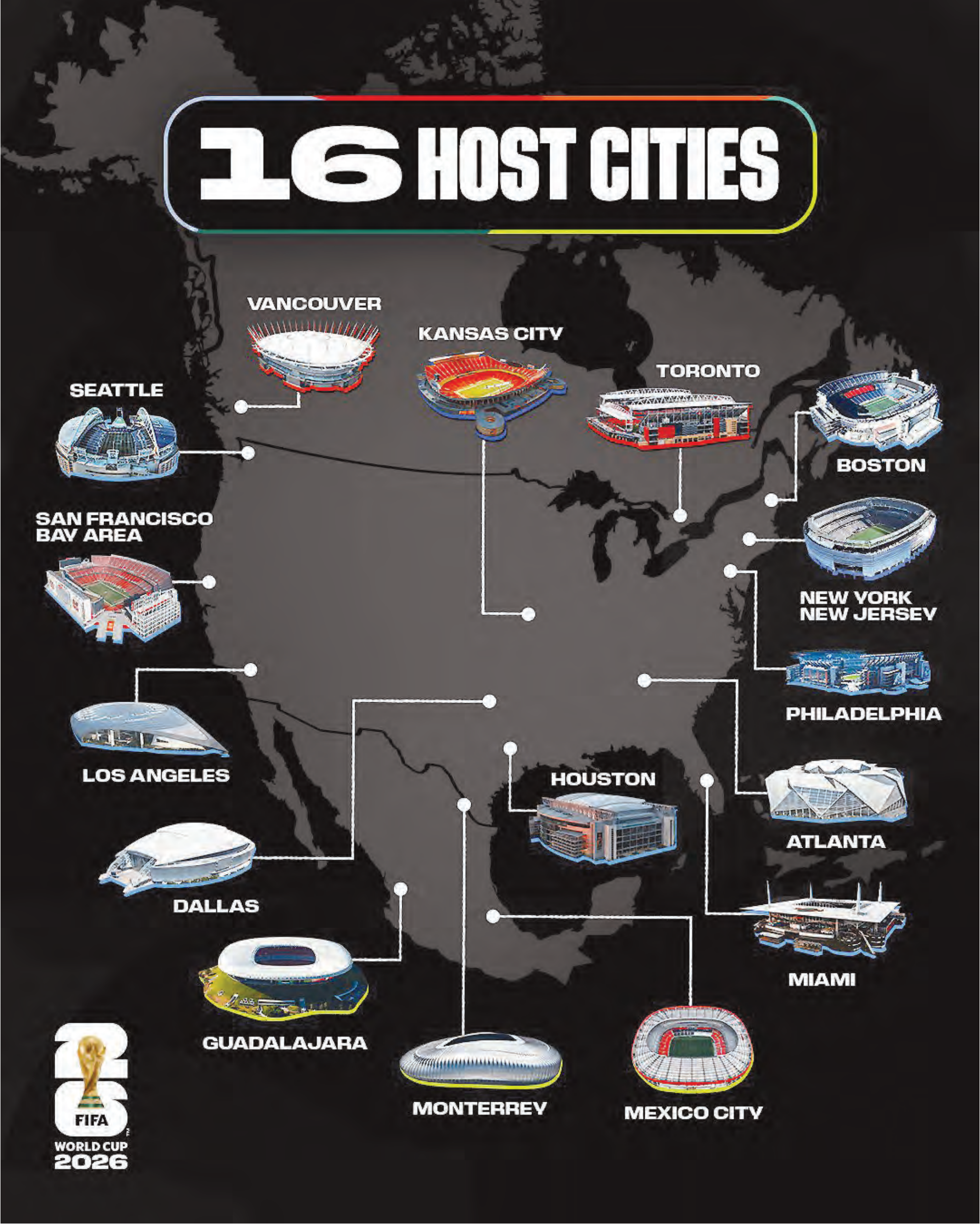
INFANTINO TO FACE MEDIA

Infantino is set to face the media on the eve of the World Cup on Wednesday, as off-field distractions dogged the build-up to the tournament.

Infantino is likely to face tough questions about sky-high ticket prices and an immigration crackdown that has seen a top referee, fans and team officials barred from co-hosts the United States.

The head of world football's governing body will give a rare press conference in Mexico City, where co-hosts Mexico play South Africa on Thursday in the opening match at the Estadio Azteca.

The refusal of US immigration authorities to allow Somali referee Omar Artan, one of Africa's leading match officials, into the country underlined fears that Donald



A big Panini sticker depicting Argentina's forward Lionel Messi is pictured on a street in San Pedro Garza Garcia, near Monterrey, Mexico, ahead of the 2026 World Cup. — AFP

Trump's immigration policy could leave deep scars on the football extravaganza.

Artan said the "biggest dream of my life" had been ripped away after he was turned back at the US border. "I am very, very disappointed," Artan told *The New York Times*. "I'm just simply a referee who's trying to live his dream, the biggest dream of my life, to come to the World Cup."

Artan, who was named the 2025 men's referee of the year by the Confederation of African Football, would have been the first Somali to officiate at a World Cup.

He said he was subjected to an

11-hour interview with border officials at Miami International Airport and then detained for several further hours in a holding cell before being put on a flight back to Turkey.

"I had the right papers and everything. I had the right visa," he added — an assertion confirmed by a Somali government advisor.

A US State Department official alleged that the referee was "associated with suspected members of terrorist organizations", therefore "making the traveler ineligible for admission to the United States".

— AFP



FIFA WORLD CUP
2026



WC WARM-UPS



Senegal's Habib Diarra in action with Saudi Arabia's Nasser al Dawsari. — Reuters

SAUDI ARABIA,
SENEGAL END
SCORELESS;
VENEZUELA
BEAT IRAQ

LOS ANGELES: Saudi Arabia was held to a goalless draw against 10-man Senegal on Wednesday in the two teams' final friendly before the start of the World Cup.

Giorgos Donis, Saudi Arabia's Greek coach, fielded a strong starting line-up in the first half before making 10 changes after the break. Senegal finished the match with 10 players after forward Nicolas Jackson was sent off in the 84th minute for a second yellow card.

Saudi Arabia produced an impressive performance in the opening stage, threatening goalkeeper Edouard Mendy's goal on several occasions, most notably in the 10th minute when Musab al Juwayr went close following a clever pass from captain Salem al Dawsari.

Saudi goalkeeper Mohammed al Owais comfortably saved a header from Lamine Camara in the 14th minute. Mohammed Abu al Shamat missed a chance to put Saudi Arabia ahead in the 30th minute when he headed over the bar from close range.

Senegal pressed hard in the closing stages of the first half but failed to seriously trouble Al Owais.

Substitute Ayman Yahya unleashed a powerful long-range effort just after the hour mark that narrowly missed the right post.

Saudi Arabia begin their World Cup Group H campaign against Uruguay on June 16 before facing Spain and Cape Verde.

Senegal, meanwhile, open their Group I campaign against France before taking on Norway and Iraq.

IRAQ FALL TO VENEZUELA

Iraq lost 2-0 to Venezuela on Wednesday in their final warm-up friendly before the World Cup. Midfielder Cristian Casseres opened the scoring for the South Americans in Bridgeville, Illinois in the 17th minute with a close-range finish.

Venezuela doubled their lead immediately after interval when Casseres won the ball before passing to striker Jesus Ramirez, who dribbled past a defender and fired in a powerful shot.

Iraq finished the match with 10 men after forward Ali Youssef was shown a straight red card in the 72nd minute.

Iraq return to the World Cup finals for the first time since their only appearance 40 years ago, and will begin their Group I campaign against Norway on June 17 before facing France and Senegal.

Venezuela is not a participant in this year's tournament in North America, and remains the only South American nation to never qualify for the World Cup finals. — Reuters

MESSI SCORES ON
INJURY RETURN AS
ARGENTINA BEAT
ICELAND

LIONEL MESSI scored within minutes of making his return from an injury scare as Argentina beat Iceland 3-0 in their final World Cup warm-up in Auburn, Alabama on Tuesday.

Messi started on the bench as the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner is eased back to fitness after exiting Inter Miami's 6-4 win over Philadelphia with muscle fatigue on May 24.

He was joined on the sidelines at the start by Julian Alvarez, Enzo Fernandez and Alexis Mac Allister as Lionel Scaloni named an experimental line-up in front of an 88,000 capacity crowd.

Messi is set to feature in his sixth World Cup and allayed fears he may not be ready for the start of the tournament in a supreme 20-minute cameo.

Argentina begin their defence of the World Cup against Algeria on June 16 before also facing Austria and Jordan in Group J.

Iceland should have taken the lead inside the first few minutes when Mikael Egill Ellertsson blasted over with the goal gaping.

Instead the three-time world champions took an early lead.

Iceland could only partially clear a goalmouth scramble inside their box and the ball broke to Strasbourg defender Valentin Barco to fire into the bottom corner.

Nico Paz failed to make the most of his chance to shine in Messi's absence and wasted a big chance to make it 2-0 before half-time when his powerful hit was repelled by the face of Iceland goalkeeper Elias Olafsson.

Fernandez and Mac Allister were introduced among five Argentine changes at the break.

Lautaro Martinez was another to make his entrance at half-time and twice hit the post when he should have doubled Argentina's advantage.

The expectant crowd had to wait until the final quarter for Messi to make his appearance.

With his first involvement, Messi's brilliant pass played in Martinez, who was wiped out by Olafsson as he chipped the ball wide.

Messi made no mistake by slotting in his 117th international goal on his 199th cap.

He was involved again for Argentina's third goal as Messi's pass fed Rodrigo De Paul, who squared for Thiago Almada to tap in. — AFP

Argentina forward Lionel Messi (10) celebrates after scoring a goal during the second half against Iceland during a Road to 26 international friendly at Jordan-Hare Stadium in Auburn, Alabama, USA. — Imagn Images





FANFESTIVAL



Hoteliers are converting terraces, ballrooms and restaurants into 'Fan Zones'.

FOOTBALL FEVER
GRIPS OMAN

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabiyousef

With the Fifa World Cup is to begin on Thursday, Oman’s major cities are gripped by the football fever and hotels are rolling out dedicated fan spaces with giant screens, themed F&B, and matchday activations to capture World Cup traffic without hosting the matches directly.

From cosy halls of star hotels to downtown coffee shops and from satellite dish service centres to multinational cafe’s, elaborate arrangements are underway to share the football fever and join the vibe for the fans of 48 teams which are divided into 12 groups over the next nine days.

Hoteliers are converting terraces, ballrooms and restaurants into ‘Fan Zones’ modelled on setups used during Qatar 2022, large LED screens, stadium-style seating, beanbags and tables, plus live entertainment and raffles between matches to keep guests at the centre of the action.

“We are all set to welcome out guests as the brand belief of Sheraton is bringing people together and making efforts are on to make the tournament a natural fit for the hotel. From friends gathering to watch their favourite teams to families and colleagues sharing memorable matchday moments, the Football Fan Zone has been designed as a destination where fans can connect over the excitement of the beautiful game,” said Rejin Thomas, General Manager of Sheraton Oman Hotel.

“World Cup is the world’s biggest gathering of fans, and bringing people together is at the core of everything we do at Sheraton. The Football Fan Zone at Hive Lounge has been created to give guests a place to connect, celebrate and enjoy every moment of the tournament in a vibrant atmosphere,” he adds.

“We are all set to welcome our guests to the live soccer experience with a 80-inch TV and refreshments and the matches would run into midnights,” Thomas, manager of a large coffee shop in CBD area said.

While hoteliers say bookings have been very positive and thriving, dish antenna connectors admit that demand for dish antennas that received the sports broadcast live has been really promising.

8

FIFA WORLD CUP™
CHAMPIONS

5		BRA	1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002
4		FRG GER	1954, 1974, 1990, 2014
4		ITA	1934, 1938, 1982, 2006
3		ARG	1978, 1986, 2022
2		FRA	1998, 2018
2		URU	1930, 1950
1		ENG	1966
1		ESP	2010

FIFA CHIEF WARNS LA OF WORLD CUP ‘HAPPY BARBARIANS’

LOS ANGELES: Fifa President Gianni Infantino warned Los Angeles on Tuesday that it was about to be invaded by soccer fans from around the world, as he helped launch World Cup festivities at a star-studded kickoff party at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

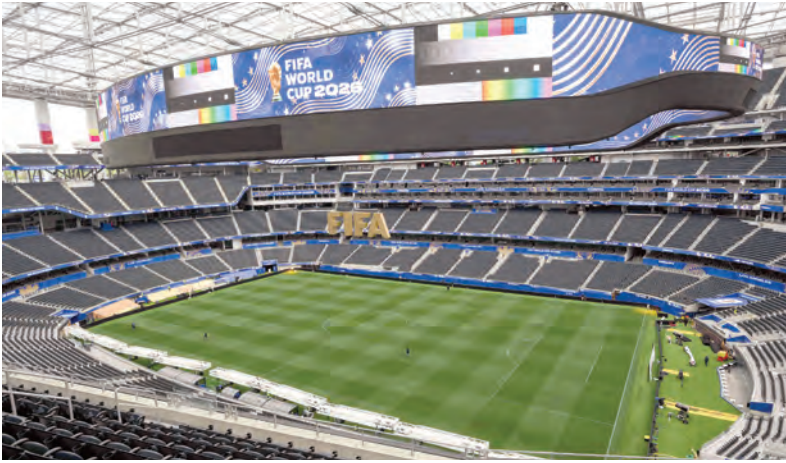
Speaking ahead of this week's opening matches, Infantino said the city would become a global gathering point during the 48-team tournament, which begins in Mexico City on Thursday before Los Angeles hosts the first US match on Friday. “You will be invaded,” Infantino told the crowd.

“You will be invaded by a horde of barbarians. But it's happy barbarians, don't worry.”

The event drew entertainment and sports figures, including actors Will Ferrell and Brendan Hunt, singer Lance Bass, former NBA player Robert Horry, and US soccer greats Mia Hamm and Cobi Jones.



GIANNI
INFANTINO
Fifa President



‘UNITE THE WORLD’
Infantino said the tournament would turn Los Angeles and other host cities into a sea of national colors as fans of all ages arrive in jerseys, flags and face paint. “Men, women, children, grandparents, doesn't matter, they will all have their faces colored with the

colors of their countries,” he said. “They will just want to enjoy and have fun because that's what we want to do with the World Cup - we want to unite the world.”

The tournament, hosted by the US, Mexico and Canada, is the first to feature 48 national teams. Infantino

The fully installed grass pitch is seen at Los Angeles Stadium (temporarily renamed from SoFi Stadium) ahead of the 2026 Fifa World Cup in Los Angeles. — AFP

said a quarter of the world’s countries would be represented on the field, while billions more would follow the tournament globally.

“This is not just a World Cup,” he said. “This will be the biggest and greatest Fifa World Cup in history.”

Los Angeles is scheduled to host eight matches, along with fan festivals and 10 fan zones across the area. Infantino thanked local organizers for staging the events, saying the city’s role reflected its standing as “the capital of entertainment in the world.”

The US will open their campaign on Friday at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood against Paraguay after an opening ceremony featuring musical performances by Katy Perry, Future and Anitta. Infantino likened the scale of the event to staging ‘104 Super Bowls’ over a little more than a month, referring to the total number of matches across the three host countries. — Reuters



FIFA WORLD CUP
2026



FIFA WORLD CUP 2026™

GROUP STAGE



A

- MEXICO
- SOUTH AFRICA
- KOREA REPUBLIC
- CZECHIA

B

- CANADA
- BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- QATAR
- SWITZERLAND

C

- BRAZIL
- MOROCCO
- HAITI
- SCOTLAND

D

- USA
- PARAGUAY
- AUSTRALIA
- TÜRKIYE

E

- GERMANY
- CURAÇAO
- CÔTE D'IVOIRE
- ECUADOR

F

- NETHERLANDS
- JAPAN
- SWEDEN
- TUNISIA

G

- BELGIUM
- EGYPT
- IR IRAN
- NEW ZEALAND

H

- SPAIN
- CABO VERDE
- SAUDI ARABIA
- URUGUAY

I

- FRANCE
- SENEGAL
- IRAQ
- NORWAY

J

- ARGENTINA
- ALGERIA
- AUSTRIA
- JORDAN

K

- PORTUGAL
- CONGO DR
- UZBEKISTAN
- COLOMBIA

L

- ENGLAND
- CROATIA
- GHANA
- PANAMA





MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE
7,650.671

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN 86.47
BRENT \$92.24
LIGHT \$89.21



SHORTTAKES



Muneer bin Ali bin Nassir al Muneeri, Deputy Chairman of Oman Investment Authority for Operations, presided over the unveiling of the Commercial Arbitration Centre's new identity.

OMAN CENTRE FOR COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION UNVEILS NEW IDENTITY

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

The Oman Centre for Commercial Arbitration, affiliated with the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), announced its new corporate identity on Wednesday. Officials described the move as a strategic turning point in the Centre's history, reflecting its future direction towards strengthening its position as a specialised institution for resolving commercial disputes according to the highest international standards.

The Centre also announced the organisation of an arbitration competition and the second edition of the "Muscat Arbitration Days", scheduled to take place from December 7 to 9 this year at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The announcement was made during a ceremony held under the auspices of Muneer bin Ali bin Nassir al Muneeri, Deputy Chairman of Oman Investment Authority for Operations and in the presence of Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of OCCI, along with several undersecretaries, dignitaries and a distinguished group of legal professionals, arbitrators, investors and other stakeholders.

Al Rawas affirmed that the role of the Oman Centre for Commercial Arbitration has become more prominent and influential this year, especially given the support it has received from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, who directed that the Centre be the official body responsible for standard contracts and government commercial contracts.

Contract awarded for wind turbine project

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

THE China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC) Shanxi Institute, a leading international engineering and infrastructure contractor, has announced that its Oman subsidiary has been awarded the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract for the Mawarid Wind Turbine Manufacturing Project at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) in southeastern Oman.

As EPC general contractor, the CEEC Shanxi Institute will oversee the construction of approximately 90,000 square metres of industrial and supporting facilities.

The scope of work includes a blade manufacturing workshop, hub manufacturing workshop, energy centre, office building, integrated utility networks, wastewater treatment facilities, as well as road and landscaping infrastructure.

Describing the project as a milestone in Oman's energy transition, the Chinese contractor said: "This project is a benchmark for Oman's implementation of Oman Vision 2040 and its advancement of green energy transformation.

Upon completion, it will achieve integrated localisation of wind power research and development, production and supply, significantly reducing construction costs and shortening delivery cycles.

It will provide core support for Oman's wind power and green hydrogen industries, drive the clustering of high-end manufacturing, technology research and development and operations and maintenance services; and serve as a model for new-energy localisation across the



Rendering of the Mawarid Wind Turbine manufacturing project in Duqm SEZ.

It will provide core support for Oman's wind power and green hydrogen industries, drive the clustering of high-end manufacturing, technology research and development and operations and maintenance services; and serve as a model for new-energy localisation across the Gulf region.

Gulf region."

Mawarid Turbine, a subsidiary of O-Green, the state-backed integrated renewable energy and industrialisation platform, is developing Oman's first wind turbine manufacturing facility with an initial investment estimated at around RO 70 million.

A usufruct agreement for the project was signed earlier this year with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

The project will be implemented in phases. The first phase will focus on the manufacture of wind turbine blades and key components, while the second phase will involve the establishment of a dedicated facility for the production of wind turbine towers and additional renewable energy components, in collaboration with local enterprises.

Planned annual production capacity is expected to range between 800 MW and 1,000 MW, positioning the facility among the largest of its kind in the region. Technology for the project will be supplied under a strategic partnership with Shanghai Electric

Wind Power, one of China's leading wind turbine manufacturers.

The company has been appointed as technology licensor and knowledge-transfer partner, with responsibilities including technology licensing, establishment of a research centre, design of manufacturing systems and the supply of turbines for pilot projects.

The collaboration also incorporates workforce development and Omanisation initiatives, including specialised training programmes in China for Omani engineers and technicians aimed at building a domestic wind-energy manufacturing ecosystem.

The EPC contractor, China Energy Engineering Group Shanxi Electric Power Engineering Co Ltd, is a core engineering and design subsidiary of state-owned CEEC, one of the world's largest energy and infrastructure conglomerates. Headquartered in Shanxi Province, SEPEC specialises in engineering design, consultancy, EPC contracting, renewable energy, power transmission and distribution, energy storage and environmental infrastructure.

Global investors see Oman as growth hub

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

International investors are increasingly viewing Oman as a strategic platform for growth in renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, tourism and innovation, reflecting growing confidence in the Sultanate of Oman's long-term economic vision and investment environment.

This was the key message emerging from a panel discussion held during the Future Fund Oman (FFO) investment showcase, where executives from global companies outlined the factors that led them to choose Oman for major investments and expansion projects.

The discussion brought together Rashid al Hashmi, Senior Manager of Investments at the Future Fund Oman, Stefano Sardo, Managing Director of global tourism investment firm Certares, Mark Jiang Pengjing, Deputy General Manager of Orion Solar, Dr Bir Kapoor, CEO and Deputy Managing Director of Gujarat Fluorochemicals Limited (GFL) and Jalal al Hadrhrami, General Manager of Terminal 11.

Speaking during the 'Future Fund Oman as an Economic



Executives from global companies outline the factors that led them to choose Oman for major investments and expansion projects.

Catalyst' session, Al Hashmi said the Fund has evolved beyond its traditional role as a source of capital and is increasingly acting as a catalyst that attracts strategic investors and helps build entirely new industries in Oman.

He noted that the Fund's investments have mobilised substantial private-sector and foreign capital, with strategic partners contributing significantly to projects across multiple sectors.

"The Fund is not merely participating in projects. It is creating industrial ecosystems and attracting long-term partners who share Oman's vision for sustainable economic growth", Al Hashmi said.

According to him, investments supported by the Fund are expected to generate thousands of jobs while helping establish new value chains in sectors such as renewable energy, battery materials, tourism and innovation.

For Certares, one of the world's leading tourism-focused investment firms, Oman represents one of the most compelling opportunities in the regional tourism landscape.

Stefano Sardo said Oman possesses a unique combination of natural attractions, cultural authenticity and modern infrastructure that distinguishes it from competing destinations.

"What makes Oman truly different is its ability to preserve its culture, traditions and values while remaining open to the world", he said.

"Visitors do not simply come to visit Oman; they come to discover it". Sardo praised the country's extensive investments in airports, roads and tourism infrastructure, describing them as a strong foundation for future growth.

"The heavy lifting has already been done. The infrastructure is in place and the opportunity now is to build upon it and accelerate the next phase of tourism development", he added.

In the renewable energy sector, Orion Solar reaffirmed its commitment to establishing one of the largest solar manufacturing facilities in the region at SOHAR Port and Freezone. Mark Jiang Pengjing said the company selected Oman after evaluating numerous investment destinations across the Middle East and beyond.

"After careful assessment, Oman emerged as the preferred location due to its strategic geographic position, strong international relationships and efficient investment environment", he said.

The project will include a six-gigawatt solar-cell manufacturing

facility and a planned three-gigawatt solar-module plant, supported by advanced automated production technologies.

"The project is expected to create more than 1,000 jobs and generate substantial local procurement opportunities while contributing to Oman's renewable energy ambitions", Mark said.

He also highlighted plans to recruit and train Omani graduates to support knowledge transfer and workforce localisation within the growing solar-energy industry.

Meanwhile, Dr Bir Kapoor of Gujarat Fluorochemicals said Oman's ambitions to develop a complete clean-energy value chain were a major factor behind the company's decision to invest.

The company specialises in advanced battery materials used in electric vehicles and energy storage systems, sectors expected to play a central role in the global energy transition.

"When we first came to Oman, our plans were much smaller. After engaging with FFO and understanding its vision for developing an integrated industrial ecosystem, we significantly expanded our investment plans", Kapoor said.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The offer will be available exclusively to ahli islamic private clients until August 31, 2026.

ahli islamic, Transom to introduce airport facilitation service for customers

MUSCAT: As part of its continued efforts to enhance everyday customer experiences, ahli islamic has partnered with ‘Maraheb’ Service by Transom to introduce a complimentary airport facilitation service for its private clients.

The initiative is designed to simplify key pre-travel procedures by providing luggage pickup, airport check-in assistance and boarding pass issuance ahead of scheduled flights, helping customers experience greater ease from the start of their journeys.

The offer will be available exclusively to ahli islamic private clients until August 31, 2026. Customers benefit from complimentary handling for up to four pieces of luggage. The luggage collection service extends across Muscat and Salalah within a 50-kilometre radius of the airport, with bookings required at least 48 hours before departure.

As travel routines become increasingly fast-paced, services that help reduce logistical complexity are becoming progressively more relevant for customers balancing busy professional and personal commitments.

By simplifying essential airport-related procedures ahead of departure, the initiative is designed to support a more organised travel experience while also reflecting the growing importance of convenience-oriented service integration within the broader banking sector.

Reflecting ahli islamic’s strong emphasis on attentiveness, trust and service that extends beyond financial transactions, it continues to place significant importance on delivering customer experiences shaped by responsiveness, care and long-term relationship-building.

The initiative further highlights the bank’s broader approach towards introducing services that complement the day-to-day needs of its private clientele while reinforcing meaningful and consistent customer engagement.

The collaboration with Transom reflects ahli islamic’s continued focus on partnering with established service providers capable of delivering efficient coordination and high standards of customer service. It reinforces the shared emphasis placed on reliability, professionalism and service excellence across every stage of customer interaction.

Such initiatives form part of ahli islamic’s broader efforts to enhance the overall experience through services and initiatives designed to complement the evolving needs of its customers.

Sharakah extends capital facility to support Zameeli’s expansion

MUSCAT: Sharakah, Oman’s leading SME development company, has extended a Sharia-compliant working capital facility to Zameeli, a digital platform that connects SMEs with local freelancers for social media content creation and creative services.

The support reflects Sharakah’s continued commitment to enabling innovative, technology-driven businesses that contribute to the growth of Oman’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Zameeli operates a



The working capital facility will support Zameeli’s operational growth and expansion plans.

digital platform that connects SMEs with local freelancers for social media content creation and creative services.

By bringing together businesses and a network of local talent, including designers, marketers, videographers and content creators, the platform helps SMEs access flexible and specialised support that enhances their digital presence.

The working capital facility will support Zameeli’s operational growth and expansion plans.

Experience the sporty Kia K5 this summer

KIA’S popular K5 sedan continues to make a fine impression in Oman with its instantly recognisable design and sleek profile. As part of the ongoing Summer Campaign, customers can now avail incredible savings and attractive benefits on this sophisticated sedan.

Engineered for those who desire exciting moments on every drive, the K5 combines advanced safety technology; and premium looks and features with complete peace of mind.

This summer campaign brings substantial financial advantages, starting with big savings of up to RO 1,100, which is directly adjusted in the price of the vehicle as a special discount in addition to the normal cash gift offer. To ensure a worry-free ownership experience, the package includes a comprehensive service benefit of 30,000 km or 3 years, along with one year of registration.

Furthermore, existing Kia owners receive an exclusive extended service benefit of up to 50,000 km or 5 years upon purchasing a new Kia during the scheme period, which runs from May 6, 2026 to July 5, 2026.

Sporting an impressive design, the K5 showcases a bold fastback silhouette highlighted by an elegant chrome trim that spans the roofline.

The premium exterior is further enhanced by advanced LED headlamps, daytime



The K5 combines advanced safety technology and premium looks and features with complete peace of mind.

running lights, a panoramic sunroof and sporty 18-inch alloy wheels. Under the hood, the K5 delivers reliable performance with a powerful 2.5L GDI engine generating 191 HP, perfectly paired with a smooth 8-speed automatic transmission.

Inside, the driver-centric cabin features a seamless infotainment display with a 10.25-inch navigation screen, a Bose premium music system and a wireless smartphone charger. For maximum comfort during the summer months, the vehicle is equipped

with front ventilated seats and rear AC vents. Safety remains a top priority and the K5 comes fully equipped with high-end protective features such as Blind Spot Collision Warning, Blind Spot View Monitor, Around View Monitor and a comprehensive airbag system to ensure total security on every journey.

Kia invites driving enthusiasts to visit their nearest showroom to experience the K5 and discover how the Summer campaign can elevate their journey.

Bank Muscat wins women empowerment award

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to strengthen its position as a national role model in women’s empowerment and advancing female participation in the banking sector through sustainable policies and initiatives focused on developing national talent and fostering a workplace culture built on diversity, equal opportunities and innovation.

In recognition of these efforts, Bank Muscat was awarded



the Women Empowerment Excellence Award during the 15th edition of the Women Conference and Awards, recently organised by United Media Services under the

auspices of HH Sayyidah Dr Taghreed bint Turki al Said.

The award acknowledges the bank’s initiatives and programmes aimed at supporting women both professionally and personally, enabling them to achieve success and contribute effectively to sustainable development.

The award was received on behalf of Bank Muscat by Alya bint Mubarak al Alawi, Assistant General Manager- Legal.

Women represent about 46% of Bank Muscat’s total

workforce, while female employees account for around 21% of management positions, reflecting the bank’s strong commitment to empowering Omani talent and enhancing women’s participation across various professional and leadership levels.

Women also play a significant role in several key business functions within the bank, including banking operations, digital transformation, risk management, operations, marketing and customer service.

Sohar International continues to invest in national talent through ‘Tomohi’

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its commitment to cultivating the next generation of Omani professionals and strengthening the nation’s talent pipeline, Sohar International has launched the fourth edition of its graduate development initiative, ‘Tomohi’, welcoming a new cohort of 30 graduates into the programme.

The induction ceremony was attended by Sohar International’s Chief Executive Officer, Abdulwahid bin Mohamed al Murshidi; Chief People Officer, Mahira bint Saleh al Raisi; and Chief Retail and Wealth Management Officer, Abdul Qadir al Sumali, alongside members of the bank’s leadership team.

The latest edition attracted more than 3,200 applicants from across



Sohar International welcomes a new cohort of 30 graduates into the programme.

the Sultanate of Oman, reflecting the growing recognition of the programme among graduates seeking to establish careers within the financial sector. Commenting on the occasion, Abdulwahid

bin Mohamed al Murshidi said: “Developing national talent is fundamental to building a resilient and competitive economy capable of achieving its long-term aspirations. As Oman advances towards the goals

of Oman Vision 2040, empowering young Omanis with the skills, knowledge and practical experience required for the future workforce remains a national priority.

At Sohar International, we view talent development as a strategic investment in the Sultanate of Oman’s future and a key enabler of sustainable economic growth.

Through initiatives such as Tomohi, we are committed to nurturing the next generation of Omani professionals, equipping them with the capabilities and confidence to contribute meaningfully to the financial sector and play an active role in shaping Oman’s continued progress and prosperity”.

Mahira bint Saleh al Raisi added, “Tomohi was created to help graduates navigate the transition from academic achievement to professional contribution.

Beyond exposure to banking operations, the programme is designed to cultivate individuals who understand how organisations function, collaborate effectively across teams and approach challenges with sound judgement and accountability.

With each edition, we continue to refine the learning experience to deepen participants’ awareness of workplace expectations and prepare them to take on greater responsibility with confidence from the outset of their careers.

SHORTTAKES



NFC operates a fleet of 5 passenger and vehicle ferries.

National Ferries carried over 250,000 passengers in 2025

MUSCAT: National Ferries Company (NFC), Oman's national maritime transport operator, carried more than 250,000 passengers during 2025, averaging around 690 passengers a day, according to the company's latest operational statistics.

The company also transported more than 64,000 vehicles and handled over 27,000 tonnes of cargo during the year, underscoring its growing role in supporting mobility, trade and tourism across the Sultanate of Oman.

NFC operates a fleet of five passenger and vehicle ferries, in addition to a dedicated cargo and landing vessel serving coastal and island communities.

The company's services provide a vital transport link between mainland Oman and key island destinations, facilitating the movement of passengers, vehicles and commercial goods.

The maritime operator said its services continue to contribute to economic development by strengthening connectivity between governorates and islands, supporting tourism activity, enabling trade and creating employment opportunities.

The company maintains an Omanisation rate of 97 per cent, reflecting its commitment to developing national talent in the maritime sector.

In addition to scheduled passenger services, NFC provides commercial cargo transport and logistical support for projects and businesses operating in remote areas.

The company also offers special tourism and exploratory cruises that showcase Oman's coastal and marine attractions.

Passenger demand typically peaks during Musandam's winter tourism season between November and February, as well as during summer holidays and Masirah Island's camping and turtle-nesting season, which runs from April to October. — ONA

Strong growth in business activities in Al Dhahirah

AL Dhahirah Governorate is strengthening its position as one of Oman's emerging economic centres, supported by rising investment activity, expanding commercial registrations and continued infrastructure development.

Data for the first quarter of 2026 showed that the number of new commercial registrations in the governorate increased by 49.5 per cent to 139, compared with 93 during the same period last year. The cumulative number of commercial registrations has now reached 10,234.

Saleh bin Said al Musalhi, Director of the Department of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in Al Dhahirah Governorate, said the growth reflects increasing confidence in the governorate's investment environment and the success of ongoing efforts to improve services and streamline procedures for investors and entrepreneurs.

He noted that Al Dhahirah's strategic location and economic advantages continue to support the expansion of commercial, industrial and service activities, while coordinated efforts among government entities are helping to create a business-friendly environment that encourages local and foreign investment.

At the wilayat level, Ibri recorded the highest number of new commercial registrations with 114, representing a 46.2 per cent increase. Dhank registered the fastest growth rate, rising by 116.7 per cent to 13 registrations, while Yanqul recorded 12 new registrations.

The governorate also issued 1,687 commercial licences during the quarter, bringing the



The number of new commercial registrations in the governorate increased by 49.5 per cent to 139.



Saleh bin Said al Musalhi, Director of the Department of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

cumulative total to 16,130. In addition, 2,077 automatic licences were issued, raising the overall number to 23,947.

Industrial activity remained robust, with 318 industrial licences issued during the period. Ibri accounted for the

largest share with 253 licences, followed by Dhank with 36 and Yanqul with 29.

Investment activity spans a wide range of sectors, including oil and gas, building materials, logistics, warehousing, manufacturing, food processing and light and medium industries.

The governorate is also making progress in renewable energy, with the number of registered renewable energy projects reaching 453.

Construction contracting remained the most active licensed sector, recording 179 new licences, an increase of 77.2 per cent compared with the same period last year.

A key driver of future growth is the Al Dhahirah Special

Economic Zone, which is being developed as a major logistics and industrial hub.

The project is expected to strengthen trade links with Saudi Arabia, attract domestic and foreign investment and enhance the movement of goods between Oman and GCC markets through its proximity to the Empty Quarter border crossing.

Several strategic projects are already under way within the zone, including the development of dry port infrastructure, a veterinary quarantine facility, administrative and commercial complexes, roads and drainage networks, laying the foundation for long-term industrial and logistics growth in the governorate. — ONA

Sohar Container Terminal inks pact for 12 electric gantry cranes

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Hutchison Ports Sohar has taken another significant step in its sustainability journey by signing an agreement with ZPMC in Shanghai for the procurement of 12 automated electric Rubber Tyred Gantry Cranes (AeRTGC), scheduled for delivery in the second quarter of 2027.

The introduction of these 12 AeRTGCs is designed to reduce the environmental impact of port operations while further strengthening Hutchison Ports Sohar's position as a smart port committed to responsible growth and environmental stewardship.

Compared with conventional RTGCs, the new AeRTGCs are designed for zero-emission grid connection through a high-voltage conductor bar system and feature both automatic and remote-control operating mechanisms. They will offer a stacking capacity of up to six high and will be equipped



Representatives signing the procurement agreement in Shanghai recently.

with anti-collision and anti-sway controls to support safer and more efficient operations.

This investment will further enhance the

port's handling capacity and improve the overall efficiency of terminal operations.

Commenting on this milestone, Andy Tsoi, Managing Director of Hutchison Ports Middle East and Africa, said, "This investment reflects Hutchison Ports' long-term commitment to Oman and our confidence in the Sultanate of Oman's role as a leading logistics gateway in the region. As we continue to support the sustainable development of Hutchison Ports Sohar, we are proud to align our efforts with Oman's Logistics 2040 strategy, the national Net-Zero target and the broader aspirations of Oman Vision 2040".

Anacin Kum, CEO of Hutchison Ports Sohar, added, "This investment is a key step in strengthening our terminal's ability to meet the growing demand for port services. The introduction of the new AeRTGC will increase our handling capacity and improve overall operational efficiency, enabling us to deliver faster, safer and more reliable services to our customers as volumes continue to grow".

"Hutchison Ports Sohar's continued investment in its terminal reflects both its long-term commitment to SOHAR Port and Freezone and the strength of our integrated port and logistics ecosystem.

As global trade continues to evolve, strategic investments and international partnerships remain essential to enhancing competitiveness, enabling sustainable growth and creating value for customers and supply chains", said Emile Hoogsteden, CEO of SOHAR Port and Freezone.

These latest acquisitions will significantly expand the port's portfolio of green initiatives, complementing existing assets such as automated electric quay cranes, eTrucks, electric forklifts and the region's first solar-powered inspection facility.

Together, these advancements reinforce Hutchison Ports Sohar's commitment to its Net-Zero roadmap and support alignment with Oman's Logistics 2040 strategy and broader sustainability ambitions.

ENERGY MARKETS

Oil steadies amidst conflict



Oil prices were little changed on Wednesday as investors balanced renewed US-Iran hostilities against weaker Chinese demand and declining global inventories.

Brent crude edged down 0.23 per cent to \$91.24 a barrel, while US crude slipped 0.16 per cent to \$88.06. Analysts said ongoing tensions in the Middle East continue to support prices despite concerns over slowing demand. — ONA

ECONOMIC DATA

China inflation remains stable



China's consumer inflation held steady at 1.2 per cent year-on-year in May, below market expectations. Lower meat prices helped contain consumer inflation, while producer prices rose 3.9 per cent.

The widening gap between producer and consumer prices highlights persistent pressure on corporate profit margins as businesses struggle to pass higher costs on to consumers. — Reuters

PRECIOUS METALS

Gold drops to 11-week low



Gold prices fell more than 1 per cent to their lowest level in 11 weeks as a stronger US dollar and higher oil prices increased inflation concerns and reinforced expectations of elevated interest rates.

Spot gold declined 1.8 per cent to \$4,187.59 an ounce, while US futures lost 1.7 per cent. Silver, platinum and palladium also recorded losses amidst weakness in metals markets. — Reuters

OPINION

The role of Future Fund Oman in supporting development



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

DESPITE being relatively new and having been established at the beginning of 2024, the Future Fund Oman, administered by the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), has already managed to participate in several promising investment projects.

The fund has a capital of RO 2 billion (approximately \$5.20 billion). It was launched to support the domestic economy and attracting high-quality investments as part of Oman Vision 2040 goals.

The fund's capital is being injected over a five-year period at a rate of RO 400 million annually. Of the total capital, 90% is allocated to new and existing direct investment projects, 7% to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and 3% to startups.

The fund focuses on non-oil sectors operating across various economic fields in which Oman enjoys significant advantages due to the availability of natural resources and strategic geographic assets. These activities are expected to support the ports and logistics sector, agriculture and fisheries, mining, tourism, services and the digital economy.

According to preliminary indicators, the fund announced that by the end of 2025 it had approved and adopted a total of 186 projects with an estimated combined value of around RO 1.7 billion.

These include major projects and direct investments, as well as initiatives targeting SMEs and startups, while creating more than 1,600 direct jobs.

During its first year, the fund approved projects valued at nearly RO 1.2 billion and contributed approximately RO 333 million. It also entered into partnerships with international investment funds specialising in technology, clean energy and advanced manufacturing, as well as with major industrial and service-sector institutions, most of which are projects are still in the implementation phase.

The growing trend among countries to establish multiple sovereign wealth funds instead of relying on a single fund reflects an increasingly common global practice, as each fund serves a distinct purpose.

The Omani government has established several funds in addition to those managed by the Oman Investment Authority, including the Future Generations Fund, which focuses on long-term global investments and preserving wealth for future generations; the National Development Fund, which concentrates on strategic national assets and projects; and the Oman Future Fund, which focuses on stimulating domestic investment, attracting investors and supporting startups and SMEs.

The existence of multiple sovereign funds offers numerous economic benefits, including diversifying risks between

The fund's capital is being injected over a five-year period at a rate of RO 400 million annually. Of the total capital, 90% is allocated to new and existing direct investment projects, 7% to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and 3% to startups.

domestic and international investments, safeguarding wealth for future generations, financing major national projects, attracting foreign investors, supporting innovation and startups; and achieving a balance between financial returns and economic development.

In Oman's case, the establishment of the Oman Future Fund represents a shift from merely managing sovereign wealth to utilising part of that wealth as a tool for stimulating the domestic economy, attracting foreign direct investment and creating employment opportunities.

This makes it one of the most significant economic initiatives undertaken in recent years.

The new package of investments and strategic projects includes several priority sectors such as renewable energy, industry and technology, healthcare, tourism and adventure activities; and food security, with a total value exceeding RO 570 million.

In addition, another investment package includes seven direct projects and investments under the portfolio allocated to strategic domestic projects, which accounts for 90% of the fund's capital.

These investments cover a range of priority economic sectors while also supporting SMEs and startups, strengthening Oman's entrepreneurial ecosystem and fostering the growth of promising companies across the Sultanate of Oman.

STOCKS SLIDE AS US INFLATION SURGES AS FRESH STRIKES HIT MIDDLE EAST

LONDON: Stock markets mostly fell on Wednesday as fresh strikes in the Middle East, a jump in US inflation and a tech sell-off weighed on sentiment.

Data showed US consumer inflation surged to a fresh three-year high in May, hitting 4.2 per cent year-on-year.

The increase, up from April's 3.8 per cent figure, follows strong US jobs figures last week that ramped up expectations for a rate hike.

Analyst Stephen Innes noted that the data was not as worrying as it first appears.

While the headline figure jumped, the core reading that excludes energy prices that have surged due to war in the Middle East, held steady at 2.9 per cent.

"The inflation fire is burning, but it has not yet jumped every fence in the neighbourhood," he said.

This "gave the market the narrow escape hatch it needed," he added.

US stock futures pared losses following the release of the report, but Wall Street's main indices still opened lower when trading opened.

Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare said, "this report was by no means a game-changer in terms of the prevailing view that the Fed won't be cutting rates anytime soon." However, investors have started worrying recently more about the risk of a hike in rates.

"While today's report was in-line with expectations that doesn't mean inflation risk — or the risk of rate hikes — is off the table," said eToro investment analyst Bret Kenwell.

"Investors have recently wound up to that possibility, and all eyes will now turn to the Fed and its new chairman next week," he added.

New US Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh will preside over his first rate-setting meeting of the central bank's policymakers next week.

Investors see no chance of a rate hike next week, according to the CME FedWatch tool, but that rises to roughly a third in September.

Technology shares led declines across Asia as investors weighed lofty valuations and concerns that persistent inflation could prompt the US Federal Reserve to hike interest rates.

European equities mostly followed Asia lower.

Oil prices rose only modestly despite the US and Iranian forces exchanging fire, just hours after President Donald Trump said a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz was close.

"The oil market is trading on hope that a resolution can be found, and on a loosening of oil supply," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at trading group XTB. She noted that declining onshore Middle Eastern oil inventories suggest "a significant amount" of oil is leaving the Gulf, although exports remain well below pre-war levels as the Strait of Hormuz remains largely blocked. — AFP

Unemployment creeps up as UK job vacancies fall

UNEMPLOYMENT has ticked up despite a fall in April's data as it was shown that the UK jobs market weakened in the last quarter. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said the UK unemployment rate was five per cent in the three months to March 2026. The unemployment rate had dropped to 4.9 per cent at April's release

The youth unemployment rate also climbed to 16.2 per cent as activity rates for the age group also fell. WPI Strategy economist Martin Beck pointed out the fall in payrolled employees for those under the age of 35 was sharper, dropping by 296,000 since October 2024 compared to a rise of 18,000 for older workers.

"In other words, the slowdown is not being felt evenly. Younger workers continue to bear the brunt of a cooling labour market", Beck said.

Vacancies also declined further to a five-year low, uncovering the difficulties faced by job seekers in a weakened market. The number of payrolled employees fell by 20,000 over the quarter and an early estimate for the three months to April suggest there could be a fall of 100,000 over three months.

Bank of England officials may have taken greater notice of new wage growth figures that could concern some policymakers.

Including bonuses, wage growth was higher than expected at 4.1 per cent. Pay growth over the three months to March was 3.4 per cent when bonuses were stripped from the figure, matching predictions set by economists.

"Latest figures suggest the labour market remains soft, with vacancies at their lowest level in five years and unemployment higher than a year ago", said Liz McKeown, director of economic statistics.

The latest set of job numbers provide some further context on the state of the British economy after the first quarter of the calendar year. Jack Kennedy, senior economist at Indeed said youth unemployment was a "flashing warning signal".



ANDY JALIL
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The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK.

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Workers walk through the Canary Wharf financial district in London, Britain.

— Reuters

"Vacancies are falling, payrolled employment is declining and the jobless rate is rising — a combination that signals the squeeze on businesses from rising costs and uncertainty is now feeding through into tangible job market deterioration", Kennedy said.

"The spike in joblessness among young people is a reminder that the workers at the beginning of their careers feel these pressures first and hardest".

GDP figures separately gave the chancellor Rachel Reeves a boost as the ONS estimated that the economy grew by 0.6 per cent in the first three months of the year.

Monetary Policy Committee members, who set interest rates every six weeks, will be closely eyeing any signs of pay pressures. This focus on wages comes as economists fear that the rise in inflation from the Iran war could push up salaries, leading to a spiralling effect in price pressures.

The tragic element of UK's national job story is how badly the problems in the labour market are hitting young people. Youth unemployment has climbed to its highest level in 11 years. Young men not in higher education account for the bulk of this.

It seems whichever sector you look at economic date points a picture of deterioration. Retail sales are down, the housing market is struggling, the construction sector has taken a hit and hiring and investment intentions are lacking confidence.

Bright spots exist in certain sectors, not least tech investment and parts of UK's resilient services sector, but backward-looking data combined with forward-looking thoughts shows a picture of a tough year ahead. Also bearing in mind, the UK faces the prospect of major political disruption and soon yet another autumn of a nervous Budget speculation.

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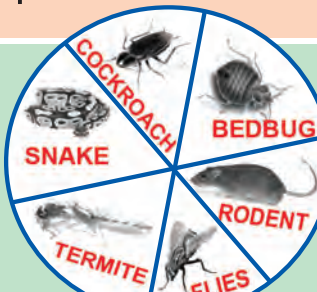
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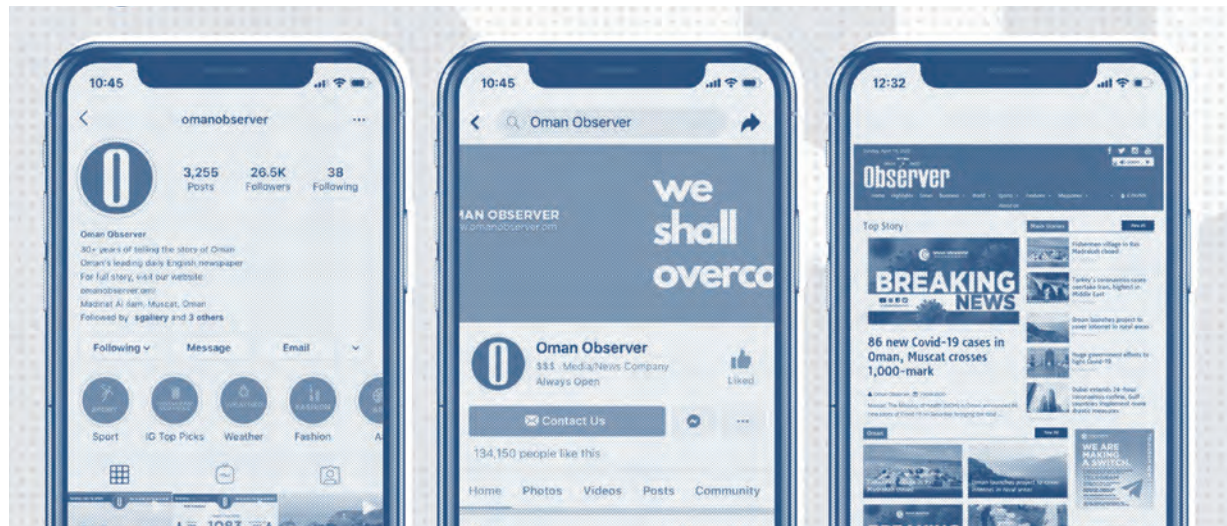
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ART/LIFE

OMANI FEMALE CROSSFIT PIONEER REEM AL RIYAMI

CHANGING WORLD 'ME' TIME ISN'T SELFISH. IT'S THE FUEL TO PERFORM



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

You know you need a holiday when you start thanking the microwave. “Ding” goes your lunch and you actually whisper “you too”. That’s not gratitude. That’s burnout in business casual. We wear “busy” like a badge of honour. Calendar packed? Must be important. Zero leave days taken this year? What a hero. But here’s the truth no one puts in the performance review: you can’t pour from an empty coffee mug. And if your mug has been on your desk since January with that same sad tea stain, it’s time. Taking leave isn’t quitting. It’s maintenance. You service your car before it breaks down on the highway. You update your phone before it freezes mid-call. But your brain? We run it on 2% battery, 47 open tabs and the fumes of yesterday’s ambition, then wonder why we’re snapping at the printer. “Me” time sounds selfish until you realise how un-selfish it is. A rested you is a nicer you. A you that doesn’t draft passive-aggressive emails at 11 pm. A you that remembers your nephew’s name at Eid. A you that laughs at jokes from your heart instead of pretending. The first day of leave feels illegal. You wake up, no alarm and panic. Did I forget a meeting? Should I check Slack “just in case”? No. That’s the sound of your nervous system remembering what quiet is. By day two, you notice things. Your house has windows. The sky isn’t just the colour between buildings. Coffee tastes better when you’re not drinking it over a keyboard. “Me” time doesn’t need a passport and a boarding pass. It can be three to seven days of what I call “strategic nothing”. Sleep until your body stops negotiating. Read a book with no learning objectives. Walk without tracking steps. Eat lunch at any time because you felt like it. The goal isn’t to become a productivity guru. The goal is to be a person again. Work will survive. Emails will wait. The world ran before you replied-all and it will keep running when you’re at the beach, or on the couch, or finally fixing that drawer that’s been sticking since 2022. In fact, the team might do better. Because nothing says “I trust you” like logging off and letting them handle it. We inherited this weird guilt around rest. As if pausing means we don’t care. But farmers let fields lie fallow so the next harvest is stronger. Athletes take rest days so muscles rebuild. Your brain is not a machine, but even machines have off switches. So file the leave. Be dramatic about it. Put “Out of Office: Recharging my humanity” in your auto-reply. Water a plant. Call a friend and not talk about work. Stare at a wall and let it be the most rebellious thing you do all year. Because “Me” time isn’t a luxury item you earn after 40 years of service. It’s the fuel. Take it before you need it. Come back weirdly cheerful, suspiciously patient and annoyingly well-rested. Your colleagues will thank you. Your family will recognise you. And that microwave? You’ll finally let it ‘ding’ in peace.

> 20

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



FILM FESTIVAL
US actress Olivia Munn attends the 19th Annual Chanel Tribeca Festival Artists Dinner at Tribeca Grill in New York.
— AFP



LIFESTYLE
A woman crosses the street in front of the Sultan Abdul Samad building near Merdeka Square in Kuala Lumpur.
— AFP

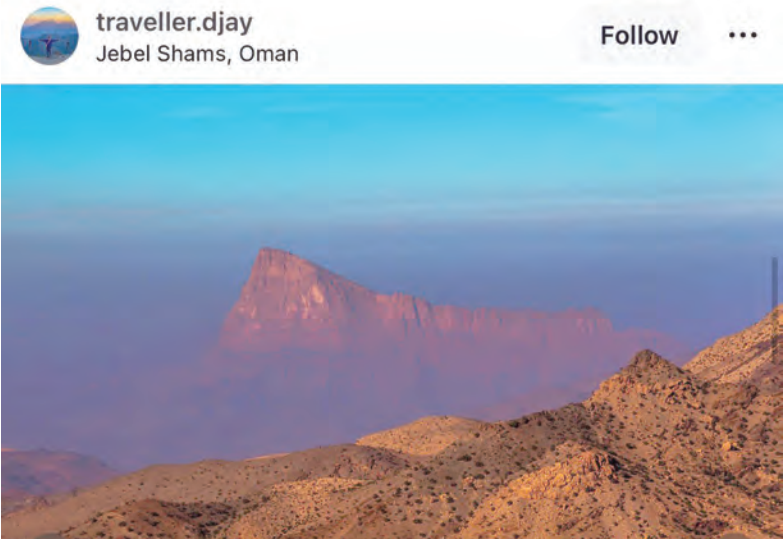


ARCHAEOLOGY
The statue of Roman emperor Hadrian (front) and the tomb of Polyksena (back), found at excavation sites, are displayed at the Troy museum in Canakkale.
— AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Little bird frolicking on tree in Dhofar



Morning light, mountain majesty.

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CHARLIE CHAPLIN
LOOKALIKES GATHER IN
SWITZERLAND



Some of the 429 people dressed as “The Tramp” pose for a photo during the 10th anniversary of Chaplin’s World. — AFP

More than 400 people donning black bowler hats, toothbrush moustaches and canes gathered in Switzerland on Sunday seeking to break the record for the biggest ever assembly of Charlie Chaplin lookalikes.

The unusual rally, drawing Chaplin fans of all ages, took place at a museum dedicated to the legendary filmmaker at his former home in Corsier-sur-Vevay in western Switzerland.

Timed to mark the 10th anniversary of the museum’s opening, the gathering in the end drew 429 Chaplin lookalikes, falling short of the world record set there in 2017, when 662 people took part.

But that did not dampen the mood. Under a blazing sun, the Chaplins crowded together to form a giant number 10 on the lawn stretching before the large manor where the English movie icon spent the last 25 years of his life.

“I am sincerely the happiest man alive”, said Anthony Champeil, a dapper 36-year-old Frenchman who looked the spitting image of Chaplin, explaining that he was an actor

who often played the film legend on stage.

“We are at Chaplin’s place with people who are passionate about Chaplin”, he said.

Suggesting that Chaplin had wanted to encourage people to maintain a childlike capacity for wonder and play for as long as possible, he mused that the actor would have enjoyed having hundreds “of big kids gathered here today”.

“I find it marvellous”.

The museum is set on the vast estate of Manoir de Ban, about 26 kilometres from Lausanne, where Chaplin lived with his wife Oona and their eight children until his death in 1977, at age 88.

He had moved to Switzerland after being barred from the United States in the 1950s over suspicions that he had communist sympathies, at the height of Cold War paranoia about Soviet infiltration.

Alice Kauffmann, who had brought her young children to participate as miniature Chaplins, said Sunday’s gathering was “moving” to behold. — AFP



People walk at sunset in front of the Trojan Horse which was donated to be displayed at Çanakkale Square following the release of the movie ‘Troy’ in Çanakkale. — AFP

FROM HOMER TO HOLLYWOOD
TROY’S LEGACY



A visitor reads information about the tomb of Polyksena found at excavation sites and displayed at the Troy Museum in Canakkale. — AFP



A tourist takes a selfie photograph in front of the Trojan Horse, which was donated to be displayed at Çanakkale Square following the release of the movie ‘Troy’ in Çanakkale. — AFP

A giant Trojan Horse replica from the 2004 film Troy, starring Brad Pitt as Achilles, still looms over the waterfront of Çanakkale on the Dardanelles Strait in western Türkiye. The film, inspired by Homer’s Iliad, helped renew global interest in the ancient city of Troy.

Now, Troy’s legacy is travelling to Rome, where a major new exhibition, “Troy and Rome”, opens at the Colosseum this Friday and runs until mid-October. Türkiye has loaned more than 220 artefacts for the show, including over 100 from the Troy Museum.

Reyhan Korpe, deputy head of the Troy excavations at Çanakkale University, said the site reveals Troy as part of Anatolian civilisation rather than purely a Greek myth. “When you read Homer, you don’t get a very clear idea of the Trojans’ identity”, he explained, noting they were likely Anatolian peoples during the time of the Trojan War.

The Unesco World Heritage site covers around 185 hectares of ruins, ramparts and layered settlements. Korpe described Troy as continuously inhabited from around 3000 BC until the 6th century AD, with nine distinct layers of settlement built on top of one another. He called it “the most western part of eastern civilisation”, highlighting its position at the



Brad Pitt stars as Achilles the primary protagonist of the 2004 film Troy. He serves as the central character whose search for immortal glory drive much of the film’s narrative.



Paris and Helen, the star-crossed couple whose illicit romance sparks the decade-long Trojan War in 2004 film Troy.

crossroads of East and West.

The Trojan War, traditionally dated to around 1200 BC and lasting ten years, is often seen as a symbolic first clash between Eastern and Western worlds. Korpe even referred to it as a kind of “first world war”. The same region would later see another major conflict millennia later during the 1915 Gallipoli campaign in World War I.

Among the artefacts in the Rome exhibition is a bronze seal discovered in 1995 bearing Luwian hieroglyphics. According to museum director Sinem Duzgoren, it is the only known written evidence from Troy in an Anatolian language, suggesting the Luwian people influenced the region’s early identity. Other objects include weapons such as sling stones, spears, knives and arrowheads, many consistent with descriptions in Homer’s epic.

Historically, Troy was known in Hittite records as Wilusa, later becoming Ilion in Greek tradition. While not a Hittite city, it was within their sphere of influence.

Korpe noted that although Hollywood’s Troy boosted tourism significantly, filmmakers never visited the excavation site, even as major discoveries were being made there.

Visitors now often arrive seeking traces of the film rather than the ancient history itself. — AFP

FEATURES

OMANI FEMALE CROSSFIT PIONEER REEM AL RIYAMI



Reem al Riyami is an Omani CrossFit coach and mother of two who is helping redefine strength and fitness for women in Oman through training and coaching.

IDRIS AL BALUSHI

FOR years, Reem al Riyami believed fitness meant becoming smaller. Like many women balancing demanding careers and personal expectations, she spent nearly a decade in architectural engineering chasing a version of health defined by long cardio sessions and minimal change on the scale. But everything shifted when she discovered CrossFit.

CrossFit is a high intensity fitness methodology built around functional movements, such as lifting, pushing, running and squatting, combined into constantly varied workouts. Instead of isolating muscles or focusing purely on aesthetics, it trains the body to perform real world tasks with strength, speed and endurance. Workouts, often called WODs, Workouts of the Day, challenge participants to push beyond perceived limits, improving overall fitness capacity rather than just appearance. For Al Riyami, this approach was transformative.

“It taught me that our bodies are not ornaments, they are tools”, she explains. “They are meant to carry us through life”. That mindset reshaped not only her training, but her entire identity. As a mother of two, strength became less about gym performance and more about life itself, having the energy, resilience and capability to show up every day for her children and herself.

Her experience also exposed a deeper gap in women’s fitness journeys, many women, especially mothers, tend to abandon their own wellbeing while prioritising family needs. Strength training, she discovered, was not a luxury but a necessity.

This realisation ultimately led her to leave behind a stable career in engineering and step fully into coaching.

Today, Reem al Riyami is a CrossFit and strength coach working with a wide range of clients, from seniors in their seventies to everyday women seeking confidence and physical empowerment. She has also built a strong presence as a social media fitness influencer, where she shares training insights, lifestyle habits and motivation with a growing online audience across Oman and beyond. While her methods are adaptable, her foundation remains the same, build strength first and everything else follows.

Her philosophy challenges traditional fitness thinking.

Rather than promoting quick transformations or restrictive routines, she emphasises consistency and long term sustainability. Clients are encouraged to focus on performance, lifting heavier, moving better, becoming more capable, rather than chasing aesthetic goals.

Nutrition, too, follows this principle. Instead of strict dieting, she advocates balance, with a particular emphasis on protein intake to support muscle recovery, energy and overall health. “Fitness should complement life, not complicate it”, she says.

Through her coaching, she has also witnessed a shift in Oman’s fitness culture. More women are entering strength training spaces, lifting weights and embracing performance based goals instead of focusing solely on weight loss. This shift, she believes, is especially powerful for mothers who are reclaiming time and energy for themselves. However, her journey has not been without challenges. Leaving a secure government engineering role meant stepping into uncertainty. As a self employed coach, she now manages everything, from training clients to

marketing and content creation.

Still, she describes the transition as deeply rewarding.

The most fulfilling part, she says, is not the transformation in appearance, but in mindset, watching women grow stronger, more confident and more capable in their everyday lives.

In a growing fitness landscape, Reem al Riyami is helping redefine what strength looks like in Oman, not as an aesthetic goal, but as a lifelong capability.

