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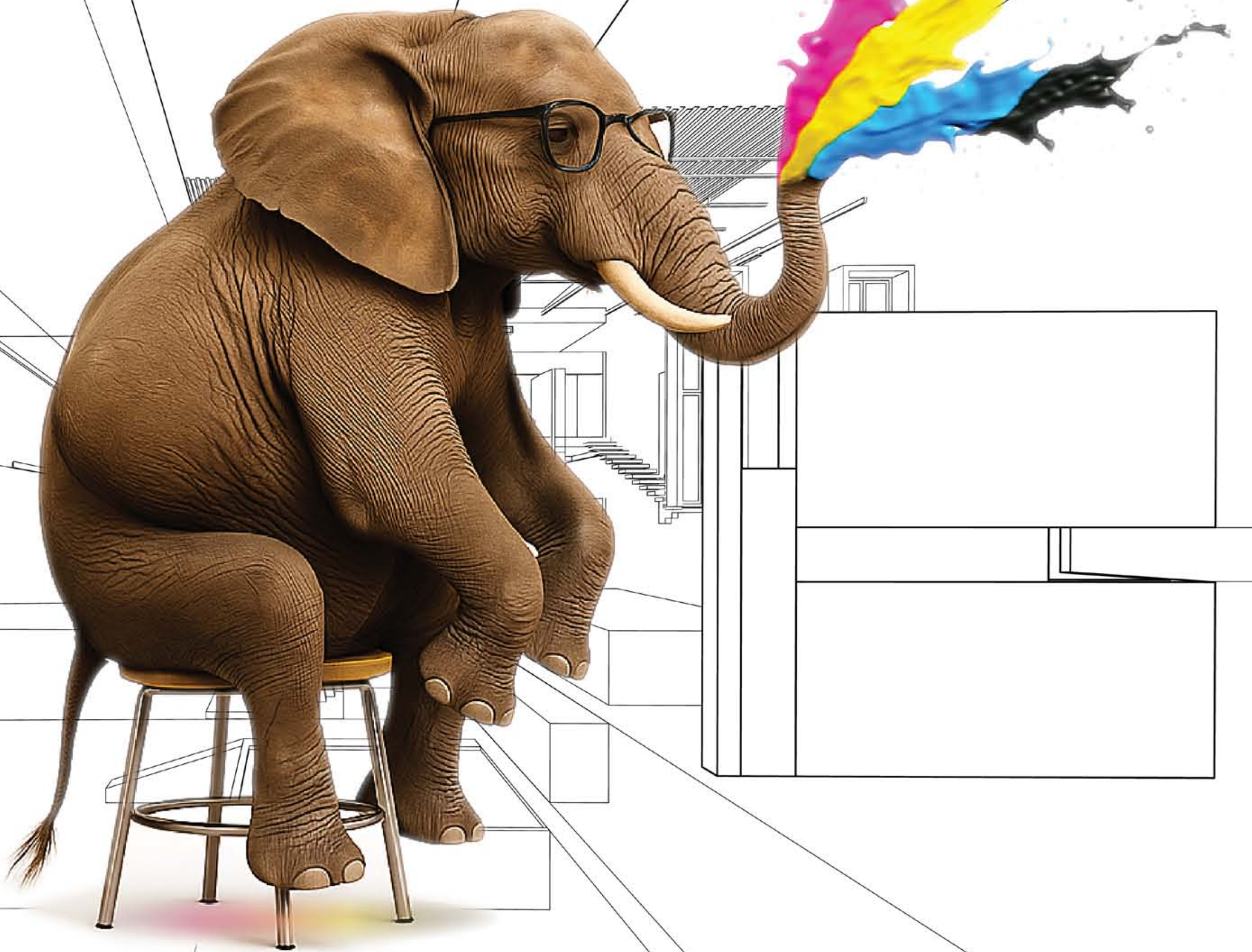
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FDI in Oman’s industrial sector jumps by 27.5% to OMR2.74bn

The sector continues to grow as reflected in the effectiveness of government policies aimed at enhancing economic diversification and increasing its contribution to the GDP

MUSCAT: The industrial sector in Oman witnessed significant growth in foreign direct investments (FDIs) during the first quarter of 2025, with a growth rate of 27.5 percent compared to the same period last year, bringing the total value to OMR2.749 billion.

The industrial sector topped the non-oil sectors in terms of targeted investment volume, with investments concentrated in promising sectors, most notably: renewable energy technology manufacturing, as part of the Sultanate of Oman's drive towards a green economy.

The industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman continues to grow as reflected in the effectiveness of government policies aimed at enhancing economic diversification



and increasing its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP), within the framework of Oman Vision 2040, which has placed industry among its priorities.

The industrial sector witnessed positive and tangible developments in several activities during the first half of 2025.

Expansion in productivity and increased regional and international demand contributed to the growth of a number of vital industrial sectors.

Dr. Saleh bin Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, said that the positive results achieved by the industrial sector are a direct reflection of the integration of national policies and incentive plans aimed at building a flexible and competitive

production base through the implementation of the programmes and initiatives of the Industrial Strategy 2040, enabling quality investments, improving the quality of services in industrial and economic cities, and facilitating procedures for investors.

He added that the industrial sector is a driver of economic growth, a lever for innovation, a recruiter of national talent, a promoter of food and medicine security, and an expander of local value chains in the national economy.

For his part, Eng. Khalid bin Salim Al Qassabi, Director General of Industry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, explained that industrial performance during the first half of this year clearly demonstrates the ability of Omani factories to achieve advanced growth

rates and expand production and operations, despite regional and international challenges related to market and supply chain fluctuations.

He stated that this positive performance was a direct result of the integrated efforts between the public and private sectors, benefiting from support and incentive packages, and reducing service costs. This was reflected in the increased rates of localising projects within industrial cities and free zones, and achieving advanced Omanisation rates in a number of industrial activities.

He stressed that the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion continues to support initiatives that enhance local added value and expand the national production base, in line with the objectives of the industrial



Dr. Saleh bin Said Masan. - ONA

strategy and “Oman Vision 2040” aimed at building a diversified and sustainable economy.

For his part, Eng. Jassim bin Saif Al Jadidi, Technical Director of the Office of the Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry, emphasised that the industrial sector enjoys investor confidence, thanks to the continuous improvement of the business environment, the stimulating legislative structure, and the promising opportunities it offers in a number of industrial sectors through the development of new incentive policies, including: providing industrial financing, developing logistics services, localising advanced technologies, and stimulating international partnerships.

The minerals sector is witnessing an expansion in production and export chains.

The manufacturing sector witnessed a significant improvement in its performance during the first half of this year, driven by strong growth in the petrochemical and electrical sectors.

In the building materials and construction sector, the iron and aluminum industries continued to achieve positive results and steady growth, while cement companies began to show signs of improved performance and reduced losses.

Tile and ceramic factories showed signs of recovery, while glass companies still face operational challenges that the Ministry is working to address as part of its plans to develop the manufacturing industries. In the food industries sector, milling, soft drinks, and refreshment companies led the recovery scene, achieving significant profits thanks to improved operational efficiency and an expanded consumer base locally and regionally.

In terms of foreign trade, Omani non-oil exports grew by 7.2 percent during the period from January to May 2025, reaching OMR 2.7 billion, reflecting the strength of Omani products in foreign markets.

The United Arab Emirates topped the list of countries importing Omani products, with OMR485 million, an increase of 22.9 percent, followed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with OMR451 million, an increase of 34.9 percent, and then the Republic of India with OMR280 million, an increase of 38.9 percent.

These results reflect the diversity of the trading partner base, underscoring the importance of activating trade promotion tools and enhancing the industrial sector's readiness to enter new markets, particularly in Asia and Africa, which represent promising markets for Omani products.

NCSI DATA

Inflation in June rises by 0.82%

MUSCAT: The Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the Sultanate of Oman rose by 0.82 percent in June 2025 compared to the same month in 2024, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The data showed that the personal goods and miscellaneous services group topped the groups with the highest increase, at 7.45 percent, followed by the transportation group at 3.12 percent, and then the restaurants and hotels group at 1.39 percent.

Statistics showed that health group prices rose by 0.76 percent, clothing and footwear prices by 0.6 percent, education prices rose by 0.07 percent, and housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel prices saw a slight increase of 0.02 percent.

In contrast, prices of the food and non-alcoholic beverages group decreased by 0.59 percent, and the furniture, household equipment, and maintenance group decreased by 0.25 percent. Prices of the culture and entertainment group decreased by 0.02



percent, and the tobacco group decreased slightly by 0.01 percent. Meanwhile, prices of the communications group remained stable without any change.

Regarding food and non-alcoholic beverage prices in June 2025 compared to the same month in 2024, a number of sub-groups increased.

The food products group not classified as another item topped the list of increases, with a 3.83 percent increase, followed by

the sugar, jam, honey, and sweets group, which rose by 3.31 percent, and the milk, cheese, and eggs group, which rose by 1.84 percent.

The prices of the oils and fats group also rose by 1.65 percent, the meat group by 0.74 percent, and the bread and cereals group, which recorded an increase of 0.62 percent.

While vegetable prices decreased by 8.06 percent, followed by fish and seafood, which decreased by 3.84 percent, fruit

prices decreased by 0.45 percent, and non-alcoholic beverages decreased by 0.19 percent.

The data showed that Al Dakhiliyah Governorate recorded the highest inflation rate among the Sultanate of Oman's governorates until the end of June 2025, compared to the same period last year, with an inflation rate of 1.76 percent.

It was followed by Al Dhahirah Governorate with a rate of 1.57 percent, then South Al Sharqiyah Governorate with a rate of 1.4 percent, Musandam Governorate with an inflation rate of 1.34 percent, and Al Wusta Governorate with a rate of 1.22 percent.

Al Buraimi Governorate recorded an inflation rate of 0.83 percent, Muscat Governorate recorded 0.82 percent, North Al Batinah Governorate recorded 0.28 percent, and Dhofar Governorate recorded 0.13 percent. South Al Batinah Governorate recorded the lowest inflation rate of 0.1 percent, while North Al Sharqiyah Governorate witnessed a slight decline in its inflation rate of 0.01 percent. - ONA

SALALAH HEALTH PARK

A recreational hub for Khareef Dhofar 2025 season

SALALAH: The “Health Park” event, located within Salalah Public Park, marks a significant addition to the activities of Khareef Dhofar (monsoon) season 2025.

This initiative aims to provide a comprehensive sports and recreational environment that promotes a healthy lifestyle and meets the expectations of visitors across all age groups. The event will run until 20 September 2025.

Healthy lifestyle

Organised by the Dhofar Municipality, the event features a designated track for walking and jogging, alongside courts for tennis, volleyball, and basketball. These facilities foster an energetic sports atmosphere that supports a healthy lifestyle and enhances an integrated experience combining physical fitness with family entertainment amidst the moderate Khareef weather.

With its modern amenities, the park offers a range of diverse sports challenges and activities suitable for all age groups, including children, youth, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. This reflects the initiative's inclusivity and its commitment to fostering community interaction.

The park also hosts weekly events organised in a family-friendly, recreational atmosphere. Children's competitions are held every Friday from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, while adult competitions are scheduled for Saturdays at the same time.

It is worth noting that the “Health Park” event aims to develop motor skills, raise awareness about the importance of physical activity, and encourage all segments of society to adopt a healthy lifestyle within an interactive and stimulating environment.

- ONA

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DURING JUNE 2025



Oman Airports efforts bear fruit, passenger traffic rises

MUSCAT: Oman Airports recorded a 2 percent growth in the number of passengers travelling through its airports during June 2025, reaching 1,134,924 travellers, compared to 1,109,745 in the same period last year.

This growth is attributed to the ongoing efforts of Oman Airports, in cooperation with relevant authorities, to enhance the Sultanate's position as an attractive year-round tourist destination by providing quality facilities at airports and improving the traveller experience from the moment of arrival until departure.

Oman Airports is committed to providing a smooth, safe, and high-quality travel experience by developing various airport facilities and implementing the latest technologies and smart services that help reduce processing times and enhance passenger comfort.

The start of the Dhofar Khareef season is an additional factor in attracting visitors, given the Dhofar Governorate's stunning nature and unique atmosphere during this season.

This growth in passenger numbers is a positive indicator of the effectiveness of promotional and

tourism efforts, and of the ability of the Sultanate of Oman's airports to accommodate the increasing traffic and provide services in accordance with the highest international standards.

Oman Airports expects continued momentum in travel activity in the coming period, supported by diverse tourism events and development plans aimed at enhancing the travel experience and providing an integrated environment that meets the aspirations of travelers and visitors across the Sultanate of Oman's airports.

- ONA



COMMENTARY

Oman guarantees expatriate workers right to retain passports

A critical protection for workers in Oman is explicitly outlined in Labour Law. Passport retention by employers is a well-documented practice that can severely restrict a worker's freedom of movement, their ability to leave an unsatisfactory or abusive employment situation, seek alternative work legally, or even depart the country upon contract completion.

Speaking exclusively to the Times of Oman, a representative of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm, a leading law office in Oman, explained that Article 6 of the labour law unequivocally states: "It is not permitted for the employer to keep the passport of the worker or his personal documents except with the written consent of the worker."



DR. MOHAMMED IBRAHIM AL ZADJALI, FOUNDED PARTNER OF MOHAMMED IBRAHIM
LAW FIRM*

This provision serves as a fundamental safeguard against exploitation and potential forced labour scenarios.

By making such retention illegal without explicit, documented



consent, the law empowers workers to retain control over their crucial identification and travel documents.

The written consent requirement is legally critical. It

precludes undue pressure or verbal authorisations. Critically, employers cannot disregard this prohibition through verbal arrangements, coercive practices, or employment contract clauses

that contravene Article 6,” stated Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Zadjali, Founding Partner of Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm.

Another spokesperson from the law firm added that violating Article 6 carries serious consequences under Article 147 of the Labour Law. Employers who illegally retain passports face fines of OMR500 to OMR1,000 per affected worker, with penalties doubling for repeat violations.

Therefore, Oman's Labour Law establishes a clear and strong stance: Employers holding worker passports is breaking the law and face substantial penalties. Workers possess the legal right to retain their passports, ensuring their mobility and protection against undue control. This empowers expatriate employees to freely exit unsat-

isfactory employment, pursue legal remedies, or depart Oman post-contract without obstruction, the expert said.

* (Mohammed Ibrahim Law Firm (info@mohammedibrahim.net), (+968 244 87 600) was established 18 years ago and is serving clients through its offices in Muscat and Sohar, as well as operating on a request basis in other areas. It offers legal representation across a wide range of practice areas that include Labour Law, Corporate, Commercial, Contracts, Banking and Finance, International Trade, Foreign Investment, Insurance, Maritime Law, Construction and Engineering Contracts, International Arbitration, Intellectual Property and more).

RELIABLE DATA COLLECTION

Survey conducted on social housing programme services

MUSCAT: The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, conducted a public opinion survey on social housing pro-

gramme services in the Sultanate of Oman. The survey was conducted from 20-24 July 2025.

This survey is part of the NCSI's efforts to support government entities with accurate and reliable

data essential for decision-making. By conducting such surveys, policymakers can better understand the reality of services and citizens' aspirations, leading to improved, evidence-based govern-

ment decisions.

Mahfoudh Salim Al Musharfi, Director of the Public Opinion Measurement Department at the NCSI, affirmed that the survey aimed to evaluate the current sta-

tus of social housing programs and measure citizens' satisfaction with construction quality, designs, and contractors. It also sought to assess the efficiency of public facilities and services within so-

cial housing projects. The survey aimed to identify challenges faced by citizens during the application and post-benefit stages, anticipate their future aspirations regarding location and area. — **ONA**

LANDMARK MILESTONE



Oman Air achieves record growth in passenger traffic

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Air has achieved a landmark milestone with a near threefold increase in point-to-point passengers – rising from 75,000 in June 2024 to 200,000 in June 2025 alone.

Point-to-point traffic – passengers flying directly into Oman rather connecting onwards – now accounts for 58% of the airline's total flight loads, nearly two times higher than any other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) airline. The news marks a significant advancement in Oman Air's strategy to drive inbound tourism into Oman and support national economic goals.

Mike Rutter, Chief Commercial Officer at Oman Air, said, "A core pillar of our strategy is to increase point-to-point traffic; not simply by adding more flights, but by ensuring each flight brings more visitors directly to the country. The growth we have achieved is the direct result of careful route planning, targeted marketing, and a network strategy that prioritises stable demand over aspiration."

"Our approach not only supports national tourism goals, but also drives a stronger revenue performance for the airline, which in turn will enable us to open new routes sustainably. We remain focused on keeping travel to Oman both accessible and at-



tractive, while delivering on our promise to be an engine of Oman's tourism growth," he added.

Oman Air continues to invest in expanding its route network, fleet modernisation, and service excellence to maintain its leadership in the region and deliver an exceptional experience for its guests.

The airline's most recent network expansions include Amsterdam, which opens direct access to the high-value Benelux market, and the re-introduction of double-daily flights on its popular London route, starting from October 2025.

Meanwhile, as the newest member of the oneworld Alliance, it provides seamless connectivity between Oman and over 700 countries and territories across the globe, including new markets like Japan, Australia and North America. As Oman continues to invest in its tourism infrastructure, Oman Air's focused approach is playing a crucial role in increasing visitors, generating

tourism revenue, and shaping the nation's appeal on a global stage.

Oman Air (WY) began operations in 1993. Initially founded to serve important domestic routes, it has since undergone rapid growth and is today recognised as a major international carrier connecting cities around the world to Oman's stunning nature, rich heritage and welcoming culture.

The award-winning airline has been instrumental in transforming Muscat into one of the Middle East's most desirable travel destinations, while supporting adjacent commercial, industrial and tourism activities. With a young and modern fleet including, among others, fuel-efficient Boeing 737 and 787 Dreamliner aircraft, which feature luxuriously appointed interiors, Oman Air is renowned for its exceptional products and services, both in the air and on the ground, and for the signature Omani hospitality it offers to every guest throughout their journey.

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Oman Kite Festival 2025 concludes after exciting competitions and vibrant events

Organised by Omran Group in partnership with Oman Sail, Visit Oman, and the Oman Adventure Centre, the festival aimed to promote adventure and experience-driven tourism by showcasing the Sultanate’s diverse coastal landscapes

MUSCAT: The Oman Kite Festival 2025 came to a close after 10 days of exciting competitions and vibrant events held across several coastal locations in the Sultanate of Oman. The festival, which ran from 15 to 24 July, brought together more than 90 athletes from around the world.

Organised by Omran Group in partnership with Oman Sail, Visit Oman, and the Oman Adventure Centre, the festival aimed to promote adventure and experience-driven tourism by showcasing the Sultanate’s diverse coastal landscapes and supporting the growth of unique tourism offerings across the country.

The closing ceremony was held at The Beachfront in Sur, South Al Sharqiyah, under the patronage of Dr. Yahya bin Badr Al Maawali, Governor of South Al Sharqiyah, and in the presence of Dr. Khamis Salim Al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, as well as senior representatives from Omran Group, sponsoring



entities and strategic partners.

The festival welcomed the participation of 90 athletes from around the world, who competed in a series of thrilling races. The highlight was the multi-stage “Oman Downwinder” race, which unfolded over four legs: from Barr Al Hikman to Masirah Island, followed by a route from Masirah through Ras Al Ruwais, then from the Pink Lagoons to Al Ashkharah, and finally from Ras Al Jinz to Ras Al Hadd.

In addition to the Downwinder, the festival featured the “Kite Course” race along the shores of Barr Al Hikman, the “Coastal Race” in Masirah Island, and the “Slalom” event in Ras Al Hadd.

Ayman bin Abdullah Al Ghafri was awarded first place in the second edition of the Oman Downwinder, finishing ahead of Mukhtar bin Abdulkarim Al Mu-

jaini and Egypt’s Ahmed Mohamed Gamal. The event highlighted the rich diversity of Oman’s coastline and its capacity to host world-class international competitions.

Meanwhile, in the Slalom race held in Sur, Majid Al Kharousi claimed the title after outperforming a competitive field. As one of three featured races during the festival, the Slalom further demonstrated the sport’s variety and reinforced Oman’s position as a versatile and attractive destination for global sporting events.

Sultan bin Sulaiman Al Khudoori, Assets Manager at Omran Group, congratulated all of the participants for playing such an important role in supporting the tourism diversification objectives outlined in the National Tourism Strategy 2040 and showing what could be possible as Oman’s coastal destinations grow into



premier international venues for kiteboarding.

Shaima Said Al Asmi, Events Specialist at Oman Sail shared her belief that each sporting event held in the Sultanate can build a legacy that contributes to tourism in each governorate across the na-

tion and provides the impetus for SMEs, home-based businesses and local service providers to support current and future while also developing into national success stories.

Sur — with its strategic location and deep-rooted maritime heritage — served as an ideal setting for the festival’s grand finale. The strong public turnout underscored the growing interest in marine sports and highlighted their vital role in supporting the local economy and enhancing Oman’s positioning as a leading destination for unique tourism experiences.

The Oman Kite Festival serves as a platform to showcase the Sultanate’s exceptional natural and marine assets, reinforcing its position on the global tourism map and capturing the attention of adventure sports enthusiasts and international sporting communities. The event further strengthens Oman’s standing as a preferred destination for experiential and adventure-based tourism, while contributing to the vitality of the tourism sector and expanding opportunities to promote the country’s diverse destinations.



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- Public Service Leader of the Year
- Digital Transformation Leader of the Year
- Sports Icon of the Year
- Health & Wellness Icon of the Year
- Creative Icon of the Year
- Social Change Champion
- Young Corporate Leader of the Year (Under 35)
- Marketing Leader of the Year

Organization & Initiative Categories:

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- Excellence in Female Entrepreneurship Support



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Oman welcomes France ‘historic’ announcement to recognise Palestinian state

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has commended and welcomed the historic announcement of French President, Emmanuel Macron on the intent of France to recognise the State of Palestine during the upcoming UN General Assembly.

The Sultanate of Oman, in a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Friday, urged all countries yet to recognise the State of Palestine.

The Sultanate has all other countries to do the same in accordance with the two-state solution as to cement the legitimate right of the Palestinian people in their independent state on the borders of 1967 with Eastern Al Quds as its capital, as to maintain the opportunity of achievement of peace and justice in the Middle East. — **OMA**

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Unaudited Statement of Comprehensive Income for 6 months ended 30th June 2025		Unaudited Statement of Financial Position as at 30th June 2025	
30-Jun-25	30-Jun-24	30-Jun-25	30-Jun-24
RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
Assets		Assets	
Investment at amortized cost		34,788	13,366
Investment assets at fair value through profit and loss (FVTPL)		2,644	-
Investment in Deposits		106,650	63,010
Bank Balances		21,722	58,443
Interest Receivables		6,076	1,871
Total Assets	171,880	171,880	136,690
Liabilities:		Liabilities:	
Short term loan		(17,103)	(3,222)
Accruals		(87)	(78)
		(17,190)	(3,300)
Net Assets Value (NAV)	154,690	154,690	133,390
Composition of net assets:		Composition of net assets:	
Unit Capital		107,363	97,264
Retained Earnings		47,327	36,126
Net Assets Value (NAV)	154,690	154,690	133,390
Net Asset Value (NAV) per unit (Rial)	1.4408080	1.3714188	
Earnings per unit		Earnings per unit	
0.035	0.026		

C.R No. 1/1457/8

Note: Due to figures displayed in 000's, immaterial variance is likely with actual numbers. The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any Unitholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of request.

Managed by Bank Muscat SAOG, Asset Management Division

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Al Batinah Power Company SAOG (the "Company"), I have the pleasure of presenting the Company's Directors' Report for 6-months period ended 30 June 2025.

Operational Highlights

The plant crossed 5,107 lost time accident-free days since inception, maintaining its excellent track record of zero lost time accidents and zero environmental incidents, which reflects our continued focus on health, safety, security, and environment.

The plant's operation was excellent during the period, achieving a reliability of 99.80%. The plant delivered 2,007 GWh to the grid, translating to a load factor of 62.74% compared to 60.69% for the corresponding period of 2024.

Financial Results

	6 months 2025 RO'000s Unaudited	6 months 2024 RO'000s Unaudited	Percentage change
Revenues	38,939	37,918	2.7%
Direct costs	(28,158)	(26,806)	
Gross profit	10,781	11,113	-3.0%
Other income	268	228	
General and administrative expenses	(433)	(426)	
Profits before interest and tax	10,616	10,915	-2.7%
Finance costs	(2,012)	(2,530)	
Finance income	10	70	
Profit before tax	8,614	8,455	1.9%
Tax	(1,258)	(1,146)	
Net Profit for the period	7,356	7,309	0.6%

Higher revenues and direct costs, as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, were attributed mainly to a higher plant load factor. The variability of the plant load factor influences the fuel and energy charges received from Nama Power & Water Procurement Company SAOC ("PWPC"). However, these charges are passed through to the gas supplier and the O&M service provider hence there is no material impact on the Company's profitability.

Gross profit declined, mainly due to scheduled outages exceeding the 15% winter allowance and a higher short notice outages compared to the same period last year.

Despite these operational challenges, the Company benefited from a steady reduction in finance costs, which supported an improvement in profit before tax. However, the net profit for the period was 0.6% lower than that of the corresponding period in the previous year.

The share price was 71 Baizas at the end of June 2025.

Corporate Social Responsibility

In alignment with the Company's commitment to positively impacting society and contributing to national development, the Company has allocated OMR 50,000 for CSR initiatives for the year 2025. The planned activities reflect the Company's dedication to fostering social well-being, sustainability, and community engagement. Planned CSR Activities:

- Contribution to Oman Charitable Organization:** ABPC contributed 20% of the CSR budget to the Oman Charitable Organization, in adherence to Decision No. 205/2021 issued by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion.
- Student Cybersecurity Initiative:** ABPC has signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education to sponsor a cybersecurity awareness program targeting eight schools, reaching approximately 6,500 students. The initiative aims to equip students with essential cybersecurity knowledge and promote safe digital practices.
- Solar Energy Project:** In support of sustainability and clean energy adoption, the Company is collaborating with the Ministry of Education to fund the installation of a solar energy project at Somrah School in Samail. This initiative supports sustainability goals and encourages the adoption of clean energy solutions.
- Physical Health Activities:** In partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Education, the Company sponsored a range of physical health and sports activities including football, basketball, handball, and chess. These events were conducted across schools in Manah and Adam, engaging over 10,000 students and organized in collaboration with Albashaer Club.
- Inclusive Classrooms Initiative:** As part of its commitment to educational inclusivity, the Company will fund the installation of inclusive classroom facilities at a selected school in Muscat, in partnership with the Ministry of Education. This initiative aims to support students with diverse learning needs.
- Employee Volunteering Programs:** The Company is also committed to fostering a culture of volunteerism among its staff. In 2025, employees will be encouraged to participate in various community initiatives such as beach clean ups in Sohar and other outreach programs, contributing their time and expertise to social and environmental causes.

Medium term Outlook

All reasonable measures are taken by the management to maintain high availability and reliability levels. Any change in the power supply and demand landscape in the Sultanate has substantially no impact on the financial performance of the Company since its profitability is mainly derived from its plant availability.

Acknowledgement

I would like to extend my personal thanks to all personnel associated with the operation of the power plant and the staff of the Company for their hard work and dedication, as well as to those others, such as our contractors, whose expertise has assisted us in achieving these excellent results.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq and His Government for their continued support and encouragement to the private sector by creating an environment that allows us to participate effectively in the growth of the Sultanate's economy and to dedicate our achievements to the building of a strong nation.

Boris Smondack
Chairperson of the Board

Unaudited condensed income statement for the six month period ended 30 June

	2025 RO'000s	2025 USD'000s	2024 RO'000s	2024 USD'000s
Revenues	38,939	1,01,273	37,918	98,618
Direct costs	(28,158)	(73,233)	(26,806)	(69,716)
Gross profit	10,781	28,040	11,113	28,902
Other income	268	696	228	594
General and administrative expenses	(433)	(1,125)	(426)	(1,108)
Profit before interest and tax	10,616	27,611	10,915	28,388
Finance costs	(2,012)	(5,234)	(2,530)	(6,581)
Finance income	10	27	70	182
Profit before tax	8,614	22,404	8,455	21,989
Tax expense	(1,258)	(3,273)	(1,146)	(2,981)
Net profit for the period	7,356	19,131	7,309	19,008
Earnings per share				
Basic earnings per share (Baizas / cents)	10.90	28.35	10.83	28.17

Unaudited condensed statement of financial position as at

	30 June 2025 RO'000s	30 June 2025 USD'000s	Audited 31 Dec 2024 RO'000s	Audited 31 Dec 2024 USD'000s
Assets				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	205,464	534,369	209,182	544,040
Right-of-use assets	2,971	7,725	3,084	8,018
Derivative instruments	344	895	652	1,696
Total non-current assets	208,779	542,989	212,918	553,754
Current assets				
Inventories	2,676	6,959	2,710	7,049
Trade and other receivables	11,137	28,967	7,144	18,580
Cash and cash equivalents	8,360	21,743	4,661	12,123
Total current assets	22,173	57,669	14,515	37,752
Total assets	230,952	600,658	227,433	591,506
Equity and liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	67,489	175,523	67,489	175,523
Legal reserve	11,540	30,013	11,540	30,013
Retained earnings	56,114	145,943	50,108	130,322
Equity before hedging reserve	135,143	351,479	129,137	335,858
Hedging reserve	(16)	(41)	(572)	(1,487)
Equity	135,127	351,438	128,565	334,371
Liabilities				
Non-current liabilities				
Term loans	35,806	93,125	37,739	98,149
Lease liabilities	3,549	9,231	3,626	9,431
Derivative instruments	363	943	1,325	3,446
Deferred tax liability	24,675	64,175	24,657	64,127
Asset retirement obligation	324	841	314	816
End of service benefits	15	40	12	32
Total non-current liabilities	64,732	168,355	67,673	176,001
Current liabilities				
Current tax liabilities	1,338	3,482	2,472	6,429
Trade and other payables	11,485	29,867	8,802	22,895
Lease liabilities	103	268	147	381
Short term borrowings	-	-	1,990	5,176
Term loans - current	18,167	47,248	17,784	46,253
Total current liabilities	31,093	80,865	31,195	81,134
Total liabilities	95,825	249,220	98,868	257,135
Total equity and liabilities	230,952	600,658	227,433	591,506
Net assets per share (Baizas / cents) - adjusted	200.25	520.80	191.35	497.65

AL SUWADI POWER COMPANY SAOG
P.O. Box: 39, P.C. 103, Bareeq Al Shatti, Sultanate of Oman,
alsuwadipower.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Al Suwadi Power Company SAOG (the "Company"), I have the pleasure to present the Directors' Report of the Company for the six months ended June 2025.

Operational Results

The operational performance of the plant during this period was excellent. The consistently high plant's reliability and technologically superior fuel-efficient operations of the plant continues to place it at the higher end of the merit order list for dispatch.

The plant achieved an excellent reliability of 99.7%. The plant delivered 2486 GWh to the Omani grid as compared to 2460 GWh delivered in H1 2024.

All operating equipment and the balance of plant equipment were serviced as per the agreed annual maintenance program. Consistent level of high plant availability is a testament of efficient and timely plant upkeep and periodic maintenance as per the equipment suppliers' manual and 'condition-based' monitoring.

The Plant's good operational performance was achieved with no Lost Time Accidents to any of our staff, thereby clocking 5,111 Lost Time Accident-free days since inception, and is reflective of our continued internal focus on Health, Safety, Environment and Quality Management.

Financial results

	6 months 2025 RO'000s Unaudited	6 months 2024 RO'000s Unaudited	Percentage change
Revenues	44,355	43,147	2.8%
Direct costs	(32,528)	(31,341)	(3.8)%
Gross profit	11,827	11,806	0.2%
Profit before interest and tax	11,636	11,608	0.2%
Finance costs	(2,181)	(2,684)	18.7%
Profit before tax	9,463	8,976	5.4%
Net profit for the period	8,066	7,704	4.7%

The financial results for the six months of the current year are better than the corresponding period for the year 2024. The increase in revenue during H1 2025 as compared to H1 2024 was mainly in (i) Fuel Charge income due to annual gas price increase and higher power generation and (ii) Capacity Charge income due to annual indexation. The increase in direct costs during H1 2025 as compared to H1 2024 was mainly due to higher dispatch and higher gas price. The gross profit marginally increased by 0.2% during H1 2025 as compared to H1 2024 due to higher indexation and lower plant insurance cost which were mostly offset by higher heat rate loss and lower Capacity charge in the current year, previous year being a leap year.

Good reduction in finance costs during the period has increased the net financial results. The net profit and earnings per share have increased by 4.7% as compared to H1 2024.

The Company distributed dividends in June 2025 and will also be able to make future dividend distributions subject to the availability of cash and fulfillment of other covenants agreed within the Finance Documents.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Within its CSR initiative, the Company contributed 20% of its CSR budget to Oman Charitable Organisation. The remaining budget will be utilized to implement Student Cybersecurity Initiative by training school students in basic cybersecurity skills, Installing Solar Panels in schools to create awareness amongst the students for clean energy, and various other initiatives which have high impact on the community and in line with our vision and policy. The earmarked funds are expected to be spent in Q3 to Q4 of the current year.

Medium term Outlook

During H1 2025, routine maintenance of all plant equipment have been accomplished. All reasonable measures are being taken by the management to maintain high reliability level. Consequently, we expect a steady progress in the Company's financial performance.

Acknowledgement

I would like to extend my personal thanks to all personnel associated with the operation of the power plant and the staff of the Company for their hard work and dedication, as well as to those others such as our contractors, whose expertise has assisted us in achieving these excellent results.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I heartily extend our best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq Bin Taimur Al Said. We thank the Government of Oman for creating an environment that allows us to participate effectively in the growth of the Sultanate's economy. We commit our efforts to the building of a strong Oman.

Julien Diaz
Chairperson

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE SIX MONTH PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE

	2025 RO'000s	2025 USD'000s	2024 RO'000s	2024 USD'000s
Revenues	44,355	115,357	43,147	112,215
Direct costs	(32,528)	(84,599)	(31,341)	(81,512)
Gross profit	11,827	30,758	11,806	30,703
Other income	297	773	254	661
General and administrative expenses	(488)	(1,268)	(452)	(1,174)
Profit before interest and tax	11,636	30,263	11,608	30,190
Finance costs	(2,181)	(5,673)	(2,684)	(6,980)
Finance income	8	21	52	134
Profit before tax	9,463	24,611	8,976	23,344
Tax expense	(1,397)	(3,633)	(1,272)	(3,307)
Net profit for the period	8,066	20,978	7,704	20,037
Earnings per share				
Basic earnings per share (Baizas / cents)	11.29	29.36	10.78	28.05

UNAUDITED CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT

	30 June 2025 RO'000s	30 June 2025 USD'000s	Audited 31 Dec 2024 RO'000s	Audited 31 Dec 2024 USD'000s
Assets				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	221,693	576,575	225,535	586,568
Right-of-use assets	430	1,115	503	1,304
Derivative instruments	406	1,055	764	1,988
Total non-current assets	222,529	578,745	226,802	589,860
Current assets				
Inventories	2,606	6,778	2,644	6,877
Trade and other receivables	11,876	30,892	6,564	17,072
Cash and cash equivalents	9,073	23,595	2,619	6,811
Total current assets	23,555	61,265	11,827	30,760
Total assets	246,084	640,010	238,629	620,620
Equity and liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	71,441	185,801	71,441	185,801
Legal reserve	12,791	33,265	12,791	33,265
Retained earnings	57,991	150,823	51,354	133,561
Equity before hedging reserve	142,223	369,889	135,586	352,627
Hedging reserve	74	196	(528)	(1,371)
Equity	142,297	370,085	135,058	351,256
Liabilities				
Non-current liabilities				
Term loans	39,796	103,501	42,298	110,008
Lease liabilities	421	1,094	499	1,299
Derivative instruments	317	825	1,385	3,601
Deferred tax liability	26,874	69,894	26,857	69,851
Asset retirement obligation	357	929	346	900
Total non-current liabilities	67,765	176,243	71,385	185,659
Current liabilities				
Current tax liabilities	1,487	3,868	2,572	6,689
Trade and other payables	12,206	31,741	8,222	21,380
Lease liabilities	169	440	164	426
Short term borrowings	2,780	7,230	2,260	5,800
Term loans	19,380	50,403	18,998	49,410
Total current liabilities	36,022	93,682	32,186	83,705
Total liabilities	103,787	269,925	103,571	269,364
Total equity and liabilities	246,084	640,010	238,629	620,620
Net assets per share (Baizas / cents) - adjusted	199.08	517.76	189.79	493.59

President Muizzu lauds India for being first responder for Maldives

The two leaders discussed cooperation in the fields of development partnership, infrastructure support, capacity building, climate action and health



MALE: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu on Friday took stock of the progress in the implementation of the India-Maldives Joint Vision for a 'Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership' with the Prime Minister reiterating India's commitment to further deepen bilateral ties in keeping with its "Neighbourhood First" and Vision MAHASAGAR policies.

PM Modi, who is on a two-day visit to Maldives, met President Muizzu at the President's Office in Male.

President Muizzu appreciated India's commitment of being the first responder for Maldives when it came to dealing with any crises.

The two leaders discussed cooperation in the fields of development partnership, infrastructure support, capacity building, climate action and health. They also called for further strengthening defence and maritime security cooperation and, in this regard, noted the collaboration between the two countries under the Colombo Security Conclave.

The two leaders also reviewed the economic partnership between the two countries. Prime

Minister underscored that the proposed Free Trade Agreement and the Bilateral Investment Treaty would open new opportunities for both sides.

Noting that the two countries must take advantage of the digital economy, especially to promote tourism, he welcomed the recent understandings on UPI adoption, acceptance of RUPAY card and trade in local currencies. The two leaders highlighted that the close development partnership between the countries was adding new value to the already strong people-to-people ties.

The two leaders noted that, as Global South partners, they would

PM Modi attends 60th Independence Day event

MALE: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday attended the 60th Independence Day celebrations of the Maldives at Republic Square in Male, where he was honoured as the 'Guest of Honour'.

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu was also present at the event.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Modi interacted with leaders of various political parties in Male. He also met Maldives Vice President Hussain Mohamed Latheef, Speaker of the Parliament Abdul Raheem Abdulla and

former President Mohamed Nasheed.

Sharing details of the visit, the Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal, said, "Narendra Modi interacted with leaders of various political parties in Male, today. He conveyed his warm wishes on the occasion of the Independence Day of Maldives. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment for a stronger India-Maldives relationship, building upon the vibrant people to people ties and the shared values between the two democracies. -ANI

The new Line of Credit offers Rupees 4850 crores [approx USD 550 million] in support of infrastructure development and other activities in Maldives. An Amending Agreement for the existing LoCs was also exchanged. It reduces Maldives's annual debt repayment obligations by 40% [from USD 51 million to 29 million]. Both sides also exchanged Terms of Reference of the proposed Free Trade Agreement.

The two leaders also virtually inaugurated a roads and drainage system project in Addu city and six High Impact Community Development Projects in other cities. Prime Minister handed over 3,300 social housing units and 72 vehicles for Maldives National Defence Force and Immigration authorities.

Prime Minister also handed over two units of Aarogya Maitri Health Cube [BHISHM] sets to the Government of Maldives. With state-of-the-art medical equipment as part of the cube, it can provide medical aid to 200 casualties with in-built support to sustain a crew of six medical personnel for up to 72 hours.

In keeping with their deep commitment to conserving nature, the two leaders planted mango saplings as part of India's "Ek Pedh Maa Ke Naam" [Plant for Mother] and Maldives's "Pledge of 5 million Tree Plantation" campaigns. -ANI

GUN AND GRENADE ATTACK

Nine killed in attack at a courthouse in Iran province

TEHRAN: Nine people were killed on Saturday when unknown assailants launched a gun and grenade attack at a courthouse in southeastern Iran, local media reported.

The assault happened in the province of Sistan-Baluchistan, near the borders with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The province frequently sees clashes between security forces and armed groups which has demanded greater rights and autonomy for Iran's ethnic Baloch.



What do we know about the attack?

State news agency IRNA reported that the attack targeted a courthouse in Zahedan, the capital of southeastern Sistan-Baluchistan province.

Zahedan lies some 1,130 kilometres (700 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran.

The province's deputy police commander, Alireza Daliri, said the attackers attempted to enter the building disguised as visitors.

The assailants threw a grenade into the building, Daliri said, killing several people inside.

The dead included at least six civilians — including a mother and child — and three assailants, IRNA reported. More than a dozen others

were injured.

Citing eyewitnesses, the Baluch human rights group HAALVSH said several judiciary staff members and security personnel were killed or wounded.

IRNA said the three dead gunmen were killed in clashes with security forces following the attack.

The Iranian judiciary's Mizan Online news site labeled the killings a "terrorist attack."

Who are Iran's Baloch ethnic minority?

Sistan-Baluchistan province is home to Iran's Baloch minority, who have long complained of economic marginalisation and political exclusion.

The Baloch homeland extends into Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, where residents have expressed similar grievances of economic marginalization and where the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) militant group has carried out numerous attacks.

The semiofficial Tasnim news agency blamed the attack on the militant group Jaish al-Adl.

The group, which is composed mainly of ethnic Baloch members, is known for its violent attacks against Iranian security forces.

Jaish al-Adl, which emerged in 2012, aims to secure greater rights and independence for the Baloch people in Iran. -DW

PROTEST

Tunisians call for the fall of Kais Saied's regime

TUNIS: Hundreds of Tunisians marched through the capital on Friday to denounce President Kais Saied's increasingly authoritarian rule, as they chanted "The people want the fall of the regime."

Marking four years since his controversial power grab, the protesters criticised the "authoritarian regime" for turning the country into an "open-air prison."

The demonstrators said Tunisia has slid into authoritarian rule under Saied, marked by mass arrests and politically driven trials aimed at crushing dissent.

Rallying under the banner "The Republic is a large prison," the protesters, led by women, chanted slogans demanding the release of jailed opposition leaders, journalists and activists.



Why are people protesting the president?

Four years ago, on July 25, 2021, Saied dissolved the parliament, removed the prime minister and began ruling by decree.

Critics branded the move as a coup.

Since then, Saied has dissolved key judicial bodies, dismissed judges and overseen the jailing of numerous opponents.

Most of Saied's prominent political opponents, including Rached Ghannouchi and Abir Moussi, are all behind bars.

"Tunisia has become an open-air prison," said Saib Souab, whose father, lawyer and Saied critic Ahmed Souab, is behind bars. Even those not imprisoned live in fear of arrest, Souab said.

A 2024 report by rights group Amnesty International said that Tunisian authorities are using vague legal charges to arrest of critics of the government.

Monia Ibrahim, wife of jailed politician Abdelhamid Jelassi, told Reuters news agency that the aim of Friday's protest was to restore democracy and free political detainees.

July 25, once celebrated as Republic Day in Tunisia, has come to be associated with Saied's anti-political class "July 25 Movement."

Samir Dilou, a former government minister said the day's meaning has changed to mark the "dismantling" of Tunisia.

"Absolute power is absolute corruption," Dilou said. -DW

LONG JOURNEY

Afghan migrants return from Iran amid hardship

HERAT: With public assistance ramping up, the free transportation of Afghans deported from Iran to their home provinces has accelerated, easing the burden of return for many, Tolo News reported. Several returnee migrants said the aid helped them forget the hardships of exile and the exhaustion of the long journey.

Mohammad, a deported migrant from Iran, said: "I am happy that we are being transported for free and I am satisfied with our government and people who helped us. Now we can travel freely to our provinces."

Noorullah Nawrozi, another deported migrant, said: "It hasn't even been a day since we returned to the country and we are already on a bus heading to Kabul. With such a crowd, I didn't think we'd be able to leave the camp so soon."

Many deported Afghans said they were left without any money, alleging that Iranian police and drivers confiscated their belongings before deportation.



Ali Ahmad, a deported migrant, added: "We ask the Islamic Emirate to negotiate with Iran to lower bus fares. In Iranian camps, money is forcibly taken from Afghans."

Tolo News quoted Abdul Saboor, another deportee, as saying: "Living in Iran was not possible. Renting a house, going to the hospital for childbirth or treatment was very difficult. Because we are Afghans, medical costs were very high, and sometimes we weren't treated at all."

Others recounted harassment

by landlords and authorities in Iran, claiming they were stripped of legal protection and denied refunds of advance rent.

Shoaib, a deportee from Iran, said: "They took me to a real estate office, tore up my contract documents and said, 'You're done.' The police were there and said the landlord had the right to do that since I had betrayed their country. I told them betrayal means killing someone or destroying a city, but I came to work and served this country." -ANI



Royal Oman Police

ANNOUNCEMENT

PUBLIC ONLINE AUCTION TO SELL USED ROP VEHICLES

The Royal Oman Police - Directorate of Public Relations and Security Information – announces a public online auction through the ROP Auctions Platform to sell used ROP vehicles via the website (www.rop.mzadcom.om), starting from Sunday, **03 August 2025** for one day.

The vehicles displayed for sale may be inspected during the period **from 29 to 31 July 2025 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm** at the Vehicle Detention Yard at the Directorate General of Transport at the Airport Heights.

Bidders must abide by the following terms and conditions:

- To register on the website www.rop.mzadcom.om
- To pay an insurance amount of RO 500/- (five hundred Omani Riyals) via the website, which is non-refundable in case of failure to pay the value of the purchased vehicle or carry out the procedures for its registration and transfer within the specified period.
- To pay the auctioneer fees at 2% of the value of the vehicle plus 5% VAT.
- To pay the value of the vehicle by electronic transfer within 24 working hours.
- To register and transfer the vehicle within 3 days after paying its value to avoid a fine of RO 5/- (five Omani Riyals) for each day of delay after the end of the specified period, without the Royal Oman Police bearing any responsibility in the event of its loss or damage.
- The Royal Oman Police and the Auction Website shall not bear any responsibility if the image or description of any vehicle displayed does not match the reality and do not guarantee its validity or technical integrity.
- For more details, please visit the website (www.rop.mzadcom.om) or call 98886154.

SPORTS

India-Pakistan to meet in Asia Cup on September 14



DUBAI: The Men's Asia Cup 2025 will be held in the United Arab Emirates from September 9 to 28, ACC President and PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi confirmed, according to ESPNcricinfo.

The tournament will follow the T20I format and feature eight teams — the five full members of the Asian Cricket Council (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka), along with the UAE, Oman, and Hong Kong.

The tournament opener is placed between Afghanistan and Hong Kong on September 9. India will kick off their campaign against UAE on September 10, while the high-voltage game against Pakistan is scheduled for the 14th.

India will play their final group stage fixture against Oman on September 19. After the group stage, the tournament will proceed to the Super 4, where the top two teams from each group will qualify. The final is scheduled on September 28.

India, Pakistan, UAE and Oman are in Group A, while Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Hong Kong are in Group B.

Although India is the formal tournament host, a neutral venue will be provided for the opposing team for a three-year period for competitions held in India or Pakistan, according to an agreement between the BCCI

and the PCB.

The agreement came about ahead of the Champions Trophy held in Pakistan earlier this year. During that tournament, India played all its matches, including the one against host Pakistan, in Dubai. India went on to win the final, which was also held in Dubai.

India is the defending champion of the Asia Cup. In 2023, India refused to travel to Pakistan for the Asia Cup, and Sri Lanka was picked as the neutral venue for India's fixtures.

In May, various reports and speculations stormed social media, suggesting that India had declined to participate in this year's Asia Cup and the Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup due to cross-border tensions between India and Pakistan.

The reports claimed that the BCCI had informed the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) of its decision to withdraw from both events — the Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup, scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka next month, and the Men's Asia Cup, slated for September.

BCCI Secretary Devajit Saini categorically denied the claims, stating that the BCCI hasn't engaged in such conversations or taken any steps regarding the ACC events. The BCCI secretary labelled the reports as "speculative and imaginary." **-ANI**

Babar, Rizwan, Afridi return to Pakistan squad

Following their T20I series defeat against Bangladesh, Pakistan have strengthened their bowling line-up with the return of experienced pacers



Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Hasan Ali, Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Mohammad Haris (wicket-keeper), Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Sufyan Moqim

West Indies v Pakistan schedule:

T20I Series (Lauderhill, USA):

First T20I - July 31, Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium, Lauderhill, USA

Second T20I - Aug 2, Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium, Lauderhill, USA

Third T20I - Aug 3, Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium, Lauderhill, USA

ODI Series (Trinidad & Tobago):

First ODI - Aug 8, Brian Lara Cricket Academy, Trinidad & Tobago

Second ODI - Aug 10, Brian Lara Cricket Academy, Trinidad & Tobago

Third ODI - Aug 12, Brian Lara Cricket Academy, Trinidad & Tobago. The West Indies are currently contesting a five-match T20I series against Australia, where they are trailing 0-2. **-ANI**

pressed in the final T20I match against Bangladesh, retains his spot while Salman Mirza misses out.

Meanwhile, for the ODI series that begins on 8 August, Pakistan has gone with a fully experienced squad, with Hasan Nawaz being the only uncapped player.

Mohammad Rizwan will be leading Pakistan in the three-match ODI contest that will be played at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad & Tobago. The T20Is will be played at the Central Broward Park & Broward County Sta-

dium in Lauderhill, USA, with Salman Ali Agha continuing to lead the side.

PAKISTAN T20I SQUAD:

Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Haris (wicket-keeper), Mohammad Nawaz, Sahibzada Farhan (wicket-keeper), Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Sufyan Moqim

PAKISTAN ODI SQUAD:

THE THREE LIONS

England dominate India; terrible second innings start for visitors

MANCHESTER: A stellar batting performance from England skipper Ben Stokes helped The Three Lions to finish their first innings on 669, leading by 311 runs against India in the fourth test at Manchester on Saturday.

This is England's second-highest total against India, only behind 710/7d at Edgbaston, 2011. India had a poor start to their second innings, losing Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sai Sudharsan in the first over for zero runs each. India were 1/2 at Lunch with KL Rahul 1* and Shubman Gill 0* unbeaten on the crease.

England started Day 4 on day at 544/7, leading by 186 runs with Ben Stokes (77) and Liam Dawson

(21*) unbeaten on the crease. Jasprit Bumrah gave an early blow to the hosts as he removed Dawson 26 in the 140th over and Brydon Carse, joined England skipper on the crease.

In the 146th over, Stokes smashed a four to bring up his 14th Test century. He bagged a five-wicket haul while bowling in the first innings, after a long wait of eight years, and now he brings up a Test century in the same match. A ton in the longest format, almost three years after.

He also became the fifth captain to have a 100 and a 5-fer in the same Test. England went past 600 runs in the 148th over after Carse slammed a four off Siraj. Stokes

also completed 7000 runs in the longest format.

After smashing Indian bowlers all over the park Stokes was removed by Ravindra Jadeja for 141 in the 156th over; in his following over Jadeja removed Carse before he slammed 47 runs off 54 balls. England finished their first innings on 669, leading by 311 runs.

Four Indian bowlers conceded 100-plus in this innings, the 25th such instance for them in Tests. This had previously occurred more than a decade ago, on the 2014/15 tour of Australia, in three consecutive Tests: Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney, respectively.

For just the seventh time in Test cricket history, a team has

achieved a 300-plus first innings lead after conceding 350-plus while bowling first. Their previous highest lead after conceding 350-plus in the first innings of the Test was 267 against Pakistan in Multan last year (823/7d in response to 556).

After England elected to bowl first and reduced India to 358 runs in the first innings, they replied with 544/7 at the end of day three, thanks to brilliant fifties from Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope and Ben Stokes and a historic century from Joe Root, which helped him leapfrog above Australian icon Ricky Ponting to become the second-highest Test run-getter of all time. **-ANI**

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KHEDMAH'S NEW SERVICE
Khedmah has launched an international mobile recharge service in collaboration with Prepay Nation, now available through the Khedmah app under the E-Store section. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



OQEP SHAREHOLDER VALUE
Oman's leading exploration and production company, OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP or "the Company") announced a share buy back programme following approval by the Financial Services Authority of Oman.



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MSX-listed banks profits rise to OMR275.9mn in 2025 first half

This growth reflects the increased pace of economic activity, the growth of the business sector, and increased demand for loans and Islamic financing, coupled with a rise in deposits



MUSCAT: The net profits of local banks listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) for the first half of this year grew by 7.6 percent to reach OMR275.9 million compared to OMR256.3 million during the same period last year.

This growth reflects the increased pace of economic activity, the growth of the business sector, and increased demand for loans and Islamic financing, coupled with a rise in deposits. Banks are also taking numerous steps to mitigate risks, reduce default rates, diversify revenue sources, and increase operational efficiency.

During the first half of this year, banks financed various economic sectors, numerous private sector and development projects, and provided financing to individuals. Total credit provided by banks reached

OMR26.2 billion by the end of March compared to OMR25.5 billion in December 2024.

In the first half of this year, banks recorded gains in their market value estimated at OMR438.3 million, rising to OMR4.70 billion by the end of last June, compared to OMR4.27 billion in December 2024.

Bank Muscat leads the banking sector in terms of market capitalisation, with over OMR2.64 billion. Bank Sohar International comes in second with OMR933 million. National Bank of Oman (NBO) was in third place with OMR487.7 million, Bank Dhofar in fourth place with OMR392.1 million, Ahli Bank in fifth place with OMR364.1 million, Oman Arab Bank in sixth place with OMR243.7 million and Bank Nizwa in seventh place with OMR223.6 million. - **ONA**

Muscat Stock Exchange index breaks the 4,700-point barrier

MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange's main index posted new gains during the week, breaking the 4,700-point barrier and continuing a five-week winning streak.

The index managed to rise during last week's trading to 4,777 points, recording its best level since early November. However, it pared its gains at the end of the week, closing at 4,718 points, up 64 points over the week. Sectoral indices performed positively, led by the industrial sector index, which rose 116 points, the services sector index rose 78 points, the financial sector index rose 27 points, and the Sharia index rose by approximately 8 points.

This rise comes amid rising institutional investment in the Muscat Stock Exchange and investor optimism regarding further improvement in financial results, following the announcement of financial results for the first half of the year by public joint-stock companies in recent days.

During the week, the Muscat Stock Exchange achieved gains in its market capitalisation estimated at OMR178.2 million, rising to OMR28.82 billion by the end of Thursday's trading.

Total trading value rose by 64 percent during the week, reaching OMR135.1 million, compared to OMR 82.3 million



the previous week. Transactions executed increased by 26.5 percent, from 10,593 to 13,400.

OQ Basic Industries attracted investors, with trading valued at OMR36.5 million, representing 27 percent of the total trading value. Bank Muscat came in second with OMR22.2 million, Oman Flour Mills came in third with OMR18.7 million, OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) came in fourth with OMR16.5 million, and Bank Sohar International came in fifth with OMR12.7 million, representing 9.4 percent of the total trading value.

During the week, 47 securities rose, 28 declined, and 12 remained unchanged. Dhofar Power Generation Company recorded the highest gains,

purchase process will begin on August 9 and end on February 9, 2026, or until the purchase of the targeted shares is completed. Upon the announcement of this decision, the stock witnessed a decline of 16 baisas, from 348 baisas to 332 baisas. The stock had witnessed a wave of increases since the company's extraordinary general assembly approved, on June 24, amending the articles of association to add a new article related to the company's share purchase.

During the week, subscription to the pre-emptive rights shares offered by Ahli Bank to its shareholders began, running from July 24 to 28. The offering is valued at OMR50 million. The bank stated that the allocation of shares will take place on July 30. The offering of these shares to exercise the pre-emptive rights is part of the bank's steps to increase its capital. The offering price is 142 baisas, and the share price closed at the end of last week's trading at 150 baisas, down two baisas from its previous close. Four deals were executed, worth OMR10,600, while 51 deals were executed for the pre-emptive rights, through which 91 million rights were traded, worth OMR96,000, and trading prices ranged between one and two baisas. - **ONA**

BROAD MONEY SUPPLY



Money supply in Oman rises by 6.9% to OMR25.4 billion

MUSCAT: Broad money supply (M2) in the Sultanate of Oman grew by 6.9 percent year-on-year (YoY) to reach OMR25.4 billion by the end of May 2025.

This increase was due to a 13.9 percent increase in narrow money and a 4.4 percent increase in quasi-money, which consists of savings and time deposits in Omani rials, plus certificates of deposit issued by banks, in addition to margin accounts and all foreign currency deposits in the banking sector.

During the same period, cash held by the public decreased by 5.1 percent, while demand deposits increased by 18.6 percent.

Regarding the interest rate structure of conventional com-

mercial banks, the weighted average interest rate on Omani rial deposits increased from 2.627 percent in May 2024 to 2.708 percent in May 2025, while the weighted average interest rate on Omani rial loans decreased from 5.621 percent to 5.551 percent during the same period.

The average interest rate in the overnight interbank lending market decreased to 4.394 percent in May 2025, compared to 5.501 percent in May 2024.

This resulted from a decline in the weighted average interest rate on repo operations, which reached 5 percent compared to 6 percent during the same period last year, in line with the policies of the US Federal Reserve. - **ONA**

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AT DUQM

Sezad attracted tourism investments worth OMR853 million in 2024

Times News Service

MUSCAT: By the end of last year, the total committed investment in the tourism sector in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) exceeded OMR853 million.

The list of tourism investments in Duqm includes 21 hotels, 10 hotel apartment buildings, and a multi-purpose tourism project featuring hotels, villas and serviced apartments.

These figures reflect growing demand for tourism services in the region and the rising number of tourists and visitors. They also highlight the active business environment and the incentives and facilitation measures provided by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) and the management of Sezad.

According to statistics from the Sezad administration, a total of 16 tourism projects had been completed by the end of last year, 11 projects were under construction, and 5 projects had yet to begin construction.

Eng. Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, CEO of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, stated that the zone enjoys growing tourism interest due to its strategic location on the Arabian Sea overlooking the Indian Ocean, its moderate year-round climate, and the availability of supporting facilities such as restaurants, cafés, various retail options, and sports and health amenities. The area also boasts numerous tour-



ist attractions including diverse beaches, the Rock Garden, Duqm Beach Park, and the public park in Sai Business District, which is one of the newest landmarks in Sezad. Duqm also offers access to other nearby attractions such as BarAl Hikman and the Arabian Oryx Nature Reserve.

He added that the Sezad administration, in collaboration with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, continuously organises sports, economic, and tourism events to showcase the investment and tourism potential of the zone and to encourage investment in the tourism sector, which is considered one of Sezad's key investment pillars.

The CEO affirmed that Sezad's strategy for the 2025-2030 pe-



riod, launched in the first quarter of this year, includes several core pillars related to tourism development. Chief among them are the promotion of a balanced lifestyle and efforts to attract tourists and strategic partners. The first pillar aims to enhance Duqm's appeal as a preferred lifestyle destination through an urban, commercial, and social development plan that positions Duqm as an attractive place for visitors, residents, and investors. The second pillar focuses on stimulating investment and positioning Duqm as a unique tourist destination through a broad range of visitor experiences supported by a growing mix of attractions.

He noted that the "MarAlaina" tourism campaign, which recently launched in Sezad, is one of the

region's most prominent tourism events aimed at promoting Duqm's tourism potential. The campaign has achieved significant results in recent years, attracting tourists heading to or coming from Dhofar Governorate. He expressed hope that this year will see even greater growth, especially with the many events planned under the campaign that cater to the expectations of the zone's visitors.

Duqm's open-sea coastline gives it a strong tourism edge, with several beaches located across central Duqm, Nafun, and RasMadrakah. The Sezad administration continues to encourage private sector players and entrepreneurs to capitalise on the area's natural assets by developing diverse tourism projects.

MARKET

OQEP enhances shareholder value with share buy back programme

The programme is intended to further enhance OQEP's ability to deliver value to its shareholders, in addition to its current base annual dividend of \$600 million and half-yearly performance linked dividend

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's leading exploration and production company, OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP or "the Company") (SYMBOL: OQEP.OM) announced a share buy back programme ("the Programme") following approval by the Financial Services Authority of Oman ("FSA").

The programme is intended to further enhance OQEP's ability to deliver value to its shareholders, in addition to its current base an-

nual dividend of \$600 million and half-yearly performance linked dividend.

The programme will be initiated 15 days after this announcement, in accordance with FSA and Muscat Stock Exchange regulations, and will be conducted pursuant to the Company's Extraordinary General Meeting held on 24 June 2025, which amended its Articles of Association to enable the Company to repurchase its shares.

Following commencement, the programme will be maintained



for a period of up to six months or until the target range for share repurchases is achieved. The target range for repurchase is 45 million to 60 million Ordinary Shares.

Ahmed Al Azkawi, CEO of OQEP, said, "The share buy back program reflects our confidence in OQEP's strong fundamentals and long-term growth prospects.



Our shareholders will now benefit from a return of capital programme which includes a base dividend of OMR 231 million

(US\$ 600 million), a Performance Linked Dividend and share buy back programme. OQEP continues to focus on growth, operational

excellence, portfolio optimization, generating robust and predictable cash flow, and ensuring long-term value for its shareholders."

IEA

Global coal demand to remain on plateau in 2025, 2026

PARIS: Global coal demand is likely to remain broadly unchanged this year and next, despite short-term fluctuations across several major markets in the first half of 2025, according to the IEA's latest update on the sector released.

The Coal Mid-Year Update shows that global coal demand increased to a new all-time high in 2024 of around 8.8 billion tonnes, up 1.5% from 2023, as rising consumption in China, India, Indonesia and other emerging economies more than offset declines in advanced economies in Europe, North America and northeast Asia.

However, several of those trends reversed in the first half of 2025 as demand declined in China and India due to weaker growth in electricity consumption and strong increases in power generation from renewable sources. By contrast, coal use grew by around 10% in the United States as robust growth in electricity demand combined with higher natural gas prices drove up coal consumption for power generation. In the European Union, coal demand was broadly flat, with lower consumption by industry offsetting higher demand from electricity generation.

Despite these short-term variations, the report notes that the underlying structural drivers of the world's coal use remain broadly unchanged. As a result, it forecasts a slight increase in global coal demand in 2025, followed by a marginal decline in 2026, bringing demand to just below 2024 levels. This remains consistent with the forecast published in December in Coal 2024, the IEA's annual coal market report, with the main changes of note since then including downward revisions for global economic growth and the important energy policy shift in favour of

coal in the United States.

Over the whole of 2025, coal demand in China is expected to decline slightly, by less than 1%. In the United States, demand is forecast to grow by around 7%, and in the European Union, it is set to decrease by nearly 2%.

Contrasting trends

"While we have seen contrasting trends in different regions in the first half of 2025, these do not alter the underlying trajectory of global coal demand," said IEA Director of Energy Markets and Security Keisuke Sadamori. "We expect

the world's coal consumption to remain broadly flat this year and next, in line with our previous forecast, although short-term fluctuations remain possible in different regions due to weather conditions and the high degree of economic and geopolitical uncertainty. As in past years, global coal trends continue to be shaped overwhelmingly by China, which consumes almost 30% more coal than the rest of the world combined."

The power sector remains the dominant source of coal demand in China and globally. But industrial use of coal in China, particularly

in steel and chemicals, is also large enough to influence global trends.

Global coal production is expected to rise to a new record in 2025, driven by continued output growth in China and India, which rely on coal for ensuring their energy security priorities. However, the report anticipates a decline in global coal production in 2026, as high stock levels and lower prices begin to weigh on supply.

Coal trade volumes, which rose steadily in recent years, are projected to contract in 2025 for the first time since the 2020 Covid-related downturn. -WAM

ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY

Khedmah partners with Prepay Nation to introduce international mobile recharge across 16 countries via its app



MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance customer experience and expand its digital offerings, Khedmah has launched an international mobile recharge service in collaboration with Prepay Nation, now available through the Khedmah app under the E-Store section.

This new feature aims to meet the needs of a large segment of residents and expatriates in Oman who wish to stay connected with their families and friends in their home countries.

The new service allows users to recharge mobile phone balances across 16 countries, in collaboration with over 43 international telecom operators. The currently supported countries include Afghanistan, Australia, Benin, Botswana, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, and Zimbabwe.

In this context, Zaaima Al Qasimi, Senior Manager - Business Development at Khedmah, said: "Through this service, we aim to facilitate communication between individuals and their fami-

This new feature aims to meet the needs of a large segment of residents and expatriates in Oman who wish to stay connected with their families and friends in their home countries

lies around the world by offering a secure and fast digital experience. The launch of this service is part of our broader strategy to expand our digital offerings and meet the aspirations of customers both within and beyond the Sultanate." This service offers several key advantages, including ease of use, the ability to top up mobile recharge anytime and anywhere, and direct technical support through official communication channels—providing users with a seamless and reliable experience.

Khedmah confirmed that this addition marks a significant milestone in its digital transformation journey and reflects its continued commitment to delivering smart solutions that simplify daily life and address users' evolving needs. The company also noted that the service will be officially available once necessary permissions are secured, with future plans to expand the list of supported countries and telecom operators.

Khedmah invites all users to download the app, explore its various features, and share their suggestions to support the development of more high-quality services.

It is worth noting that Khedmah has been a leader in billing and collection services. The company provides a central hub for customers to pay various bills, including electricity, water, communications, traffic fines, vehicle insurance, entertainment channel subscriptions, charity donations, and many other services. These services are available through the company's widespread branch network, covering most regions in Oman, as well as its electronic platforms, including the Khedmah app and website.

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Indian male, 10 yrs experienced, Currently in Oman looking for a job in pay roll, accounts, indoor sales and any administrative job. Contact: 99632298. Email: irfanm2804@gmail.com

Indian female accountant. MBA Finance. 9+yrsr experience in and out Oman. Contact: 95756987

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RUSSIAN SCIENTISTS DEVELOP BIO-INSPIRED RESCUE ROBOTS

The innovative technology features a shadow-mode robotic arm controlled through a sensor-equipped glove, where the robot learns and replicates the user's finger movements in real time

Scientists from Russia's Southern Federal University have developed a robotic system based on neuromorphic technologies capable of simulating human sensory organs for potential use in rescue operations. The innovative technology features a shadow-mode robotic arm controlled through a sensor-equipped glove, where the robot learns and replicates the user's finger movements in real time.

Vladimir Smirnov, head of the university's Radioelectronics and Nanoelectronics Engineering Department, confirmed these robots could be deployed in rescue missions, with other university innovations applicable to prosthetic limbs. He explained that neuromorphic structures essentially function as precise electronic circuits performing neural network operations that could potentially replace human involvement.

The system incorporates tactile memory and pain receptors that enable surface characterisation - detecting hardness, temperature, and texture upon contact. While humans might not consciously process such data daily, these represent machine learning functions performed by neural networks through neurotransmitter pathways in subsurface skin layers.

The university's Neuroman Laboratory is developing localised solutions for fully automated robotic assistants capable of autonomous post-training operation without human intervention. These advancements position Russia to compete in global markets for intelligent robotics, marking significant progress in biologically-inspired artificial intelligence (AI) applications for emergency response systems.

Smirnov noted the technology's potential extends beyond rescue operations into industrial and medical fields where human-like sensory perception proves valuable. The university plans further testing to enhance the system's environmental adaptability and response accuracy under various operational conditions. - **ONA**



SPORTS

Hope’s efforts in vain as Tim David scores record-shattering century

West Indies had muscled their way to a daunting 214/4 after being put to bat against their will

BASSETTERRE: Tim David produced a spectacle with his brute force to blaze his way to the fastest T20I century for Australia and propel his side to a 3-0 unassailable lead in the five-match series at Warner Park.

Cricket lovers in Australia and T20I fanatics switched on their screens in the morning to witness how their side was faring against the Caribbean powerhouse. West Indies had muscled their way to a daunting 214/4 after being put to bat against their will.

In reply, Australia were threadbare at 87/4 after 8.4 overs, slowly allowing the idea of living to fight another day to sink in their minds. But David embraced the role of finisher and left the Men in Maroon gobsmacked with his sheer power-hitting. David’s destructive potential was on display when he orchestrated a six-hitting lesson in the two monstrous overs.

In three consecutive overs bowled by ball tweakers, Gudakesh Motie, Akeal Hosein and Roston Chase, David flaunted his six-hitting nerve and blasted nine. With-



in the blink of an eye, the 29-year-old brought up his half-century in just 16 balls, the fastest for the Baggy Greens, going past Travis Head and Marcus Stoinis’ record of 17.

He went on firing all cylinders and celebrated his maiden and the fastest T20I ton for Australia, achieving the feat in a mere 37 deliveries. David bettered Josh Inglis’ 43-ball effort against Scotland in Edinburgh last September. Estonia’s Sahil Chauhan is at the top

of the overall summit, hammering a ton in 27 deliveries against Cyprus last year.

David wasn’t the only centurion of the run-scoring fest in Basseterre. In the first innings, West Indies captain Shai Hope notched his maiden T20I hundred in 55 deliveries. He became just the second batter after legendary Chris Gayle to score a T20I hundred for the West Indies.

However, his efforts went in vain

courtesy of David’s masterclass. He raised a 128-run stand for the fourth wicket with Mitchell Owen, who played a belligerent, unbeaten cameo of 36(18). He landed the decisive blow, and David’s relentless onslaught ended with 102* from 37 balls, laced with six fours and 11 towering maximums. His record-shattering efforts allowed Australia to gun down the target in 16.1 overs and savour success with a six-wicket victory. -ANI

Australia go past India to achieve rare feat in T20Is



BASSETTERRE: Australia breezed past India and South Africa and etched its name in the history books for toppling the record for most successful chases of 200-plus targets in T20Is following a run fest in the third fixture against the West Indies.

Tim David brought thunder down the ground with his record-shattering century to help Australia gun down the daunting 215-run target. This was the sixth time that Australia completed a successful chase of a 200-run target or more in the format.

The Baggy Greens transcended India and South Africa, who have pulled off

the unprecedented feat on five occasions each. West Indies, on the other hand, have fallen flat while trying to defend a 200-plus target on six occasions, the most by any team. The Caribbean side surpassed South Africa’s tally of five at Warner Park.

In the milestone-breaking contest, David delivered a power-hitting spectacle to smash the record of fastest fifty and hundred for Australia in T20Is. Within the blink of an eye, the 29-year-old brought up his half-century in just 16 balls, the quickest for the Baggy Greens, going past Travis Head and Marcus Stoinis’ record of 17. -ANI

DOUBLE-CENTURY

SA batter Jorich Van Schalkwyk scripts history



HARARE : Jorich Van Schalkwyk, the 18-year-old opener for South Africa Under-19, has made history by being the first batter to slam a double-century in men’s Youth ODIs.

In the tri-series opener in Harare on Friday, Van Schalkwyk hit 215 runs off 153 balls against Zimbabwe’s Under-19 team.

In his 153-ball innings, Van Schalkwyk struck 19 fours and six sixes to help South Africa score 385 in the first innings. On his way there, he surpassed Hasitha Boyagoda’s 2018 record of 191 runs for Sri Lanka’s Under-19 team. Zimbabwe Under-19 responded to the total by collapsing for 107.

Before him, the highest score

by any batter in youth ODIs was 191 by Hasitha Boyagoda of Sri Lanka against Kenya in 2018.

In his last outing, Van Schalkwyk had broken the previous South Africa Under-19 record for highest individual score by hitting an unbeaten 164 against Bangladesh Under-19 earlier in the week.

On Friday, he spent 212 minutes and 46.2 overs at the crease during his record performance. Tatenda Chimugoro was the pick of the bowlers for Zimbabwe as he grabbed six wickets in this eight-over spell and gave away 62 runs at an economy of 7.91.

Van Schalkwyk was awarded player of the match for his brilliance with the bat. -ANI

LONGEST FORMAT

He’ll be driven to make it to No.1: Pope on Root toppling Sachin as top run-getter

MANCHESTER : England batter Ollie Pope felt Joe Root could go on to break the record of legendary Indian batter Sachin Tendulkar to become the highest run getter in Test cricket after Root surpassed former Australian skipper Ricky Ponting to become the second-highest run scorer in the longest format.

Root achieved this feat in the fourth Test at Old Trafford cricket ground on Friday. Root was removed by World No.1 all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja for a brilliant 150 in 248, consisting of 14 fours.

“I’m sure if his body allows, I’m sure he’ll have the hunger to play. I’m not sure how many games he needs, the way he’s batting. He’ll obviously be driven to make it to number one, but I think he just wants to keep playing as long as he can. The excitement he still has to play Test cricket, whenever we rock up at the start of the series, he’s always got the biggest smile on his face. So I think the hunger he has for it, I wouldn’t be surprised if he can chase him down,” Pope told the media.

He also praised Root’s 150-run innings and said it was exactly what England needed.

“Knock like today, I think exactly what the team needed. Pretty flawless, didn’t really give away any chances, and just played his game. And I think, yeah, the way he goes about his cricket, the way he trains, the amount of runs he’s scoring now is just amazing. He’s a joy to watch and see how he goes about his stuff. And yeah, obviously just keeps getting better and better,” he added.

Root continues to shine against India and surpassed Steve Smith’s record on Friday for centuries against the Men in Blue. Root has now scored 12 centuries against India.

Root now has nine Test hundreds against India at home - the most by any batter against an opponent in home Tests, surpassing former Australia legend Don Bradman’s eight against England.

Ollie Pope explained that England skipper Ben Stokes experi-



far. And obviously, we’ve still got a game to go. So I think he’s obviously pushed himself to some serious limits so far,” Pope said.

Stokes completed 11000 runs in his international career across all formats in his outing against India and remained unbeaten on 77 at the end of Day 3 of the fourth Test. England ended the day at 544/7, leading by 186 runs.

Stokes, while he completed his fifty during the final session, went off the field due to trouble in his left leg. But Stokes (77*) came back to bat and, along with Liam Dawson (21*), kept any other possible disaster at bay.

Stokes now has 11016 runs in 272 matches across all formats at an average of 35.88 with 18 hundreds and 61 fifties under his belt.

Coming to the match, England started off their day at 225/2, with Ollie Pope (20*) and Joe Root (11*) unbeaten. The duo went on to have a century partnership, building on the exploits of openers Ben Duckett (94 in 100 balls, with 13 fours) and Zak Crawley (84 in 113 balls, with 13 fours and a six). They took England to 332/2 at the end of the first session, with both batsmen having scored their fifties.

In the second session, while Washington Sundar (2/57) removed Ollie (71 in 128 balls, seven fours) and Harry Brook (3), skipper Stokes and Root thwarted any further resistance from India as Root completed his 38th Test ton and went past Ricky Ponting to become the second-highest Test run-getter. -ANI

ACROBATIC TITLE

China sweep team golds in artistic swimming at World Aquatics Championships

SINGAPORE: China won the World Aquatics Championships team acrobatic title in artistic swimming on Friday, concluding its campaign with gold medals in all three team events.

Performing a routine titled “Soul of the Terracotta Army”, the Chinese squad topped the preliminary round with 225.7993 points and carried that momentum into the final, where they scored 229.0186 points to secure the gold. The team finished ahead of Neutral Athletes B (NAB) and Spain.

It marked China’s fourth gold medal in artistic swimming, with the country sweeping all three team gold medals in this tournament.

“Although we won three gold medals in the team events, I don’t



think that means we’re absolutely dominant,” said China’s head coach Zhang Xiaohuan. “We’re still in the process of exploration. We’re also learning from our competitors. There is, in fact, a lot of confusion and anxiety throughout this journey.”

“Deep down, I have greater expectations in the new Olympic cycle and with the new lineup. I believe this Championships still marked a significant breakthrough for us - the gold medal in the women’s solo event was the first in our history, something we had never achieved before,” Zhang added.

Earlier on Friday, Spain’s Iris Tio Casas and Dennis Gonzalez Boneu scored 323.8563 to win the mixed duet free event gold medal,

followed by neutral athletes Aleksandr Maltsev and Olesia Platonova, with only 0.4125 points behind. Britain’s Isabelle Thorpe and Ranzuo Tomblin took the bronze.

“It’s the best world championships ever,” Tio Casas said. “We are happy that we can finish the season with a happy ending. Probably a lot of people in Spain will see this and we can be an example for little kids.”

The 22-year-old Spaniard completed golden hat-trick in this tournament. The high diving preliminaries also concluded, with Rhiannan Iffland and Constantin Popovici topping the women’s and men’s fields respectively. 14 men and 14 women advanced to the final round. -Xinhua

IN PICTURES



Baalbek International Festival opens in eastern Lebanon
Opera Carmen is staged during the opening of the Baalbek International Festival at the ancient Baalbek Citadel in eastern Lebanon. The festival is one of Lebanon's most renowned cultural events and features world-class performances in music, dance and opera, attracting artists and audiences from around the globe. *Xinhua*



Displaced by division: Sectarian rift drives thousands from Syria's Sweida
Umm Khaled, a displaced Bedouin woman from the city of Shahba in the countryside of Sweida, is seen at a school-turned refugee camp in Daraa province, southern Syria. *Xinhua*



View of mangroves in Indonesia
An aerial drone photo shows the mangrove forest on the coast near Tarumajaya village, in Bekasi district of West Java province, Indonesia. *Xinhua*



Exhibition showcasing works by Russian painter kicks off at National Museum in Beijing
A journalist works at the exhibition "Ilya Repin Encyclopedia of Russian Life" in the National Museum of China in Beijing, capital of China. The exhibition is showcasing 92 representative pieces by Russian realist painter Ilya Repin. *Xinhua*



National Kebaya Day commemorated in Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Women wearing traditional Kebaya are seen during a commemoration of National Kebaya Day held at Prambanan Temple complex in Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. *Xinhua*



Ajay Devgn and Mrunal Thakur during promotion of their upcoming Hindi-language film 'Son of Sardaar 2'
Bollywood actors Ajay Devgn and Mrunal Thakur pose for a picture during the promotion of their upcoming Hindi-language film 'Son of Sardaar 2', in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



Sprint Qualifying of F1 Belgian Grand Prix
Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc (left) jumps out of the car after the Sprint Qualifying of the Formula One Belgian Grand Prix at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Stavelot. *Xinhua*



Capybaras forage along riverside in Sao Paulo, Brazil
A capybara rests on the bank of the Pinheiros river in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Capybara, the world's largest rodent, grows over one metre long as an adult. Despite its size, capybara is remarkably easygoing. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat launches new edition of EAGLEs programme to empower branch managers

The “EAGLEs” programme stands for Engage, Align, Grow, Learn, Evolve, and it constitutes a key initiative that underscores the bank’s strategic endeavours to invest in its employees and support its broader mission of empowering emerging Omani talent

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, upholds commitment to developing the skills of national human resources. In line with its dedication and vision to foster sustainable professional growth and equipping employees with the leadership capabilities needed for navigating future challenges, the bank has launched a new edition of the “EAGLEs” Programme, a vital platform that empowers leading employees and aims to create a more connected, resilient, and accountable workforce.



The “EAGLEs” programme stands for Engage, Align, Grow, Learn, Evolve, and it constitutes a key initiative that underscores the bank’s strategic endeavours to invest in its employees and support its broader mission of empowering emerging Omani talent. The new edition is tailored for branch managers employed at the bank’s retail branches, corporate branches, as well as Meethaq’s branches, aiming to recognize their pivotal role in driving operational excellence, customer satisfaction, and team performance. It is worth noting that the current edition will feature a total of 181 participants from branch managers and run into two batches. To mark the occasion, Bank Muscat held an event for the first batch of the new edition that was attended by members of the executive management and branch managers across the entire branch network, including conventional,

corporate and Meethaq Islamic Banking branches. All participants will undergo training with the aim to equip them with essential business development tools, enabling them to deliver exceptional banking services and enrich the overall customer experience. **Impactful role** On this occasion, Ahmed Faqir Al Bulushi, Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Banking at Bank Muscat, delivered a keynote address applauding the vital and impactful role of branch managers in driving business development and delivering top-tier service to customers. He said: “This programme represents a significant milestone in the Bank’s journey toward cultivating a culture of excellence, innovation, and continuous growth. It also serves as an effective platform for learning and skill-building among Omani banking professionals, enabling them to better

serve customers and contribute meaningfully to the Bank’s long-term success. The “EAGLEs” Programme is part of the Bank’s ongoing efforts to align with customer expectations and meet their banking needs, in line with its vision “To serve you better everyday.” We would like to deliver our best wishes to all branch managers who are a cornerstone of the Bank’s operational structure, representing the face of the institution and playing a central role in implementing strategic objectives.” Ahmed Al Bulushi further reiterated: “Effective leadership is essential to realizing the Bank’s strategic goals. The programme provides an ideal forum for branch managers to exchange ideas, refine leadership competencies, and strengthen teamwork. Bank Muscat, remains dedicated to investing in its employees’ capabilities, encouraging open communication between branch leadership and

senior management, and fostering a collaborative, innovative, and success-driven work culture rooted in the Bank’s core values.” Bank Muscat places great importance on developing the skills of its employees through a wide range of training programmes and educational opportunities from the outset of their employment. The Bank has set a strategic plan aimed at extending its support to developing human resources and opening new pathways for young Omanis to showcase their professional potential, by performing across-department coordination for assessing staff needs and responding proactively to evolving workforce and banking sector demands. Over the years, Bank Muscat has continued to enhance its model work environment, ensuring the delivery of world-class services and facilities to both individual and corporate customers. Today,

the Bank is recognized as an employer of choice and a preferred career destination for many young Omanis. The Bank currently has over 4,000 employees across departments and branches in all governorates of the Sultanate. Employees benefit from diverse opportunities to participate in training programmes and workshops. In 2024, Jadara Academy, the Bank’s dedicated Learning and Development Center, organized over 525 training programmes and online modules that provided 46737 training seats over a total of 51354 training days. Over 164 employees participated in different programmes, including educational and training programmes as well as opportunities to pursue higher education at local colleges and universities. In addition, a number of 55 employees successfully completed their professional certifications during various programmes.

ISLAMIC BANKING

Muzn Islamic launches Sharia-compliant direct debit E-mandate

MUSCAT: NBO Muzn Islamic Banking has announced the launch of its Sharia-compliant Direct Debit E-Mandate service, to streamline recurring payments for both individuals and businesses. Available on Muzn Islamic Banking’s Corporate Internet Banking services and the Muzn Islamic Banking app, the new digital solution complements the nationwide digital transformation efforts by providing a reliable and efficient way to manage high volumes of transactions without delays. Commenting on the launch, Salima Obaid Al Marzooqi, Assistant General Manager and Chief Islamic Banking Officer at NBO, said, “At Muzn Islamic Banking, we recognise that customers seek solutions that align with their values, not just digital services. The Direct Debit E-Mandate reflects our commitment to build a future-ready, Sharia-compliant banking ecosystem that meets the evolving needs of both individuals and businesses. It also offers operational efficiency, transparency and trust within a secure, user-centric platform.” The Direct Debit E-Mandate enables customers to schedule



automated payments directly from their bank accounts, reducing manual processing and administrative costs. This fully digital service helps to ensure cash flow stability, avoid payment delays and have greater control over financial commitments. It also allows customers to create, approve, modify or cancel payment mandates while receiving real-time notifications for all mandate activity and payment transactions, ensuring full transparency and oversight. Supporting various payment frequencies (daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly), this solution is ideal for managing a wide range of recurring payments, including utility bills, loan repayments, business subscriptions, and vendor payments.

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Kia Carens and Carnival: Ideal 7-8 seater MPVs for families and businesses

MUSCAT: Offering best-in-class cargo and passenger space, the Kia Carens and Kia Carnival present a bold take on utility. Designed to deliver optimal functionality for businesses, Kia’s MPV range takes a multifaceted approach, enabling smooth and convenient daily operations. The Kia Carnival delivers a fresh perspective on the next generation of vehicles that transcend this traditionally utilitarian segment. Powered by a dynamic 3.5-liter V6 engine, it delivers 268 horsepower and best-in-class 627 litres of luggage capacity—raising the bar in both utility and performance. Equipped with multi-seating configurations, including Slide-Flex 2nd-row seating and 3rd-row AC vents, the Carnival also features a Keyless Entry System, button start, Bluetooth voice recognition system, Integrated Display (4” Cluster + 12” Navigation or 12.3” Cluster + 12.3” Navigation), and a wireless smartphone charger. With best-in-class passenger and cargo room, and seamless connectivity, it ensures utility in every aspect of life. Make deliveries on time and carry out daily operations effortlessly. The Kia Carnival is a complete package—it enhances driver confidence with Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS) features—the most comprehensive



standard ADAS suite in its segment—and includes advanced features like Blind-Spot Collision Avoidance Assist, Forward Collision Avoidance Assist (FCA 2), and Lane Following Assist (LKA), maximizing safety from all angles. For businesses and families alike, the SUV-inspired design of the 7-seater Kia Carens offers exceptional utility for small and medium-sized businesses. It’s a versatile solution for a wide range of

enterprises—from corporate travel and tourism operators to small bakery and restaurant owners, taxi services, and corporate fleets by the day—or as an ideal family car for school drop-offs. It offers spacious interiors, modern connectivity features, and advanced safety systems. Designed with comfort in mind, the Carens is equipped with steering-mounted audio controls, a rear-view camera, smart key with button start, roof-mounted AC

vents, and remote engine start—making it one of the most unique MPVs in its segment. Remarkably spacious, it also includes various practical features that simplify daily tasks, such as fold-flat rear seats that offer more cargo space than one can imagine. Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the official distributor of Kia in Oman, is committed to delivering an exceptional ownership experience.

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