

OMAN
Oman Observer
DAILY



P12

KANE HITS BRACE IN 100TH CAP AS ENGLAND SINK FINLAND

P13

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR LEADS OMAN'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

P20

MASIRAH ISLAND'S CRITICAL ROLE IN THE CONSERVATION OF SEA TURTLES

Oman, IAEA sign cooperation deal

The Sultanate of Oman and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) signed in Vienna the Technical Cooperation Framework document for the period 2024-2029. The cooperation framework, the third document signed by Oman, comprises cooperation programmes in the fields of radiation safety, agriculture, food safety, human health, water resources, environment and cultural heritage. The step reflects keenness to meet the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. **PHOTO ON P2**

SUNRISE - 05:52 AM
PRAYER TIMINGS
FAJR - 04:37 AM
DHUHR - 12:08 PM
ASR - 03:35 PM
MAGHRIB - 06:19 PM
ISHA - 07:30 PM



NEW YORK

OMAN, US DISCUSS TRADE, INVESTMENTS

Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and his delegation met officials of the United States Administration and Congress, as well as representatives of US companies specialised in the sectors of energy, health, information technology and tourism. The two sides discussed ways to develop investment and trade partnerships between Oman and the United States. The Omani side showcased investment opportunities available in Oman with the objective of realising the goals of Oman Vision 2040. The two sides also looked into measures to make optimum use of the Oman-US free trade agreement.

DETAILS ON P15

BAGHDAD



IRAN PRESIDENT DEEPENS IRAQ TIES

Iran and Iraq on Wednesday signed more than a dozen agreements to deepen already strong ties as Masoud Pezeshkian visited Baghdad on his first foreign trip as a new President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The three-day trip comes amid turmoil in the Middle East sparked by the war in Gaza. Speaking at a press conference alongside Pezeshkian, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al Sudani said both governments opposed any expansion of the war in Gaza. "In light of the escalation that the region has been going through, we have spoken a lot about the importance of stability," Sudani said, blaming Israel for the regional spillover of the war. Pezeshkian announced that "14 cooperation memorandums were signed between Iran and Iraq, which is the starting point of the expansion of cooperation". "If we are together, we will avoid falling into the fire," he added.

DETAILS ON P6

Oman ranks 21st among world's top investment countries

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman has occupied the 21st place globally in the list of 2024 "best countries for investment and doing business", according to a report issued by CEOWORLD magazine headquartered in New York.

The ranking reflects Oman's consistent efforts to improve its business environment and enhance its attractiveness to foreign direct investments (FDI). The report states that Oman

garnered an economic stability score of 92.12 points, in addition to positive assessments of government policies and skilled workforce. These factors emerge as an added asset to the country's institutional framework rating of 92.34 points, which, the magazine said, affirm Oman's attractiveness to foreign investment and entrepreneurship.

This advanced rating caps up Oman's efforts to implement



Oman Vision 2040, which seeks to diversify the national economy and diminish dependence on oil revenues.

The report also highlights the role of the "Invest Oman" lounge (the leading official interface for major investments in the Sultanate of Oman) in streamlining investor experience that benefits from comprehensive business services.

It is noted that the remarkable development in infrastructure,

including free zones and special economic zones, boosted Oman's ability to attract foreign direct investment. This is further enhanced by the country's focus on digital transition and technology-driven business climate, said the magazine, noting that all those factors greatly contributed to the consolidation of Oman's position as a leading investment destination.

SEE ALSO P15

14 KILLED IN GAZA AS ISRAEL BOMBS SCHOOL

PALESTINIANS TAKE NEW SEAT AT UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

GAZA STRIP: An Israeli air strike on Wednesday hit a central Gaza school, with the territory's civil defence agency reporting 14 killed in the facility turned displacement shelter.

The vast majority of the Gaza Strip's 2.4 million people have been displaced at least once by the war, triggered by the October 7 attack on Israel, with many seeking safety in school buildings.

Israeli forces have struck several such schools in recent months, saying Palestinians were operating there.

The Al Jawni school in central Gaza's Nuseirat, already hit several times during the war, was struck again on Wednesday, civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said.

"There are 14 martyrs, including women and children, in the Israeli bombing of Al Jawni school", he said, also reporting "a number" of wounded.

The government media office said about 5,000 displaced people were sheltering at the school, which used to be run by the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA, when it was hit on Wednesday.

Al Jawni has been hit at least five



Palestinians stand in the courtyard of a school after an Israeli air strike hit the site, in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip, on Wednesday. – AFP

times in more than 11 months of war.

Palestinians took a seat among member states at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, a new right accorded to the delegation despite not being a full member of the body. Starting with the 79th General Assembly session, which began on

Tuesday, the Palestinians can submit proposals and amendments, and sit among member states.

The Palestinian envoy to the United Nations, Riyad Mansour, took his place on Tuesday afternoon at a table marked "State of Palestine" between Sri Lanka and Sudan. — **Agencies**

Harris puts Trump on defensive in combative debate

PHILADELPHIA: Democratic candidate Kamala Harris put her Republican rival Donald Trump on the defensive in a combative presidential debate on Tuesday with a stream of attacks on his fitness for office and his myriad legal woes.

A former prosecutor, Harris, 59, controlled the debate from the start, getting under her rival's skin repeatedly and prompting a visibly angry Trump, 78, to deliver a series of falsehood-filled retorts.

At one point, she goaded the former president by saying that

people often leave his campaign rallies early "out of exhaustion and boredom."

Trump, who has been frustrated by the size of Harris' own crowds, said, "My rallies, we have the biggest rallies, the most incredible rallies in the history of politics."

He then pivoted to a false claim about immigrants eating pets in Springfield, Ohio, that has circulated on social media and was amplified by Trump's vice presidential candidate, Senator J D Vance.

"They're eating the dogs!"



Members of the media use a screen to watch the presidential debate in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday. – Reuters

he said, as Harris laughed in disbelief. "The people that came in, they're eating the cats! They're eating the pets of the people that live there."

"Talk about extreme," Harris replied. Her plan had always been to goad Trump into saying things that could become viral social media clips, her advisers said beforehand.

With eight weeks to go before the election, and days until early voting starts in some states, the debate — the only one scheduled — offered a rare opportunity for both candidates to make their

case for a television audience of tens of millions of voters. The candidates clashed over immigration, foreign policy and healthcare, but the debate was light on specific policy details.

Wall Street remained on edge as the closely watched debate gave investors little clarity on key policy issues, even as betting markets swung in Harris' favour.

Instead, Harris' forceful approach succeeded in putting the focus on Trump, leaving her allies jubilant and some Republicans acknowledging Trump's struggles. **SEE P7**



GCC advisory authority discusses protection of youth from drug addiction

MUSCAT: The Advisory Authority of the GCC Supreme Council during the current session.

The meeting discussed the project of draft reports to be filed by committees entrusted with studying the security of energy in the Gulf region



(with emphasis on technical alternatives), a strategy to protect GCC youth from the risks of drug addiction and ways to safeguard the growth of emerging markets and protect them from repercussions affecting the global economy.

The meeting reviewed the topics proposed for the 28th session, which will be submitted to the GCC Supreme Council's leaders at their upcoming summit in the State of Kuwait. — ONA



OMAN, IAEA SIGN COOPERATION FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

VIENNA: The Sultanate of Oman and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) signed in Vienna the Technical Cooperation Framework document for the period 2024-2029. The document was signed by Yousef bin Ahmed al Jabri, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and Hua Liu, Deputy Director General of the IAEA Technical Cooperation.

— ONA

Shura discusses electricity sector regulation

MUSCAT: The Majlis Ash'shura Public Services and Utilities Committee on Wednesday hosted Engineer Ahmed bin Hamad al Subhi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Nama Group and the group's executive chairmen, on Wednesday.

The meeting discussed a number of topics including the management and regulation of the electricity sector, current electricity tariffs, services provided at the service halls and delays in electricity service delivery in some residential schemes. The meetings come within the framework of the committee's keenness to improve and develop the services provided by the company to citizens and residents in the Sultanate of Oman.

The CEO of Nama Electricity Distribution Company presented a visual display during which he clarified on the services provided by the company, the consumption patterns, collection mechanism, billing and payment systems applied by the company.

The CEO of Nama Electricity Supply Company also presented



a visual display that explained the company's roles, mechanism for submitting an application for electricity connection to homes and urban areas, the requisite procedures and the challenges facing the connection process.

The committee members inquired about several topic including higher electricity bills and calculation mechanism, power outages and re-connections, the company's plans to replace old wooden poles with new ones made of materials compatible with the climate, replacing ground connection paths with new ones befitting urban development and the importance of replacing manual metres with smart meters.

— ONA

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

The first legal symposium on the role of legal regulations and their Professional applications in the healthcare industry was successfully concluded by the Oman College of Health Sciences. The symposium took place on Wednesday at the main headquarters of the National Bank of Oman, under the auspices of Dr Said bin Harib al Lamki, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs.

The event, titled "The Role of Legal Legislation and Its Professional and Judicial Applications in the Health Sector", saw a significant turnout of experts from both the health and legal fields.

The primary goal of the symposium was to emphasise the significance of legal legislation in enhancing healthcare quality and safeguarding the rights of patients and healthcare professionals. Discussions revolved around the impact of current laws and strategies for their advancement to align with modern progress.

Dr Fahd al Zadjali, Dean of the Oman College of Health Sciences, inaugurated the symposium and highlighted the institution's dedication to promoting legal and practical knowledge within the health sector. He underscored the importance of the symposium

Symposium looks at legal challenges in healthcare industry



Discussions revolved around the impact of current laws and strategies for their advancement to align with modern progress. — Photo by Saleh al Sharji

as a platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences among specialists.

With 225 representatives from 45 different health professions and 58 legal experts from various institutions in attendance, the symposium received positive feedback. Abdulaziz al Shafi'i from the Oman College of Health Sciences expressed his satisfaction with the event's success, noting that it was initiated in response to the needs of students and healthcare staff during training and administrative proceedings.

The symposium featured

three main sessions addressing practical issues and legal challenges in the health sector. The first session focused on legislative and legal aspects, with presentations by Dr Qais al Sabai and Dr Nasser al Azri discussing health legislation and its implementation challenges.

The second session delved into professional ethic s and judicial principles, presented by Professor Yahya al Farsi and Dr Mohammed al Shueili, respectively.

Dr Amal al Balushi concluded the session with a presentation on ethical and legal standards for

medical errors.

In the third session, the focus shifted to challenges and aspirations in legislative and educational realms of the health sector. Dr Asma al Balushi, Dr Qamra al Siriri, and Dr Inas Mohammed Qutaishat presented working papers on the role of artificial intelligence in healthcare.

Participants stressed the importance of ongoing symposia to foster collaboration among stakeholders, share expertise, and enhance health legislation in alignment with modern advancements.



TENDER

PROVISION OF HARDWARE SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP) is responsible for procuring new capacity for power and water in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the requirements of the law for the regulation and privatization of the electricity and related water sector promulgated by Royal Decree 78/2004 as amended and the PWP license.

Tender Description	PWP seeks proposals from experienced and qualified bidders who are in partnership with at least HP, FortiGate or Cisco products and have an expertise in IT systems and networking to provide IT maintenance and support services.
Tender Number	OPWP/2024/025
Tender Purchase Period	10 September 2024 up to 23 September 2024
Tender Fee	50 OMR / Free of charges for (SME) with a valid Riyada card
Submission date	13 October 2024 at 12:00 PM Gulf Standard Time GST
Collection & Payment Methods	The tender documents are available for purchase in an electronic format through PWP website (https://www.omanpwp.om/new/Default.aspx). The payment is done electronically through PWP website. In case of any queries, please send an email to: procurement.officer@Omanpwp.nama.om .
Bank Guarantee	A Tender Bond (in the form set out in the tender documents) or a bank certified cheque of not less than 1% of the tender value, to be valid for a period of 150 days from the submission deadline date referred to above. The tender bond or certified cheque shall be enclosed as part of the bid



الهيئة العامة لشراء الطاقة والمياه | شركة ناما لشراء الطاقة والمياه | PWP | PO Box 1985, Room PC 110, Ras, Sultanate of Oman | Tel: +968 24838882 | C.A No: 6710314 | Tax Number: 984501

Gulf Theatre Festival kicks off in Riyadh, honouring pioneers

SAEED AL RAHBI
RIYADH, SEPT 11

The 14th edition of the Gulf Theatre Festival kicked off at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University in Riyadh on Tuesday. The event was held under the patronage of Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan, Minister of Culture, and attended by Sultan Al Bazie, CEO of the Theatre and Performing Arts Authority, along with representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The festival's events will continue over eight days, from September 10 to 17, in a distinguished cultural gathering hosted by Saudi Arabia. It brings together numerous theatre artists and creatives from all GCC countries.

Among those honoured were Kuwaiti artist Mohammed Jaber, Emirati artist Ahmed Al Jasmi, playwright Emad Al Shanfari, Qatari artist Saleh Al Manaai, Saudi artist Fahad Al Harthy, and Bahraini artist Ibrahim Khuloom, who chaired the festival's permanent committee throughout his tenure, was also honoured.

Jalila bint Saif al Fahdiah, Director



The 14th edition of the Gulf Theatre Festival began in Riyadh on Tuesday.

of the Theatre and Cinema Department at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, stated that Oman's participation in the Gulf Theatre Festival, held in Saudi Arabia, highlights the importance of Omani involvement alongside its GCC counterparts. She emphasised the continuous and rapid development of Gulf theatre, which addresses various issues through numerous stories and scenes.

Oman will participate in this festival with a theatrical performance titled 'Al Ru'a' by the Tawasol Theatre Group, written and directed by Taher al Harrasi. The play is scheduled to be performed on Saturday, September 14. Al Fahdiah expressed

confidence that the theatrical performances will feature intense competition and intellectual enrichment, reflecting the development of the theatrical movement in the GCC countries.

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, will present the play 'Al Ru'a.' The play revolves around the people of a village living in fear and terror caused by 'Al Ru'a,' who controls the village and its people, keeping them in constant conflict that has persisted for decades. Al Ru'a interacts with and affects each village resident differently, with each character having their own unique story. Between love and hatred, truth and fear, good and evil — who will triumph?

Wednesday witnessed the first theatrical performance, 'Bahr' from Saudi Arabia, followed by the play 'Ashofek' from the UAE on Thursday.

On Friday, Bahrain will present the play 'At the Other Bank,' while on Saturday, Oman will perform 'Al Ru'a.' On Sunday, Qatar will present 'The Tent,' and on Monday, the final performance will be 'A Crossing's Sorrow' from Kuwait. — ONA



TRAINING PROGRAMME ON SUSTAINABLE GOV'T INVESTMENTS BEGINS

SALALAH: The training programme titled 'Sustainability of Government Investments in the Governorates,' organised by the State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution, commenced on Tuesday at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah.

Spanning three days, the programme brings together specialists in project and investment management from various state administrative units. The initiative aims to align participants with strategic goals for sustainable investments,



fostering professional growth in evaluating, following up on investments, and tackling fraud and corruption in development projects.

Participants will explore national priorities for governorate development, local governance of investments, and gain insights into fraud prevention in public funds.

The programme further delves into the legal frameworks governing development projects and the mechanisms for investigating violations, ensuring transparency in handling public fund crimes. — ONA

Salalah international cycling tour ends with victories in Dhofar



SALALAH: The fourth edition of the Salalah International Cycling Tour wrapped up on Wednesday in Dhofar Governorate, as part of the Khareef Dhofar Season. Organised by Dhofar Municipality in collaboration with the Oman Cycling Federation and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the event saw participation from 90 cyclists across 15 national and international teams.

Algerian cyclist Yacine Hamza from the Madar team claimed victory in the final stage, covering 133 kilometres from Al Mughsail to Darbat Falls.

In the overall standings,

Brazilian cyclist Nicolas Cesar from the Victoria team took first place and donned the golden jersey.

Dutch cyclist Quentin Fling won the green jersey for the general classification by time, while Moroccan cyclist Ibrahim al Sabahi from the Qatar Pro team claimed the white jersey for riders under 23.

Mongolian cyclist Benjarar of the Mongolia national team was awarded the grey jersey as the fiercest competitor.

The race concluded with a ceremony led by Dr Ahmed bin Mohsin al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, who presented the awards to the winners.

Dhofar supports entrepreneurs with RO 2.6 million in loans

SALALAH: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority has provided 26 financing loans to entrepreneurs in Dhofar Governorate, amounting to over RO 2.613 million between 2022 and 2024.

According to Mohammed bin Ahmed al Ghassani, Director of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority in Dhofar Governorate, 18,027 establishments have registered with the authority as of mid-2024, with 2,139 of them receiving an entrepreneurship card. Small enterprises dominate the governorate with 16,000 registered, followed by 1,662 small and 119 medium enterprises.

The Entrepreneurship Card offers various benefits, including access to government and private incentives, training courses, financial and technical consultations, and participation in exhibitions organised by the authority.

Al Ghassani highlighted the ongoing efforts to qualify and develop entrepreneurs. In 2024 alone, 293 participants



SMEDA has provided 26 financing loans to entrepreneurs in Dhofar Governorate

joined the Entrepreneur Readiness Programme, and 74 entrepreneurs received consultations in business-related areas such as marketing, legal advice and feasibility studies.

The department continues to promote a culture of entrepreneurship, start-ups and creative financing, aiming to support the growth and sustainability of small and medium enterprises and the creative handicraft sector in Dhofar. — ONA



International film festival spotlights Dhofar as a rising cultural hub

SALALAH: The first-ever Dhofar International Film Festival was held last week at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment, under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar. The event featured a visual presentation highlighting Dhofar Governorate's unique attributes and displaying films from 18 countries in narrative and documentary categories.

The festival drew film-makers, artists and cinema enthusiasts worldwide, spotlighting Dhofar as a rising cultural hub.

The opening ceremony featured a captivating visual presentation showcasing the rich cultural and natural beauty of Dhofar Governorate, followed by highlights from the films participating in the festival. These included both narrative and documentary films from 18 different countries, each offering a unique perspective on storytelling.

Festival Director, Dr Rashid bin Abdullah al Yafei, highlighted in his speech the Oman Film Society's vision of creating a vibrant cultural and creative exchange space.

He emphasised that the festival aims not only to promote Dhofar's historical and touristic diversity, but also to foster growth in Oman's budding film industry.



The festival aims not only to promote Dhofar's touristic diversity, but also to foster growth in Oman's budding film industry

Workshops and film screenings will provide opportunities for aspiring film-makers to hone their skills in scripting, acting, directing and cinematography.

Out of nearly 200 films submitted, 41 were shortlisted for the festival's competitions.

The 22 narrative films and 19 documentaries will be judged by a jury of cinema experts, artists and specialists in film production from Oman and abroad.

Chairman of the Oman Film Society, Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi, underscored the potential of cinema as a tool for promoting tourism, noting how films can significantly enhance a country's global image. He pointed out

that one impactful film can achieve what years of marketing efforts might struggle to do in showcasing the beauty and heritage of a nation like Oman.

The festival's atmosphere was further enriched by artistic performances, and the evening concluded with the honouring of judges, film-makers and key sponsors, setting the stage for the next few days of cinematic celebration in Salalah.

The festival is set to run for several days, offering workshops, screenings and opportunities for film-makers to exchange ideas, paving the way for future collaborations and the growth of Oman's budding film industry. — ONA



MUSCAT GOVERNORATE
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (26/2024)

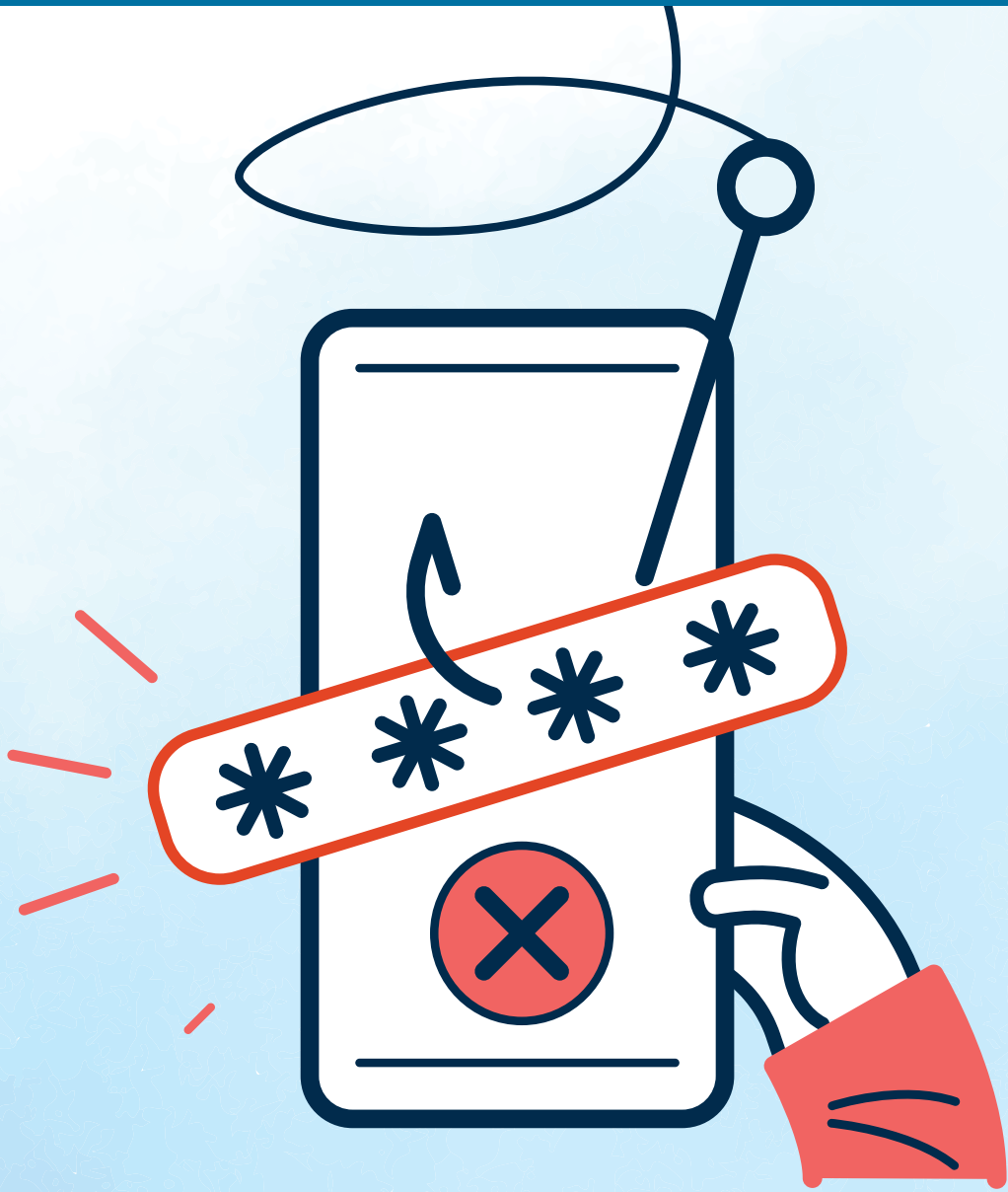
International Companies specialized in the field and registered with **Tender Board**, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date
PRE/24/129 (Re-Call)	Design and Build of Al-Mabelah Bazar (Re-Tender)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-184 (Re-Call)	Protection of Electrical Boxes belonging to Traffic Lights (Re-tender)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-161 (Re-Call)	Consultancy Services for Development Residential Area at Al-Mabelah (Near to Bab AL Salam Mosque) Lights (Re-tender)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-192 (Re-Call)	Redressing Data Center (Re-Tender)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-179 (Re-Call)	Maintenance of Landscaping and Cleaning Works at Green Walk- (Re-Tender)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-153 (Re-Call)	Maintenance of Pump Room at Qurum Waterfall (Re-Tender)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-055 (Re-Call)	Design & Construction Services for Al Saleel Park- (Re-Tender)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-124 (Re-Call)	Design & Construction of Wadi Channels, Box Culverts and Protection Works in Al Bustan, Muttrah (Re-Tender)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-252	Maintenance of Street Cable in Muscat Governorate (AL Seeb, Bowsher, AL Amerat, Muscat and Muttrah)	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-242	ITSM Solution Design, Implement, Support and Maintenance	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-215	Proposed Solutions to Resolve Storm Water Problem at Al Hail South	05/10/2024	22/10/2024
PRE-24-258	Supply of files & folders for Storing Documents in MM	05/10/2024	22/10/2024

1. Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.

2. Clarification and Support:

- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@gstb.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).



BEWARE



MOBILE DEVICE FRAUDSTERS ON THE RISE



Raising community awareness and using advanced measures like two-factor authentication can significantly reduce cyber fraud risks. However, striking a balance between convenience and security is essential

NADA AL JABRI

A financial technology expert

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

Mobile phones have become indispensable in our daily lives, but with technological advancements comes a darker side — electronic fraud, which has been increasingly targeting smartphone users.

Fraudsters employ various techniques, including deceptive messages and phone calls, impersonating representatives of companies or financial institutions. They manipulate victims into providing personal or financial details. Additionally, mobile apps that appear legitimate may be designed to steal sensitive information.

One common tactic involves sending fake links via text messages, prompting users to enter their bank details on fraudulent websites. In another scenario, fraudsters may claim to be employees from well-known companies, asking individuals to update their banking or security details. The methods used are evolving, making it harder for people to detect fraud until it's too late.

Cybersecurity expert Abdullah al Balushi says, "Phone fraud exploits users' lack of awareness about cyber threats. Many people are quick to trust official-looking calls or messages, which puts them at risk." He advises individuals to be cautious, recommending, "Never share personal or banking information over the phone unless you are certain of the caller's identity. If in doubt, it's better to contact the company or bank directly for verification."

Nada al Jabri, a financial technology expert, notes that while technological advances enhance security, they also introduce new vulnerabilities for fraudsters to exploit.

She adds, "Raising community awareness and using advanced measures like two-factor authentication can significantly reduce cyber fraud risks. However, striking a balance between convenience and security is essential."

Several victims have shared their experiences

of phone fraud. Sarah Mohammed, a government employee, recalls being tricked into providing her banking information during a call from someone posing as a bank representative. "I realised hours later that my account had been drained. It was a harsh lesson — banks never ask for sensitive information over the phone," she said.

Ahmed Khaled, a university student, was scammed via a text message link that appeared to be from a trusted social media platform. After entering his details, his account was hacked and used for illegal activities. "Technology is a double-edged sword, and awareness is our best defence," he warns.

Phone-based fraud poses a significant threat, requiring cooperation between government agencies and financial institutions to raise awareness and improve security measures. Users need to stay informed of the latest scams and take necessary precautions to protect their data.

Al Balushi further emphasises the importance of verifying the identity of any caller and refraining from sharing sensitive information online or over the phone without proper confirmation.

Public awareness campaigns through media and social platforms play a crucial role in educating users. Additionally, regular updates to apps and security systems ensure the latest protections are in place.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology is actively supporting Oman's move towards a secure, knowledge-based digital economy.

The ministry consistently reviews cybersecurity threats and advocates for government and private institutions to adopt cutting-edge software to safeguard digital infrastructure and services. By doing so, they aim to build resilient systems that serve the community without risking breaches or security threats.



‘Manual Thinking’ fosters creative mindset



The adoption of ‘Manual Thinking’ offers a transformative solution for companies seeking to elevate their team dynamics, drive productivity and achieve their strategic goals

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

New Metrics Academy has officially introduced the ‘Manual Thinking’ methodology to the Middle East, marking the first time such pioneering approach has been made available in Oman. Designed to enhance collaboration and co-creative innovation, the launch represents a significant milestone in fostering a culture of creativity and teamwork across organisations in the region.

The adoption of ‘Manual Thinking’ offers a transformative solution for companies seeking to elevate their team dynamics, drive productivity and achieve their strategic goals. In a region characterised by diversity and rapid development, organisations increasingly need effective tools that inspire collaboration and out-of-the-box thinking. The ‘Manual Thinking’

system addresses these needs by streamlining creative processes and helping teams visualise, organise, and execute their ideas with clarity and efficiency.

Anisa al Raisi, Head of New Metrics Academy and a key advocate of the methodology, highlighted the impact of the system: “Manual Thinking’ provides teams with a structured yet flexible approach to ideation and problem-solving. With tools like the ‘Manual Thinking Box’ and ‘Manual Thinking Map,’ organisations can transform their collaborative efforts into a seamless and engaging experience, unlocking new levels of innovation.”

Developed by renowned designer Luki Huber, ‘Manual Thinking’ simplifies complex processes and fosters a creative mindset in workplaces. Global institutions such as IKEA, Nestlé and the Spanish government

have adopted this methodology, a testament to its effectiveness and ability to drive tangible results. Bringing this proven approach to Oman strengthens the region’s position as a hub for innovative business practices.

Expressing his excitement about the launch, Luki Huber stated, “I am thrilled to collaborate with New Metrics Academy, a forward-thinking leader in Oman and the Middle East. I look forward to witnessing how ‘Manual Thinking’ empowers organisations to foster creativity, improve collaboration and drive meaningful change in this dynamic region.”

Sohar International Head of the Academy, Rukaya al Moosa stated, “Manual Thinking is exactly what our organisation needs to streamline our teamwork and boost our creative output. I’m excited to see its positive impact on our projects.”



UTAS Ibra welcomes 480 new students for Sept intake

SAUD AL BUSAIDI
IBRA, SEPT 11

UTAS Ibra has welcomed 480 new students for the September intake. Students from various cities across Oman took part in the welcome week. The branch organised several academic and social activities, including talks by Dr Hafedh al

Rahbi, Dr Hilal al Hajri and Shaikh Salim al Numani. Dr Hafedh al Rahbi, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for UTAS Ibra, emphasised the importance of embodying morals and Omani cultural values both on and off campus. Dr Hilal al Hajri, the head of the Preparatory Studies Centre (PSC), shed light on the new placement test launched this year

in collaboration with EnCoach. This innovative test incorporates AI technology for both creating and marking exams. Dr Hilal also highlighted key regulations regarding attendance and assessment. Shaikh Salim al Numani also discussed the values and morals that students should adhere to during their studies, sharing insights.



Sultanate of Oman

The Supreme Judicial Council

Biddings Announcement

The Supreme Judicial Council announces its desire to submit the following Biddings:

Bidding No.	Bidding Title	Bidding Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Bidding Document Fee (Non-refundable)
01/2024	Management & Operation of Cafes in: (General Secretariat of the Supreme Judicial Council in Madinat Al-Irfan, Supreme Court, Court Complexes: Muscat, Nizwa, Rustaq, Ibra, Sohar).	26/09/2024	07/10/2024	RO 25/-
02/2024	Management & Operation of a Transaction Clearance Office in Court Complexes: (Nizwa, Rustaq).	26/09/2024	07/10/2024	RO 25/-

Companies and institutions wishing to obtain bidding documents may visit the Financial Affairs Department on the first floor of the General Secretariat building of the Supreme Judicial Council in Madinat Al-Irfan during official working hours. To receive the bidding conditions brochure against the specified financial fee.

The envelopes must be kept closed and sealed with red wax, with the phrase (café rental bid and the name of the bidder) written on them, provided that the name of the bidder or anything referring to him is not written on the envelope. Bids are submitted to the Tenders and Contracts Department in the same building and on the first floor during official working hours, before the hour. 10 a.m. on Thursday, 09/05/2024

- Any bid received after the specified date or that does not meet the conditions will not be considered.



12 September 2024

AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Finance is pleased to announce the sale of movables, by online auction (www.mazadcom.om), as per the following details:

Auction	Preview Location	Preview Dates & Times	Auction Period
Used vehicles	1 (40) Vehicles at the MOF warehouse, Ghala Industrial	23-25 September 2024 8:00 am - 2:00 pm	Open: 29 September 2024 (10 am) Close: 30 September 2024 (10 pm)
	2 (1) Vehicle at the General Directorate of Finance, Dhofar		
Used Furniture and Devices	1 Ministry of Finance's warehouse, Ghala Industrial	23-25 September 2024 8:00 am - 2:00 pm	Open: 29 September 2024 (10 am) Close: 30 September 2024 (10 pm)
	2 General Directorate of Finance, Dhofar Governorate		

Interested persons/companies shall comply with the following:

- A bidder must register and sign up on the website (www.mzadcom.om).
- A bidder shall pay a security deposit of RO 1000 for vehicles, and RO 100 for Furniture and Devices (refundable in case of non-purchase).
- A bidder shall pay the total value of the movables via the website within five working days after the end of the auction.
- A 5%-VAT shall be added to the purchase value and 2%-auction fees to each movable value.
- A bidder is required to pick up the movable within five working days after paying the purchase value. In case the movable is not picked up, the Ministry shall not be responsible for any losses or damage that may occur to the movable.
- If a bidder fails to pay the purchase value or transfer the movable within the specified period, the security deposit shall be confiscated.
- The interested bidders can inspect the movables during the period starting from 23 September 2024 to 25 September 2024 at the Ministry of Finance's warehouse in Ghala Industrial from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.
- The mechanical condition of the vehicle, vehicle safety driving on the road, or the possibility of it being licensed by the Royal Oman Police will not be guaranteed in any way, as well as the Ministry is not obligated to guarantee any defects in the movables being sold, and the buyer must inspect the movables to verify their condition.

N.B:

01 The movable is sold as is.

02 The Ministry of Finance reserves the right to delay or cancel the auction without justifications.

 For more details and information, please visit (www.mazadcom.om) or telephone number: (94162650 - 77507247 - 93815156).

 To inspect the vehicles, please contact (during the working hours) Ministry of Finance: (24746112 - 24746129 – 24746131).

oman_mof

www.mof.gov.om

وزارة المالية-سلطنة عمان

ministry of finance - Oman

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR STAKEHOLDER MEETING

MSA Green Projects LLC. is implementing a Verified Carbon Standard project, “Oman Blue Carbon”

The project aims to restore and conserve the mangrove ecosystem across the coastline of Oman, leveraging their natural ability to sequester carbon. This initiative aims to enhance coastal ecosystems while contributing to climate change mitigation through the preservation of these vital carbon sinks. The project not only targets carbon sequestration but also supports biodiversity by improving coastal resilience.

The project is intended to register with the Verified Carbon Standard to claim the emission reductions. In this regard, MSA Green is pleased to invite you for stakeholder consultation to discuss and obtain your views on the project.

Programme Schedule:

Date : 14 October 2024

Time : 10 AM

Venue : Conference Hall, OWWSC (NAMA Water Services) (Behind of Directorate of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources), Mahout Al Wusta Governorate, Sultanate of Oman

We look forward to your participation in the meeting. In case you are unable to attend, please send your views, concerns and feedback to the below address:

Phone: +968-96682432, +968-96630479
Emails: punit.mathur@msa-green.com
sayed.abubakr@msa-green.com
forestry.projects23@gmail.com

Sohar University inducts over 4,000 new students

SUHAS: Sohar University organised an induction programme for new students of the 2024-2025 academic year on September 11-12 at the university campus.

Dr Hamdan bin Suleiman al Fazari, Vice-Chancellor of the University, attended the programme along with a number of academic and administrative staff, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The purpose of the induction programme is to familiarise students with the university's rules and regulations, as well as the services and facilities provided by the university that will support them throughout their academic journey.

Dr Hamdan bin Suleiman al Fazari, Vice-Chancellor of the University, welcomed the new students. Speeches from the ministry, the GFP, the Student Advisory Council, as well as speech from the Admissions and Registration Department, the Financial Department, and the Health, Safety, and Environment Section followed.

There was also Holy Quran recitals and a university movie. The event also featured a ‘Connect with SU’, an introduction to graduate attributes, and university policies. Additionally, the induction included an accompanying academic and support services exhibition, including student activities, academic support, student services, career guidance, the financial department, health and safety, the Learning Resources Centre, Information Technology Services, Admissions and Registration, and the Student Advisory Council.



Pope in Singapore; inter-faith dialogue, climate on agenda



Pope Francis is welcomed upon arrival at Changi airport in Singapore. – AFP

SINGAPORE: Pope Francis arrived in Singapore on Wednesday afternoon from East Timor, where he is expected to focus on inter-faith dialogue and reinforce the Catholic Church’s presence in a region where it is a small minority.

The pope is on the final leg of an ambitious 12-day journey across Southeast Asia and Oceania, the longest trip of his papacy. His two-night stay in the city-state, a global financial hub, will include a speech to the country’s political authorities, where the pope may also address issues such as wealth inequality and climate change.

Francis will also celebrate a Mass the Vatican expects to draw some 55,000 people, including Catholics who are travelling from Hong Kong for the event. Singapore, with a population of 5.92 million, is plurality Buddhist, with about 31 per cent

of people identifying with that faith. The Vatican counts about 210,000 Catholics in the country. There are also strong Muslim, Hindu and Taoist communities.

Inter-faith dialogue has been a central theme of Francis’ 11-year papacy, and in Singapore he will host an inter-religious meeting with young people from various faith traditions. Wealth inequality and climate change are other frequent themes.

Singapore’s government says rising sea levels due to global warming could have major implications for its low-lying coastline and it is planning to spend \$77 billion over the course of the century on the issue. While in the country, pope will also hold private meetings with President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, and former prime minister Lee Hsien Loong. — **Reuters**

Iraq PM rejects widening Gaza war

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al Sudani, speaking alongside visiting Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, said on Wednesday that both governments opposed any widening of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

“In light of the escalation that the region has been going through, we have spoken a lot about the importance of stability; this stability threatened by the Zionist aggression in Gaza,” Sudani said.

“We have stated more than once our rejection of any extension of the conflict,” he added, underlining the two governments’ “common positions” on the war.

Meanwhile, newly elected Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is aiming to deepen relations with neighbouring Iraq by signing a series of agreements in Baghdad during his first trip abroad, Iran’s official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported on Wednesday.

Government representatives of both countries would sign 15 cooperation agreements during Pezeshkian’s three-day visit, IRNA reported.

Pezeshkian is also to be the first president in the history of the Islamic republic to visit Iraq’s partially autonomous Kurdish region in the north of the country.

The Iraqi prime minister’s



Iraq’s Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al Sudani with Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian in Baghdad. – AFP

media office said the two countries had signed 14 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in different fields including trade, sports, agriculture, cultural cooperation, education, media, communications and tourism.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Wednesday that Tehran and Baghdad have various areas of cooperation “including political, regional... and security issues”, Iranian state media reported.

Pezeshkian visited a monument for Iranian Major-General Qassem Soleimani who was killed, in a US drone attack

Visiting Iranian President Pezeshkian signs series of agreements in Baghdad during his first trip abroad

in 2020 in Iraq, Iranian state media reported.

Tehran sees Iraq as an important partner economically and as a “gateway to the Arab world,” and despite sanctions, Iran remains an important supplier of gas and electricity.

While Tehran has constantly

expanded its influence in Iraq over recent years, tensions remain, in particular over the presence of US forces in Iraq. Iraq also maintains relations with the West, by contrast with the isolation imposed by the West on the leadership in Tehran. Iran’s support for Russia in its war of Ukraine has drawn further Western sanction.

According to reports, Iraqi Prime Minister Prime Minister Mohammed al Sudani and his government have negotiated on Tehran’s behalf with other Arab countries, including Egypt, which have cool relations with Tehran. — **AFP/dpa**

Hanoi flooded by swollen river as Yagi leaves 179 dead

HANOI: Vietnam’s capital of Hanoi evacuated thousands of people living near the swollen Red River as its waters rose to a 20-year high, flooding streets days after Typhoon Yagi battered the country’s north, killing at least 179 people.

Asia’s most powerful typhoon this year, Yagi brought gales and heavy rain as it moved westwards after landfall on Saturday, causing the collapse of a bridge this week while it scythed through provinces along the Red River, the area’s biggest.

“My home is now part of the river,” said Nguyen Van Hung, 56, who lives in a neighbourhood on the banks of the Red River.

Across the country, the typhoon and subsequent landslides and floods have killed 179 people while 145 were missing, the government estimated.

Vietnam’s state-run power utility EVN said on Wednesday it had cut off power from some flooded parts of the capital due to

Hanoi evacuates thousands from areas near swollen river as Vietnam utility halts water discharges from hydropower plant

safety concerns.

Mai Van Khiem, director of the National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting, said in a statement that the Red River was at its highest in two decades and that more rain was expected over the next two days.

Some schools in Hanoi have told students to stay home for the rest of the week, while thousands of residents of low-lying areas have been evacuated, the government and state media said.

Nearer the city centre, charity Blue Dragon Children’s Foundation evacuated its office on Tuesday, after authorities warned of flood risks.

“People were moving frantically, moving their



Rescue workers help stranded people from a flooded area at the border town of Mae Sai, following the impact of Typhoon Yagi, in the northern province of Chiang Rai, Thailand. – **Reuters**

motorbikes, relocating items,” said spokesperson Carlota Torres Lliro, expressing concern for dozens of children and families living in makeshift houses by the

river. EVN said on Wednesday it had stopped discharging water from Hoa Binh hydropower dam, the second largest in northern Vietnam, into Red River

tributary, the Da River, to reduce water flows.

Vietnamese authorities also raised concerns on Wednesday about Chinese hydropower plants

releasing water into another Red River tributary, the Lo River, known in China as Panlongjiang, with Beijing saying the two countries were cooperating on flood prevention.

Yagi wreaked havoc on many factories and flooded warehouses in coastal export-oriented industrial hubs east of Hanoi, forcing closures, with some only expected to resume full operations after weeks, executives said.

The disruptions threaten global supply chains as Vietnam hosts large operations of multinationals that ship mostly to the United States, Europe and other developed nations.

Elsewhere, in provinces north of the capital, landslides triggered by heavy floods killed dozens. “My house’s first floor is completely under the water,” said Nguyen Duc Tam, a 40-year-old resident of Thai Nguyen, a city about 60 km from Hanoi. “Now we have no fresh water and electricity,” he said. — **Reuters**

COLOMBO

Maldivian ministers resign ahead of Muizzu’s trip

Two junior ministers in the Maldivian government, who were suspended for disparaging Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi this year, have resigned ahead of a proposed visit by President Mohamed Muizzu to New Delhi, an official said.

Malsha Shareef and Mariyam Shiuna in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Information and Arts were disciplined along with fellow minister Abdulla Mahzoom Majid in January for comments they made on social



media platform X.

The president’s spokesperson was cited by local media as saying that Muizzu would make an official visit to India “very soon”. — **Reuters**

NAIROBI

Kenya airport strike disrupts flights

Hundreds of passengers were left stranded at Kenya’s main airport as staff went on strike over a planned takeover by an Indian company.

The walk-out by the Kenyan Aviation Workers Union began at midnight, severely disrupting flights at Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA). Long queues of passengers were outside the airport and there were lines of cars trying to access the area, reporters said.

The union said the strike



would continue until the government scrapped a plan to lease the airport to India’s Adani Group for 30 years in exchange for a \$1.85-billion investment. — **AFP**

MANILA

Hundreds flee after Philippine volcano warning

Hundreds of people fled their homes in the Philippines after a volcano spurted harmful gases, an official said, as experts warned of a potential eruption. About 300 residents of villages within four kilometres of the Kanlaon volcano crater in the centre of the country were evacuated on Tuesday as a precaution, the local government of nearby Canlaon City said.

The evacuees have taken temporary shelter at schools and community centres away from the volcano, city information of-



ficer Edna Lhou Masicampo said. “People from villages near the foot of the volcano have been complaining about the strong smell of sulphur,” Masicampo said, adding most of the residents were farmers. — **AFP**



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

THURSDAY | SEPTEMBER 12 | 2024

7

In brief

■ STOCKHOLM



SWEDEN BOOSTS JUSTICE SPENDING TO COMBAT CRIME

Sweden will increase spending on its justice system by \$335 million in its budget bill for 2025 to curb high crime rates, the justice minister said. Including earlier decided measures and other cost increases, the justice system budget will grow by 8 billion crowns or 10 per cent year-on-year to 86.7 billion crowns in 2025. Sweden has been rocked by gang violence and has the highest per-capita rate of gun violence in the EU. Justice Minister Gunnar Strömmer said that while shootings associated with organised crime so far this year were fewer than the same period in 2023, there is a risk of new spirals of violence. —Reuters

■ REIMS



NEW FRENCH PM TO FORM GOVERNMENT 'NEXT WEEK'

France will have a new government 'next week,' recently installed conservative Prime Minister Michel Barnier said, as he sounded out candidates to run ministries faced with an unpredictable hung parliament. "We're going to do things methodically and seriously," Barnier told reporters in the eastern city of Reims, adding that he was "listening to everybody" in a political scene split into three broad camps since July's inconclusive snap parliamentary election. "We're going to name a government next week," he said. Barnier was named last week by President Macron as his compromise pick for head of government. — AFP

■ NEW ORLEANS



NEW ORLEANS BRACES FOR HURRICANE FRANCINE

Hurricane Francine threatened New Orleans and the wider Gulf Coast as far east as the Alabama and Florida border, shutting down a quarter of oil and gas production in the Gulf while parishes across Louisiana issued evacuation orders. The hurricane was about 395 km southwest of Morgan City, Louisiana as it crawled northeast packing 90 mph winds. Earlier, the US National Weather Service warned that conditions were expected to deteriorate throughout the day as the hurricane threatened some coastal areas with 9-foot storm surge. — Reuters

Harris rattles Trump in presidential debate

PHILADELPHIA: Kamala Harris put Donald Trump on the defensive in a fiery televised debate on Tuesday, getting under her rival's skin as they battled for a breakthrough in an agonizingly close US presidential election. In a performance that earned her the endorsement of pop superstar Taylor Swift, the Democrat baited the "extreme" Republican into angry responses on issues ranging from abortion to democracy and foreign policy.

The 59-year-old US vice-president managed to knock former president Trump off his game in their first and only scheduled showdown, which featured a series of bitter personal attacks on both sides.

Trump said afterwards that the ABC News-hosted clash in Philadelphia was his "best debate" but snap polls and commentators said Harris had won, with her campaign quickly challenging him to a second debate in October.

With less than two months until election day, Harris was under pressure to deliver in front of an audience of tens of millions after her sudden rise to the top of the Democratic ticket in place of US President Joe Biden.

She started on the front foot by surprising Trump by approaching him to shake his hand before they took to their lecterns — and then kept the upper hand.



Former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a presidential debate with US Vice-President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris at the National Constitution Center in Pennsylvania. — AFP



Harris repeatedly managed to needle Trump into finger-jabbing insults and meandering invective

He ended up talking at length about a debunked conspiracy theory that Haitian immigrants have been eating local people's pet cats and dogs in Ohio — before being corrected by the moderator that authorities have said this didn't happen.

Biden said the Harris-Trump debate "wasn't even close", in a post on X.

The last presidential debate in June had resulted in a crushing victory for Trump, after Biden delivered a catastrophic performance that ended up dooming his reelection campaign.

A CNN snap poll after the debate said Harris performed better than Trump by 63 per cent to 37 per cent of registered voters.

In a sign Trump realised things had not gone as well as he hoped, the former president made an unusual appearance in the debate "spin room" afterwards to speak to journalists.

Pop megastar Taylor Swift broke her silence on US politics minutes after the debate, backing Harris as president and praising her as a "steady-handed, gifted leader."

— Reuters

Trump repeatedly raised his voice as he hit back at the vice president on immigration and the economy, branding her a "Marxist" and blaming her for what he said were the failings of President Joe Biden's administration.

Harris responded by looking on in amusement before declaring that she represents a fresh start after the "mess" of the Trump presidency — and saying: "We're not going back."

One of their most intense exchanges was on abortion.

Trump insisted that while having pushed for the end of the federal right to abortion, he wanted individual states to make their own policy.

Harris said he was telling a "bunch of lies" and called his

policies "insulting to the women of America."

Another jarring clash came as Trump doubled down on his unprecedented refusal to accept losing to Biden in the 2020 election, before trying to overturn the result.

Harris responded by mocking his catchphrase as a reality TV star, saying that Trump had been "fired by 81 million people" and calling him a threat to democracy.

The former prosecutor pointed out that Trump is a convicted felon, called him "extreme" and said it is "a tragedy" that throughout his career he had used "race to divide the American people."

The rivals also clashed on foreign policy, with Harris telling Trump that Russian President

Vladimir Putin would "eat you for lunch" when it came to the war in Ukraine and that world leaders were "laughing" at him.

Trump shot back by accusing Harris of being weak on the war in Gaza, saying she "hated Israel".

But Harris, who spent five days intensively preparing for the debate, repeatedly managed to needle Trump into finger-jabbing insults and meandering invective.

She elicited an angry response when mocked the size of his trademark rallies, one of his favourite topics, saying that attendees were leaving early out of "exhaustion and boredom."

Trump repeatedly attacked Harris on migration, but she also managed to make him lose his cool on what should have been a winning topic.

Germany's chancellor, oppn clash over migration



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz speaks during a plenary session in the Bundestag in Berlin. — AFP

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz defended his government's migration policy in remarks to parliament on Wednesday and emphasised the country's need to attract skilled foreigners.

"There is no country in the world with a shrinking working population that has economic growth. That is the truth we are confronted with," Scholz said in the Bundestag, as Germany's parliament is known.

His remarks come amid tense, acrimonious debate in Berlin over migration and asylum policy. On Tuesday evening, cross-party talks between Scholz's coalition and the centre-right opposition collapsed with bitter criticism.

Migration policy has been the dominant topic in political debate since a knife-wielding assailant killed three people and wounded eight others last month in the western German city of Solingen.

The suspected attacker is a 26-year-old Syrian man who had evaded an order to be deported from Germany to Bulgaria, where he was first registered in the European Union.

Scholz on Wednesday sharply criticized opposition

leader Friedrich Merz of the centre-right Christian Democrats (CDU), accusing him of posturing in the right-wing press while failing to engage in good-faith negotiations over genuine policy changes.

German citizens don't want to see theatrical performances, but serious and serious politics, Scholz claimed.

"Sloganeering, not getting anything done," Scholz shouted at Merz and other lawmakers from the centre-right bloc.

It would have been good to find real joint solutions to the migration issue, said Scholz: "We will never slam a door, you can always comeback."

Scholz said his government is in the process of achieving the "biggest turnaround in dealing with irregular migration," citing efforts to accelerate deportations, reforms to the European Union's common asylum policy and a set of security proposals set to be presented to parliament later this week.

Merz bristled at Scholz's accusations, calling them "disgraceful," and flatly rejected the chancellor's invitation to further talks in his response.

— dpa

Blinken: US-UK visit backs Ukraine 'victory'

KYIV: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy vowed on Wednesday to support Ukraine until its victory over Russia as they paid a rare joint visit to Kyiv.

The trip sends "a strong message that we are committed to Ukraine's success, committed to Ukraine's victory, committed to a Ukraine that stands on its own feet, militarily, economically and diplomatically", Blinken said as they held three-way talks with their Ukrainian counterpart.

Meanwhile, the US and British top diplomats began a visit Wednesday to Ukraine, where they will discuss further easing rules on firing Western weapons into Russia, whose alleged acquisition of Iranian missiles has raised new fears.

In a rare joint trip, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken took the nine-hour train from Poland to Kyiv alongside Foreign Secretary David Lammy, whose two-month-old Labour government has vowed to keep up Britain's role as a key defender of Ukraine.

The visit comes as President Volodymyr Zelensky ramps up his requests to the West to provide weapons with more firepower and fewer restrictions.

US President Joe Biden, asked in Washington whether he would let Ukraine use longer-range weapons for strikes on Russian targets, said: "We're working that out right now."

In Moscow, the Kremlin promised it would respond "appropriately" if Washington eases its restrictions.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Britain's Foreign Secretary David Lammy pose with Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Andrii Sybiha (C) during their meeting in Kyiv. — AFP

Biden, while strongly supportive of Ukraine, has previously made clear he wants to avoid devolving into direct conflict between the United States and Russia, the world's two leading nuclear powers.

Blinken, speaking on Tuesday in London alongside Lammy, said the United States was committed to providing Ukraine "what they need when they need it to be most effective in dealing with the Russian aggression".

But Blinken, who is paying his fifth trip to Kyiv since the attack, said it was also important to see if Ukrainian forces could maintain and operate particular weaponry.

Pressed later in an interview with Sky News on whether the

United States would green-light long-range weapons, Blinken said: "We never rule out, but when we rule in, we want to make sure it's done in such a way that it can advance what the Ukrainians are trying to achieve."

But Blinken, who is paying his fifth trip to Kyiv since the attack, said it was also important to see if Ukrainian forces could maintain and operate particular weaponry. Pressed later in an interview with Sky News on whether the United States would green-light long-range weapons, Blinken said: "We never rule out, but when we rule in, we want to make sure it's done in such a way that it can advance what the Ukrainians are trying to achieve."

— AFP

A reminder of the importance of our breath



Hyesha Barrett
@coach_hyesha

Hyesha is a certified Master Life Coach and NLP Practitioner based in Muscat

Breathing is an unconscious, automatic process we rarely put thought to, yet it is the foundation of life and plays a crucial role in our physical and mental well-being.

What we often take for granted and rely on with complacency, the importance of our breath extends beyond mere survival, as it impacts every aspect of our health - including our emotional state, cognitive function and overall vitality.

Our breath, the most immediate connection to life is essential for energy production and the functioning of every system in our body.

Shallow, rapid breathing, often a by-product of stress and overwhelm, limits our oxygen intake which can lead to fatigue, anxiety and compromised immune functionality. It can further create a feedback loop that exacerbates the negative feelings, which when left unattended can generate extended internal turmoil.

In contrast, deep and intentional breathing can activate the parasympathetic nervous system - the body's 'rest and digest' mode, which helps lower our heart rate while promoting a sense of de-

stress, calm and relaxation. Deep, slow breathing increases oxygenation, supporting better circulation, enhancing detoxification and promoting overall physical health.

Moreover, breathwork has been shown to have profound effects on cognitive function and mental health. Studies have found that controlled breathing exercises can improve attention, memory and executive function. By regulating the breath, we can better manage our emotional responses, reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety while increasing our resilience to stress.

In essence, our breath is a powerful tool that we can consciously control to influence our physical health, emotional well-being and spiritual connection. By paying attention to our breathing patterns and incorporating mindful practices into our daily routines, we can enhance our quality of life, improve our mental clarity and foster a deeper sense of peace and balance. Some simple techniques to connect to the power of your breath include:

A quiet place away from distractions.

Comfortable position, either sitting or lying down. Palms up.

MINDFUL BREATHING CAN HELP EASE PAIN INTO PLEASURE, IMPROVE CONCENTRATION AND CULTIVATE A DEEPER CONNECTION TO THE PRESENT MOMENT

Close eyes and release all tension. Focus on relaxing each and every part of your body.

Concentrate on your breath, observe how it feels.

Deepen your inhale through the nose and exhale out the mouth, for 4-6 seconds.

Notice any distracting thoughts and with a kind feeling gently return focus to your breath.

Chant a relaxing mantra such as 'let go' or 'I am enough.'

Any length of time is fine, the key is consistency.

End gently by thanking your body and breath.

Through creating a daily consistent routine, your body will automatically deep breath when stress comes your way.

Mindful breathing is a versatile tool that can be practised anywhere, anytime. Regular repetition can help ease pain into pleasure, improve concentration and cultivate a deeper connection to the present moment.

In a world where we often focus on external solutions for health and happiness, reconnecting with the source of life offers an astounding reminder that some of the most effective tools for well-being are already within us.

‘Justice not done’ 50 years after Ethiopia revolution

DYLAN GAMBA

In his apartment in Ethiopia's capital, Ermias Woldeamlak stares at the photos of his three older brothers, all of them killed during a period of military terror a generation ago. "Elias was 20 or 21, Thomas was 19, Berhan was 18," he says.

Half a century has passed, "but I still feel very sad," Ermias adds. "I remember it as fresh as something that happened yesterday."

Thursday marks 50 years since a Marxist-Leninist military junta known as the Derg seized power in Ethiopia, overthrowing Emperor Haile Selassie and a monarchy that had ruled Ethiopia for 700 years.

Tens of thousands died at the hands of the new regime, which ruled with callous brutality until its own overthrow in 1991.

Its 87-year-old leader Mengistu Haile Mariam lives on quietly in Zimbabwe despite being convicted of genocide and sentenced to death in absentia in 2008.

For Ermias, that impunity is impossible to stomach. Without the extradition of the regime's "greatest criminal", and without financial reparations for the victims' families, "justice has not been done", said the 64-year-old documentary filmmaker.

Ermias was just a teenager when the revolution happened. Initially led by left-wing students, it was quickly overtaken by the army which established the Provisional Military Administration Council (its local acronym spells Derg) on September 12, 1974.

Ermias's brothers were among the young rebels in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) who tried to seize back control from the army.

The clashes triggered the rise of Mengistu, a hardline colonel, to the leadership in 1977, and unleashed a two-year period of brutal repression that became known as the "Red Terror".

Ermias's oldest brother, Elias, was arrested in November 1976 after being found in their grandmother's home with red paint -- illegal because it was used for rebel slogans. Elias spent months in prison and was tortured, his brother says.

The family would regularly bring him food and clothes until one day in March 1977, the prison guards said they should no longer bother coming.

The next brother Thomas was executed on the steps of a church in Addis Ababa and his body put on public display as a warning.

The family only learned of the death of Berhan, who had been in hiding, after the fall of the Derg in 1991. — AFP

Balancing sustainability and stability in the energy transition



RUMAITHA AL BUSAIDI

The writer is a climate change activist, women's rights activist, radio presenter, marine scientist and entrepreneur

Last month, I found myself in Stavanger, Norway — the heart of the country's energy landscape — where I explored the breathtaking nature and participated in the ONS 2024 conference. Standing atop Pulpit Rock after a stimulating hike, I couldn't help but reflect on the steep ascent we face in the global energy transition.

This metaphor was at the heart of discussions during the conference, where the balance between trade, climate policies, and energy stability was a recurring theme. The parallel between the steep hike and the challenges discussed couldn't have been clearer: navigating the transition to sustainable energy and balancing trade and climate policies requires both endurance and vision.

Renewable energy is expanding rapidly, particularly in regions like the EU, where solar power plays a key role. However, this growth has introduced challenges such as negative pricing and market instability, which reflect the need for diversified energy portfolios.

The global energy landscape is also experiencing increased demand, especially in Asia and Africa, highlighting the importance of an inclusive and balanced energy transition. We must explore innovative, sustainable solutions that ensure the integration of renewable energy while maintaining energy system stability.

The global energy transition is not a one-size-fits-all solution. As energy demands rise sharply in emerging economies, it becomes increasingly apparent that this transition must be inclusive.

In one of the most significant discussions, global powerhouses like the EU, China and the US took centre stage, echoing real-world dynamics where other regions often feel sidelined.

I took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of integrating the perspectives of smaller, often overlooked economies into the conversation. Insights from different parts of the world must be integrated into the conversation to ensure that



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon of Norway with Rumaitha al Busaidi and fellow round table participants at the ONS 2024 conference in Stavanger.

trade and climate policies work for everyone. It's about achieving a global good, where inclusivity is not just important but essential for ensuring a successful, sustainable future.

THE ENERGY TRANSITION IS NOT JUST ABOUT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS — IT'S ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY, INCLUSION AND THE LEGACY WE LEAVE BEHIND

This theme of inclusion also carried into a meaningful conversation I had with the Crown Prince of Norway, where we discussed the importance of a just transition and sustainable energy solutions.

We explored how policies could be crafted to ensure a fair energy shift that benefits everyone. I also touched on the parallels between Oman and Norway — two energy-rich nations with shared challenges and opportunities in transitioning to greener futures.

Both countries have a significant role to play in advancing global sustainability through thoughtful policies and collaboration.

At the heart of this dialogue

was a question I posed during the conference: "What does it mean to be a good ancestor?" This question resonates deeply.

It is a reminder that our policies today will shape the world we leave for future generations. The energy transition isn't just about technological advancements — it's about responsibility, inclusion and the legacy we leave behind.

The challenges facing today's energy market — where solar dominance has led to negative pricing — reinforce the need for a balanced energy portfolio. Stabilising solutions, such as hydrogen and carbon capture among others, will play a pivotal role in advancing the energy transition. These solutions will be essential for all regions as we harmonise energy policies with global trade initiatives and move toward a sustainable future.

As I reflect on the discussions from Norway, I am more convinced than ever that regions across the globe must lead by example.

Our energy policies, anchored by both tradition and innovation, must continue to evolve in a way that supports global sustainability. The choices we make today will determine our legacy. Our collective contribution to the energy transition is not only necessary but can also be a defining moment in history.

Empowering minds... with AI

In an era where artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming industries and reshaping the future of work, the role of educators has never been more crucial.

Enter the Summer School for Teaching Faculty: Empowering Minds, a ground-breaking and transformative programme designed specifically for teaching faculty to equip them with the knowledge, and skills needed to integrate AI-driven tools into their teaching practices and research methodologies; creating dynamic, responsive, and learner-centred environments.

Held this year with a focus on ‘Artificial Intelligence in Education and Research,’ the summer school catalysed positive change in teaching practices by providing a unique platform for teachers to explore AI’s potential, not just as a teaching aid but also as a driver of innovation in academic research.

Faculty members from different disciplines and various academic institutions in the Sultanate of Oman were immersed in a week-long journey of engaging workshops, interactive discussions, expert-led sessions, and hands-on activities, all aimed at fostering AI literacy and application among faculty from diverse disciplines.

Dr Asma al Ghassani, Assistant Professor and Director of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Sultan Qaboos University, stated that this summer school bringing international and national experts to train higher education faculty and enhance their AI literacy. She noted that the programme went beyond AI in education, placing a spotlight on its role in advancing academic research. The discussions and debates during the programme have sparked numerous innovative ideas while expanding networking opportunities among faculty from



Dr Moza al Rawahi

The writer is Assistant Professor in Journalism at Sultan Qaboos University

AS AI CONTINUES TO EVOLVE, EDUCATORS AND RESEARCHERS MUST REMAIN AGILE AND OPEN TO CHANGE

various institutions.

It is obvious that there is a paradigm shift in education — from teacher-centred instruction to a learner-centred approach, and the summer school addressed this transition head-on, offering educators the chance to learn about AI’s role in personalised learning, tailoring educational content to meet individual needs, analysing large sets of educational data to identify trends and improve curricula, and enabling real-time feedback.

In research, AI facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration and automates data analysis. This paradigm shift transforms traditional methods, fosters innovation, and ultimately reshapes how knowledge is acquired, shared, and applied across various disciplines.

“AI isn’t meant to replace educators; it’s designed to amplify their capabilities,” remarked Dr Adhari al Zaabi, Assistant Professor at Sultan Qaboos University College of Medicine and Health Sciences. The faculty were encouraged to rethink traditional pedagogical models, from adaptive learning platforms that tailor instruction to individual students’ needs, to AI-driven tools that enhance engagement and creativity.

As AI continues to evolve, educators and researchers must remain agile and open to change. This means that they must adapt and embrace these evolving technologies to remain competitive in an ever-changing landscape and therefore become sustainable in the future.

The Summer School for Teaching Faculty is part of a broader effort to ensure that teaching professionals stay at the forefront of these developments and keep pace with this trend of transition, adopt and adapt the opportunities and challenges of AI-enabled technologies.

THE ‘SETTING’ SUN



A passenger ship is seen during sunset in Dili, East Timor, on Wednesday. – Reuters

Tracking air quality the right way

Every year, the World Health Organization summarises global progress on malaria control. It details the number of cases in affected countries, shows year-on-year changes, outlines goals, and assesses the current funding landscape. The United Nations puts out a similar annual report for HIV/Aids. This regular tracking of serious public-health concerns is essential for addressing them effectively, because it can help channel resources to where they are most needed and identify interventions that are working.

But there is no authoritative, up-to-date global accounting of air pollution, a health risk that takes a larger toll than malaria and HIV/Aids combined. Particulate matter, a form of air pollution often associated with dust and smoke, was the leading contributor to the world’s disease burden in 2021, and has been found to cut 1.9 years from average life expectancy. Air pollution was also linked to more than 700,000 deaths in children under five years old in 2021, making it the second-highest risk factor for death in this age group.

The world’s main authority on air quality is arguably the WHO, which produces globally influential standards for pollution levels. Its most recent guidelines, published in 2021, aimed to improve air-quality standards by lowering the recommended level of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from ten micrograms per cubic metre to five.

The WHO also compiles data on annual particulate matter in cities worldwide through its ambient air quality database, which is primarily



Soumya Swaminathan

The writer is a former chief scientist of the WHO, is Co-Chair of Our Common Air and Principal Adviser for the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme



Christa Hasenkopf

The writer is Director of the Clean Air Program at the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago and a commissioner at Our Common Air

sourced from government measurements and updated every two to three years. But in the most recent edition (updated in January 2024), only 0.4 per cent of cities reported data from 2022, and more than half of the data are at least seven years old. Many countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia – which bear a disproportionate share of the health burden from air pollution – are missing measurements, with four of the most polluted countries reporting none at all. This lack of data makes it impossible to gauge global progress or to ensure strategic resource allocation.

Satellite-derived data could fill in the gaps. But while several groups generate and compile such information, there is no definitive database. (Anecdotally, when we asked ten air-quality experts where they go for the most recent data, we received 14 different answers, none of which meet the criteria for an authoritative global source.) Moreover, annual data often have a lag of up to two years, and there is no established mechanism to assess their quality. Contrary to its name, calculating satellite-derived air-quality data requires ground monitoring data, which can make satellite data less reliable in countries with little monitoring capacity. Addressing air pollution worldwide requires a clear view of the global picture. Fortunately, building a system that regularly tracks collective

progress on reducing particulate matter, with built-in mechanisms to help improve data-gathering efforts in the most polluted places, is technologically, logistically, and politically feasible.

The first goal should be to create an annual, authoritative accounting of PM2.5 pollution in every country. This would require incentivising countries to contribute more recent ground-monitoring data, establishing a process to combine these data with available satellite information to determine their annual pollution levels, and identifying capacity and data gaps and directing resources accordingly.

Global development and philanthropic organisations will have to provide significant financial

and human resources to launch such an effort, including support for countries that currently lack the capacity to monitor or measure air quality. It will also require public-health, environmental, and finance leaders to work together, much as they have done to tackle other serious issues such as malaria, HIV/Aids, Covid-19, and tuberculosis.

Several UN agencies, including the WHO, the World Meteorological Organisation, and the UN Environment Programme, could house or coordinate these data-gathering and capacity-building efforts. And institutions such as the World Bank, regional development banks (the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank,

among others), bilateral donors, and philanthropies must help finance them.

There is a dire need for international collective action to tackle this challenge, which is local, yet has global consequences. The latest report on reporting and tracking air quality, published by Our Common Air, addresses some of the key concerns in the commission’s recommendations. We have successfully confronted global health challenges in recent years and, in doing so, created a playbook that can be applied to others. The question now is whether the international community will use it to tackle the world’s single greatest external risk to human health.

@Project Syndicate, 2024



There is no authoritative, up-to-date global accounting of air pollution.

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

Oman's head coach Jaroslav Silhavy said that the team's fitness level declined at the end of the second half which costed the team to receive two goals and lose the game. The Czech coach expressed his satisfaction on the players performance despite their 3-1 loss against South Korea on Tuesday at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in the AFC Asian Qualifiers — Road to 26.

"I am proud of my players' performance and their efforts during the match. They played very well in the opening half and they could come back but the fitness level declined at the end of the second half. This was the reason that the team dropped in energy and received two goals in the end of the deciding half," coach Silhavy said in the post-match press conference late on Tuesday.

The national team's match against South Korea recorded a huge audience which reached to 27,144 attendees but all the fans were disappointed after the second consecutive defeat in the qualifiers as the team lost against Iraq last week in Basra by 1-0.

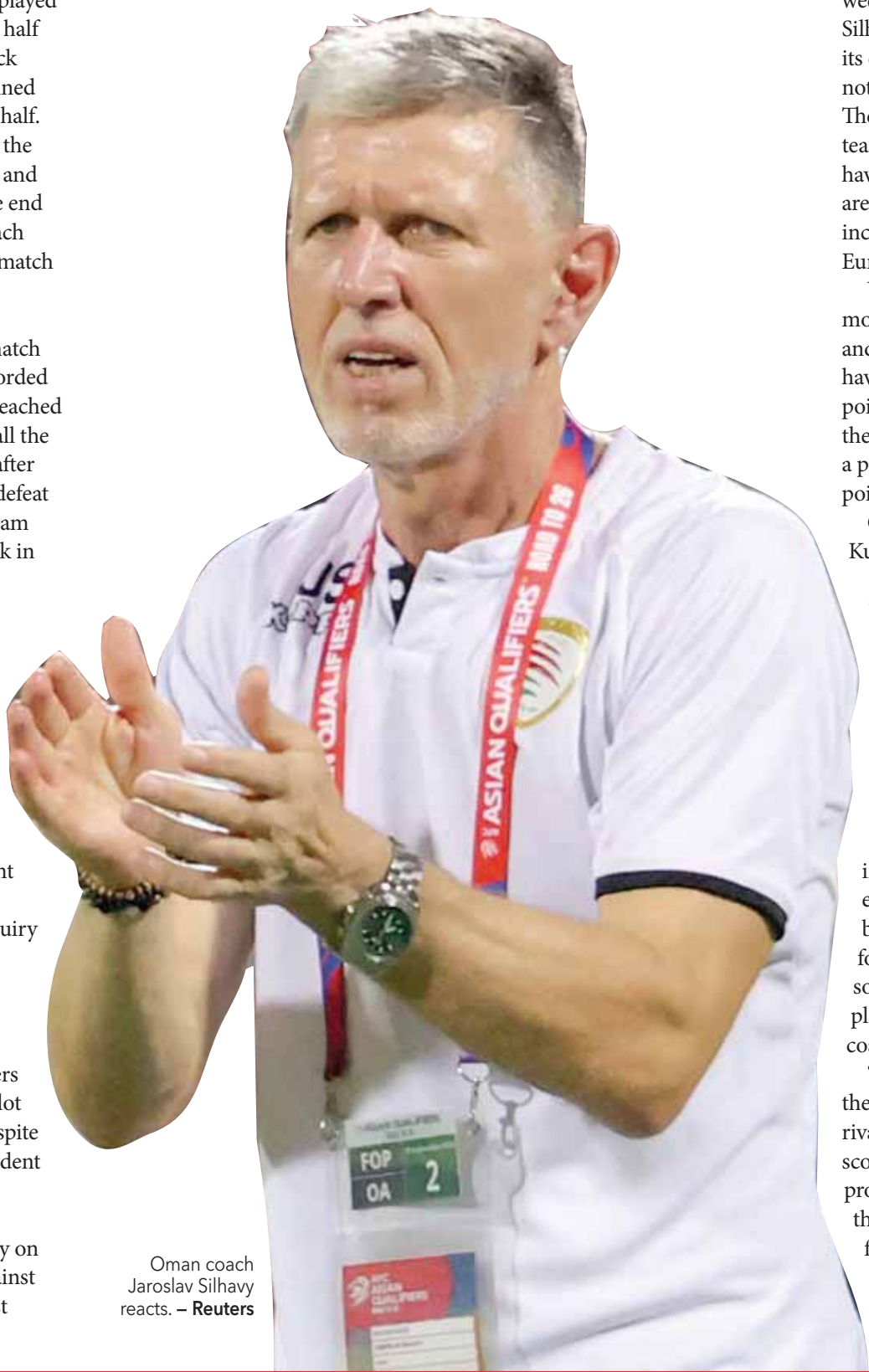
STRONG TEAM

"I would like to say big thanks for all the fans who attended the match and supported the team throughout the match. I deeply apologise for this result as our target was different than this," he said.

Responding to an inquiry on the teams chances in the qualifiers, the coach said: "We have met two strong teams in the beginning of the qualifiers but still we are having a lot of games remaining. Despite today's result, I am confident that our chances are still available in this group."

Replying to an inquiry on the Palestinian show against South Korea in Seoul last

OMAN PLAYERS' FITNESS LEVELS DECLINED IN SECOND HALF: SILHAVY



Oman coach Jaroslav Silhavy reacts. — Reuters

week despite their league level, Silhavy said: "Every match has its own scenarios. We should not compare with other games. The Korean team is the strongest team in the group and they have experienced players who are playing in major leagues including some of them in European league," he pointed out.

With the victory, Koreans moved to four points in the group and equal to Jordan and Iraq who have the same amount of the points while Red Warriors are in the bottom of the group without a point and Kuwait have two points.

Oman's next match is against Kuwait in Muscat on October 10.

TACTICAL CHANGES

On the other hand, South Korea head coach Hong Myung-bo congratulated his players for the outstanding show. "It was a very difficult away match especially in the first half after the opponent pressed hard towards our side in the end of the first half and ended by 1-1 draw. The team bounced back strongly in the following half after making some tactical changes and the players converted that properly," coach Hong said.

"There were some mistakes at the back line which allowed the rivals attackers to create some scoring chances. This was closed properly in the deciding half of the game by the players as they followed the technical plan properly," the Korean coach added.



Colombia down Argentina, Brazil stunned in WC qualifiers

MONTEVIDEO: Colombia avenged their Copa America final defeat with a 2-1 victory over Argentina while Brazil crashed to a 1-0 defeat against Paraguay in South American qualifying for the 2026 World Cup on Tuesday.

Skipper James Rodriguez buried a nerveless 60th-minute spot-kick to seal a hard-fought win for Colombia over the reigning world champions, who were without injured captain Lionel Messi.

It was sweet revenge for Colombia, who were beaten 1-0 by Argentina in a bitterly disappointing Copa America final loss in Miami two months ago. "I don't think I've ever scored against them — there's a first time for everything," Colombia captain Rodriguez said of his winning spot-kick.

"We want to get used to playing finals. Today was just

another game, but against a team that has won everything -- this victory tastes even better."

The victory at Barranquilla's Metropolitano Stadium lifted Colombia into second place in South America's 10-team qualifying competition with 16 points from eight points, just two points behind leaders Argentina.

Colombia, backed by a passionate home crowd, took the lead in the 25th minute when Rodriguez chipped a cross to the back post where Yerson Mosquera rose to head home.

But three minutes after the interval, the visitors drew level when a misplaced pass from Rodriguez was pounced upon by Nicolas Gonzalez, who raced away and slotted past advancing Colombia keeper Camilo Vargas.

Twelve minutes later, though, Colombia restored their lead in controversial fashion.

Nicolas Otamendi clattered



Colombia's midfielder James Rodriguez celebrates scoring his team's second goal during the 2026 FIFA World Cup South American qualifiers match against Argentina in Barranquilla, Colombia. — AFP

Daniel Munoz with a wild challenge and after several minutes, Chilean referee Piero Maza was sent to the VAR monitor and awarded a penalty.

Rodriguez stepped up and confidently slotted home, sending Argentina's penalty

specialist Emiliano Martinez the wrong way.

Colombia striker Jhon Duran missed a great chance to make it 3-1 when he was found unmarked in the centre of the box but fired straight at Martinez.

BRAZIL STUMBLE

Despite the defeat, Argentina remain comfortably on course for a place at the 2026 World Cup which is being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

With the tournament expanded to 48 teams, the top six finishers in South American qualifying will win a berth to the finals.

The seventh placed team in qualifying goes into an inter-confederation playoff, with the bottom three teams eliminated.

Five-time world champions Brazil meanwhile continued their unconvincing qualifying campaign with a 1-0 defeat against Paraguay in Asuncion.

Inter Miami midfielder Diego Gomez — who is reportedly due to join Premier League side Brighton at the end of the season — scored the game's only goal, crashing a long-range shot in off

the post in the 20th minute.

The defeat leaves Brazil in fifth place in the standings on 10 points, leading by goal difference from Venezuela, who drew 0-0 at home to Uruguay on Tuesday.

Paraguay meanwhile moved into seventh place on nine points after just their second win of the qualifying campaign.

Elsewhere on Tuesday, Chile's hopes of qualifying suffered another body blow after they slumped to a 2-1 loss at home to Bolivia. Goals from Carmelo Algaraz and Miguel Terceros handed Bolivia a 2-1 win.

The victory left Chile languishing in ninth place in the standings with just five points from eight games as Bolivia climbed into eighth, trailing seventh-placed Paraguay on goal difference. Ecuador meanwhile boosted their qualification hopes with a 1-0 win over Peru in Quito. — AFP

Germany, Canada win Davis Cup openers

PARIS: Germany shrugged off the absence of world number two Alexander Zverev to sweep past Slovakia in their Davis Cup group stage finals opener on Tuesday as Canada beat Argentina.

Despite the absence of their top four players, including Zverev, the Germans dominated their Group C tie 3-0 in Zhuhai, China. The group also includes the United States and Chile.

Canada, the 2022 champions, eased past Argentina 2-1 in Group D action in Manchester, England.

Germany's Maximilian Marterer won the first point 6-4, 7-5 against Lukas Klein, with Yannick Hanfmann beating Jozef Kovalik 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/3).

Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz teamed up in the doubles to see off Klein and Igor Zelenay 7-5, 6-3 and wrap up the tie.

The United States, 32-time champions, open their campaign against Chile on Wednesday, followed by Slovakia on Friday and Germany on Saturday.

"We have a few days off so we can recover and do our best to win the next matches and still have a chance to go to the final," said Slovakia's Kovalik.

In Manchester, Canada's Denis Shapovalov battled past Francisco Cerundolo 7-5, 6-3 in Group D before Felix Auger-Aliassime eased past Sebastian Baez 6-3, 6-3.



Germany's Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz in action during their Davis Cup Group C doubles match against Slovakia's Lukas Klein and Igor Zelenay. — Reuters

Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni teamed up in the doubles to beat Shapovalov and Vasek Pospisil 2-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Canada next play Finland on Thursday before taking on hosts Britain on Sunday.

"I feel great," said Shapovalov. "The last time I played in the Davis Cup we won the competition, so it was nice to be back and playing at such a high level. I want to build on this now."

AUSTRALIA BEAT FRANCE
Champions Italy open their

title defence on Wednesday in Bologna against Brazil but without world number one Jannik Sinner, winner of the US Open at the weekend.

Italy are in the same Group A as Belgium, who bounced back from going 1-0 down to defeat the Netherlands 2-1.

In Group B, 10-time winners France lost 2-1 to Australia, losing finalists in 2022 and 2023.

Playing in Valencia, Australia took the lead after Thanasi Kokkinakis beat Arthur Fils 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/3).

Ugo Humbert levelled for the French, the France number one downing Alexei Popyrin 6-3, 6-2.

The Aussies took the tie when Matthew Ebden and Max Purcell saw off Edouard Roger-Vasselin and Pierre-Hugues Herbert 7-5, 5-7, 6-3.

Carlos Alcaraz's Spain are also in Group B.

The top two nations in each of the four groups in the round robin competition will qualify for the eight-team final in Malaga, Spain from November 19-24. — AFP



Canada's Denis Shapovalov in action during his singles match against Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo. — Reuters



Reilly Opelka of the US in action against Chile's Cristian Garin. — Reuters

United States win opener against Chile

ZHUHAI, China: The United States made light of the absence of several top singles players as they began their Davis Cup Finals group stage campaign with victory over Chile on Wednesday.

Reilly Opelka and Brandon Nakashima both came through lengthy three-set battles to give their team a winning lead in the Group C opener in Zhuhai, China.

Olympic doubles silver-medallists Rajeev Ram and Austin Krajicek then beat Matias Soto and Tomas Barrios Vera to wrap up a 3-0 victory and join Germany at the top of the table.

Captain Bob Bryan was unable to call upon the likes of US Open runner-up Taylor Fritz, Frances Tiafoe or Tommy Paul but his team showed its strength in depth to win a tricky tie.

Opelka, ranked 309th in the world, beat 116th-ranked Cristian Garin 6-3, 4-6, 7-6(3)

before Nakashima, the world number 40, beat Alejandro Tabilo 7-6(5), 2-6, 7-6(3).

Ram and Krajicek also needed three sets in the doubles to give 32-time Davis Cup winners the US the perfect start as they bid to reach the last eight for the second time since the new format was introduced in 2019.

Four groups of four nations are being contested in four different cities — Zhuhai, Bologna, Valencia and Manchester — with the top two from each group progressing to the final eight-nation knockout round in Malaga in November.

Later on Wednesday, Carlos Alcaraz is expected to line up for Spain against the Czech Republic in Group B in Valencia while Britain take on Finland in Group D in Manchester.

The day's other tie features reigning champions Italy against Brazil in Bologna in Group A. — Reuters

ISC to hold annual badminton tournament

MUSCAT: The Indian Social Club Oman in association with O! Millionaire is all set to conduct its annual badminton tournament from September 16 onwards at ISC Darsait indoor badminton courts.

The tournament, be held on September 20 and 21, will consist of open badminton tournament where all Indian residents in Oman can participate. This category involves men's premier single and double, men's single and double. The last date to register for the tournament is September 15.

Next category is exclusively



for ISC members and its linguistic wing members which involves under-11 boys and girls,

under-15 boys and girls, men's, women's, veterans and mixed all in doubles categories whereas

singles will be competed in men's, women's and veteran's sections. This tournament will start from September 16 and finals will be held on September 21.

This year ISC has introduced a team championship which will be exclusively for ISC members and its linguistic wing members.

Each team will consist of seven players and will be played under the category of men's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles.

The last date of registration for the ISC and its linguistic wing members for the tournament is September 15.

Stokes returns for Pakistan tour

LONDON: Ben Stokes returns as captain for England's three-Test tour of Pakistan next month while Brydon Carse could make his debut just weeks after completing a ban for breaches of betting rules.

Stokes will skipper the side after missing the 2-1 home series win against Sri Lanka with a hamstring injury. Opener Zak Crawley is also in the squad announced on Tuesday after missing the same series with a broken finger.

Bowling all-rounder Carse, who returned to action in late August after serving a three-month ban for historical betting violations, appears to be the main beneficiary of a year-ending elbow injury to Durham team-mate and fellow quick Mark Wood.

The South Africa-born 29-year-old, who has featured in 17 white-ball internationals for England, takes his place in a 17-strong squad alongside another player yet to make his Test bow, Jordan Cox.

The tour is scheduled to get under way on October 7 in Multan.

There are due to be further Tests in Karachi and Rawalpindi but renovations



England's Ben Stokes during a warm-up session. — Reuters

ahead of next year's Champions Trophy are causing problems at those venues.

One or more of the games could be moved to the United Arab Emirates or Sri Lanka.

Dan Lawrence, a makeshift opener against Sri Lanka in the absence of Crawley, has been dropped.

Young left-arm fast bowler Josh Hull has been retained while Jack Leach and Rehan Ahmed — two spinners who featured in England's historic 3-0 series whitewash over Pakistan in 2022 — are recalled.

Leach was displaced as England's number one spinner this season by Shoaib Bashir but the Somerset pair, plus Leicestershire's Ahmed, form Stokes's trio of frontline slow bowling options. — AFP

England squad for three-match Test tour of Pakistan:

Ben Stokes (captain), Rehan Ahmed, Gus Atkinson, Shoaib Bashir, Harry Brook, Brydon Carse, Jordan Cox, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Josh Hull, Jack Leach, Ollie Pope, Matthew Potts, Joe Root, Jamie Smith, Olly Stone, Chris Woakes.

LONDON: Harry Kane celebrated his 100th England cap in memorable style as the striker's superb double sealed a 2-0 win against Finland in the Nations League on Tuesday.

England captain Kane struck with a pair of eye-catching finishes in the second half at Wembley to mark the latest landmark in his remarkable career.

The 31-year-old is the 10th man to reach a century of England appearances, joining the likes of David Beckham and Bobby Moore in the exclusive club.

Goalkeeper Peter Shilton holds England's caps record with 125 appearances, while Wayne Rooney is the country's most capped outfield player on 120, and it would be little surprise if Kane passed both of them.

He is only the third England player to score on their 100th appearance after Rooney against Slovenia in 2014 and Bobby Charlton against Northern Ireland in 1970.

Kane became England's record scorer in March 2023 and the Bayern Munich striker now has 68 goals for his country.

Inspired by the longevity of Portugal striker Cristiano Ronaldo, who recently scored his 901st career goal, and NFL legend Tom Brady, Kane shows no signs of easing up in his record-setting career.

It was a perfect night for the former Tottenham star, who led England onto the pitch alongside his two of children before kick-off and was presented with a commemorative gold cap by fellow Three Lions centurions Frank Lampard and Ashley Cole.

"His finishing is very good, even in training. It's not a surprise when he scores goals as his habits are so good," England interim boss Lee Carsley said. "The way he trains and conducts himself, he is a great example for the rest of the players."

While Kane took the spotlight, it was also another encouraging game for Carsley, who oversaw a 2-0 victory against Ireland in his first game in charge on Saturday.

Carsley is the first England

KANE HITS BRACE IN 100TH CAP AS ENGLAND SINK FINLAND



England's Harry Kane shoots at goal with an overhead kick. – Reuters



England's Harry Kane holds up a golden cap awarded for his 100th England cap with his daughters Ivy Jane Kne and Vivienne Jane before the match. – Reuters



England's Harry Kane applauds fans after being substituted. – Reuters

manager to win his first two competitive games since Fabio Capello in 2008.

The 50-year-old, who replaced Southgate following his resignation after the Euro 2024 final loss to Spain, has deployed an attacking game-plan that stands in stark contrast to his predecessor's conservative tactics.

MIDAS TOUCH

Whether that will be enough to earn him the job on a permanent basis remains to be seen, but his impressive start has given the Football Association food for thought before England return to action against Greece in October. "I'm totally relaxed about the situation. I have got to do a good job," Carsley said.

"We have shown ourselves that we can do it. We can put ideas in place and the players have responded really well."

Showing faith in the players he worked with as England Under-21 coach, Carsley gave a first Three Lions start to Lille midfielder Angel Gomes, who gave a made solid impact, while Chelsea winger Noni Madueke set up Kane's second goal after coming off the bench for his debut.

Wearing golden boots, Kane turned the Nations League Group B2 tie in rain-lashed north London into the latest demonstration of his midas touch. After being denied by a tight offside call in the first half and several fine saves from Finland keeper Lukas Hradecky, Kane got the goal he craved in the 58th minute.

Taking Trent Alexander-Arnold's pass 20 yards from goal, Kane deftly shifted the ball into space before unleashing a blistering strike that cannoned into the net off the underside of the crossbar.

Kane's 26th goal in 35 Wembley appearances for England was swiftly followed by his 27th in the 76th minute.

Running to Alexander-Arnold's pin-point pass, Madueke teed up Kane with a low cross that the striker slotted home in typically predatory fashion from 12 yards. Capping a night to remember, Kane exited to a standing ovation when he was substituted moments later. — AFP

Germany rally to hold Dutch after conceding early

DUTCH SCORE FIRST GOAL AFTER 100 SECONDS

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands: Germany conceded a goal after 100 seconds but forced their way back to share the points as they drew 2-2 with the Netherlands in an entertaining Nations League Group A3 clash at the Johan Cruyff Arena on Tuesday.

Deniz Undav scored on his first start for Germany and captain Joshua Kimmich netted the second for a 2-1 half-time lead after the Dutch grabbed an early goal through Tijjani Reijnders.

But the hosts recovered to equalise through Denzel Dumfries early in the second half in a game played at a quick tempo and with occasional flashes of temper to make it a spicy derby.

Germany top the standings, level on four points with the second-placed Netherlands, after both won their opening group

games on Saturday. Bosnia, who are third, and Hungary in fourth place have a point apiece after they drew 0-0 in Budapest.

Netherlands, who beat Bosnia 5-2 in their opener, got off to a dream start as a perfect through ball from Ryan Gravenberch set Reijnders away to storm down on goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen and expertly tuck the ball into the net.

The Dutch had two more clear-cut chances to extend their lead but Dumfries headed wide from Xavi Simons' 15th minute free kick and five minutes later Simons had a chance of his own, with only the keeper to beat, after another accurate pass from Gravenberch, but hit his effort straight at Ter Stegen.

But while the home side created opportunities, the Germans dominated possession,

GERMANY COME BACK TO CLAIM 2-1 HALF-TIME LEAD



Netherlands' Denzel Dumfries heads at goal. – Reuters

moving the ball around quickly, and soon had the Dutch on the back foot.

Germany's Jamal Musiala

intercepted an errant pass from Matthijs de Ligt, who had a similar defensive lapse against Bosnia, to set up the 38th minute

DUMFRIES' SECOND-HALF EQUALISER SECURES POINT

equaliser for Undav.

The visitors were ahead on the stroke of halftime after stretching the Dutch defence, who had by then lost Nathan Ake to a suspected hamstring injury that saw him carried off on a stretcher.

Robert Andrich's long pass to the left wing was hooked back across goal by David Raum, who showed resolute determination, and the unmarked Kimmich had an easy back post tap-in.

DE LIGT SUBSTITUTED

De Ligt was replaced for the second half amid several tweaks by coach Ronald Koeman that served to get his side back into the game.

Striker Brian Brobbey's strength saw him hold off defenders and get the ball square for Dumfries to make it 2-2 six minutes into the second half to

the delight of the Amsterdam crowd.

Germany then squandered three good opportunities to retake the lead as Kai Havertz missed from close range, Undav then unsuccessfully tried to chip keeper Bart Verbruggen and finally Raum headed wide at the back post.

A late German penalty appeal was turned away by the Italian referee, who was given an earful by visiting coach Julian Nagelsmann at the final whistle.

"He didn't blow well for either side," he complained.

But Dutch skipper Virgil van Dijk was pleased with how things turned out.

"At times it was very good. We created chances, the guys who came on showed themselves well. That is what we want, that gives positivity," he said. — Reuters



MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE
4,724.755

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$70.85
BRENT \$70.80
LIGHT \$ 67.45





بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

All the best and everything you need

Benefit from the Wage Protection Scheme with SME Business Banking

Dedicated Call Center for SME Customers

[www.bankdhofar.com](#) 2477.5773

Please Scan to know more





NEW PARTNERSHIP

UK-BASED FIRM TO INVEST IN OMAN’S BLOCK 8 MINERAL CONCESSION



Alara Resources is actively exploring additional opportunities for copper, zinc, silver and gold in Oman and Saudi Arabia.

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

London-listed exploration company Power Metal Resources has taken a significant step into the Sultanate of Oman by signing a non-binding Heads of Terms (HoT) with Alara Resources and Awtad Copper. This strategic partnership aims to facilitate Power Metal’s investment of up to \$740,000 to earn a 12.5-per cent stake in the Block 8 mineral concession, located in the Hazm area of northwestern Oman.

Alara Resources, an Australia-based mining and exploration firm, is currently focused on expanding its operations in the Middle East. Its flagship project, the Al Wash-hi – Majaza Copper-Gold Project, has positioned Alara as a key player in Oman’s mining sector. The company is actively exploring additional opportunities for copper, zinc, silver and gold in Oman and Saudi Arabia. Awtad Copper holds a joint venture with Alara and is dedicated to the Block 8 Project.

The formal agreement is expected to be finalised within 15 days, although the non-binding nature of the HoT leaves some uncertainty. Despite this, Power Metal’s management expresses confidence in moving forward, highlighting the potential of Block 8 based on historical data.

CEO Sean Wade emphasised the significance of this opportunity, stating, “I am delighted to be sharing this news for Power Metal in the Arabian Shield, expanding the Power Arabia portfolio into Oman.” He indicated that the exploration efforts could validate the area’s mineral potential.

The terms of the HoT outline that Power Metal will manage the exploration programmes during the investment phase. The company is tasked with overseeing all aspects of the exploration activities, including management, planning, execution, interpretation and reporting, in consultation with Awtad Copper.

TURN TO PAGE 14

Industrial sector leads Oman’s economic growth

THE industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman has achieved remarkable economic growth in the first quarter of 2024, positioning itself as a key driver for sustainable development and economic diversification under Oman Vision 2040.

According to the latest data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), Oman’s manufacturing sector grew by 9.2 per cent at constant prices compared to the same period in 2023, with production value increasing from RO 871 million to RO 951 million across various industrial activities. This growth accounted for 10% of Oman’s GDP.

The most significant contributors to this growth were the basic chemical industries, which saw a 6.4% increase, and other manufacturing industries, which grew by 6.3%. The output in these sectors rose to RO 338.2 million and RO 545.2 million, respectively.

DRIVING FACTORS BEHIND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, expressed his satisfaction with the rapid growth of Oman’s industrial sector.

He highlighted that Oman’s industrial sector is outperforming the global average. While global industrial production grew by just 0.9% in the first quarter of 2024, Oman’s manufacturing industries saw more significant expansion due to strong governmental support and a focus on enhancing local products for both domestic and international markets.

Dr Masan attributed the sector’s success to the adoption of new technologies in supply chain management, which helped streamline operations and enhance production efficiency.



In the first half of 2024 alone, Salalah Free Zone secured RO 68 million in new investments.



DR SALEH BIN SAID MASAN

Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry

Many Oman factories have implemented advanced tracking systems and logistics technologies, contributing to sustained growth despite global economic challenges such as fluctuating energy prices and supply chain disruptions.

Additionally, Omani manufacturers have strategically adapted to changes in raw material and energy prices, making them more resilient to external pressures.

Oman’s efforts in industrial development have been recognised globally.

The country ranked 53rd worldwide and 4th regionally on the 2024 Industrial Performance Index for Competitiveness, issued by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

This ranking reflects the effectiveness of Oman’s policies aimed at improving its industrial sector’s competitiveness.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion continues

to support the sector by simplifying administrative procedures, offering tax incentives and facilitating access to credit. These efforts have made it easier for investors to establish and expand their businesses. Additionally, the government provides land and services at competitive prices for industrial projects, with a particular focus on high-priority industries and advanced technologies.

ENHANCING INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN MANUFACTURING

To further enhance the sector, Oman is investing in research and development (R&D), digital technologies and automation. The ministry has established research centres to foster innovation, supporting start-ups through manufacturing incubators.

Collaboration with academic institutions ensures the practical application of scientific and technical research in industry.

TURN TO P15

OQEP eyes 35 MW solar plant to power Oman upstream assets

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP), which recently announced its intent to divest 25 per cent of its equity via an Initial Public Offering (IPO) on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), plans to tap solar energy to support the decarbonisation of its upstream operations.

OQEP — the upstream arm of state-owned global integrated energy group OQ — says it is currently collaborating with its green energy investment peer OQ Alternative Energy (OQAE) on the development of a 35 MW capacity solar power project to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its



Solar power is among a raft of options being weighed by OQEP to help achieve its decarbonisation goals.

operations.

While OQEP has a sizable portfolio of operating and non-operating assets in Oman, its primary target for decarbonisation is Block 60, which currently produces around 60,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day (boe/day). To maintain sustainable growth from the concession, OQEP plans to implement a robust exploration strategy aimed at unearthing other potential reservoirs as well.

In addition to plans for solar energy, OQEP is also working to connect Block 60 with the national electricity network. Slated for completion by mid-2025, this linkage will support Block 60’s transition away from gas and diesel-powered electricity supply.

At a media briefing earlier this week to announce the company’s divestment plan, officials outlined OQEP’s broader strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 1 and 2) to Net-Zero by 2050.

This target will apply to the company’s operated assets Block 60 and Block 8, the Musandam Gas Plant, and company-operated processing facility and export terminal. In addition, routine flaring is proposed to be eliminated by 2027.

According to officials, the switch from diesel to gas for power generation, coupled with the use of modern technology, has enabled the company to slash its GHG intensity to below 15 kg CO2/boe in its operated assets, well be-

low the target set under the Oil & Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI).

At the same time, the deployment of a smart Fugitive Methane Leak Detection tool has helped reduce GHG emissions by detecting and repairing leaks.

“OQEP has identified various GHG reduction opportunities over the next 10 years, including flare reduction projects, energy efficiency projects, process optimisation and renewable energy projects.

“The company also intends to implement additional emission reduction initiatives in the future that are expected to deliver a reduction of up to 40 per cent of Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions from a 2021 baseline,” the company added.

BUSINESS

QUICK TAKES



The pact authorises Scope Fuel Company to use the Al Maha Petroleum brand and trademark to manage and operate fuel filling stations across Saudi Arabia.

OMANI FUEL MARKETING FIRM INKS PACT IN KSA

NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG, a publicly traded fuel marketing company in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced a significant milestone in its international expansion. On September 10, 2024, the company signed a 20-year franchise agreement with Scope Fuel Company in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This agreement authorises Scope Fuel Company to use the Al Maha Petroleum brand and trademark to manage and operate fuel filling stations across Saudi Arabia. The partnership is expected to enhance Al Maha Petroleum's sales and profit margins significantly, it said in a filing to the Financial Services Authority (FSA) on Wednesday.

Significantly, Al Maha is the second Omani fuel marketing company to expand its footprint beyond Oman's borders. Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO), another publicly traded company, recently announced the launch five new service stations in Saudi Arabia, including its first location in Al Riyadh, increasing its total to 35 stations in the country. OOMCO's presence in Tanzania remains stable with 12 service stations.

Affirming its commitment to environmental sustainability, OOMCO is actively rolling out Vapour Recovery Units (VRUs) at its fuel stations in Oman. These units capture petrol vapour released during unloading and refuelling, directing it back into underground storage tanks to reduce emissions. To date, 25 stations have been equipped with VRUs, leading to a reduction of 952 tonnes in emissions during H1 2024.

OMAN OIL PRICE DECLINES 99 CENTS

MUSCAT: Oman oil price (November delivery 2024) yesterday reached \$70.85 per barrel, comprising a decline of 99 cents compared to the price on "Tuesday", which stood at \$71.84.

The average price of Oman oil (September delivery 2024) stabilised at \$83.85 per barrel, thus \$1.35 per barrel higher than August delivery 2024. — ONA



Oman-based startup raises \$2.8m in seed funding

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

OMAN-BASED cloud kitchen startup IO Kitchens announced that it has raised \$2.8 million in seed funding, led by Tanmia Small-Cap Fund.

In a statement, Hisham Hasan, CEO and Founder of IO Kitchens, shared how the funding will help expand the brand.

"We are deeply appreciative of the trust our investors have placed in us. This capital infusion will enable us to scale our operations, enhance our proprietary technology platform, and expand our culinary portfolio, all while continu-



HISHAM HASAN
CEO and Founder of IO Kitchens

ing to forge strategic partnerships that will propel IO Kitchens to new heights.

Our ultimate goal is to transform the food delivery experience in Oman and beyond in a way that resonates with today's tech-savvy consumers," he said.

The funding, led by Tanmia Small-Cap Fund, was supported by a diverse group of family offices and regional investors.

Khalid al Balushi, CEO of Tanmia, stated, "We are thrilled to close our first investment in our Tanmia Small-Cap Fund and support IO Kitchens' ambitious vision.

Their innovative approach to the cloud kitchen model is poised to make a significant impact on the food delivery sector, not just in

Oman, but across the region. We believe IO Kitchens is on the cusp of reshaping how food is delivered and enjoyed."

Established in 2021, the cloud kitchen enterprise currently operates in three locations in Oman, harbouring a portfolio of over 30 F&B brands, in addition to managing its own brands.

According to the global management consulting firm IMARC Group, the global cloud kitchen market was valued at \$71.1 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 9.86 per cent from 2024 to 2032, reaching \$170.0 billion by 2032.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the cloud kitchen market is projected to reach a value of over \$10 billion by 2029.

UK-BASED FIRM TO INVEST IN OMAN'S BLOCK 8 MINERAL CONCESSION

FROM PAGE 13

The initial investment of \$500,000 is earmarked for the period leading up to the renewal of the existing licence in April 2025, with an additional \$240,000 expected to follow.

Upon reaching the initial expenditure milestone, Power Metal will earn a 10 per cent interest in Block 8, with a further 2.5 per cent interest contingent on the additional spending.

Once the total investment of \$740,000 is

completed, the parties will negotiate a joint funding programme for future expenditures and ownership percentages.

Awtad Copper will retain the licences during this phase and will be responsible for obtaining the necessary approvals for exploration.

The collaboration underscores the growing interest in Oman's mineral resources, particularly in light of the proximity of the Al Wash-hi - Majaza Mine to Block 8.

Awtad Copper's established presence in

the region is expected to enhance operational efficiencies, providing local logistical support and stakeholder engagement for Power Arabia.

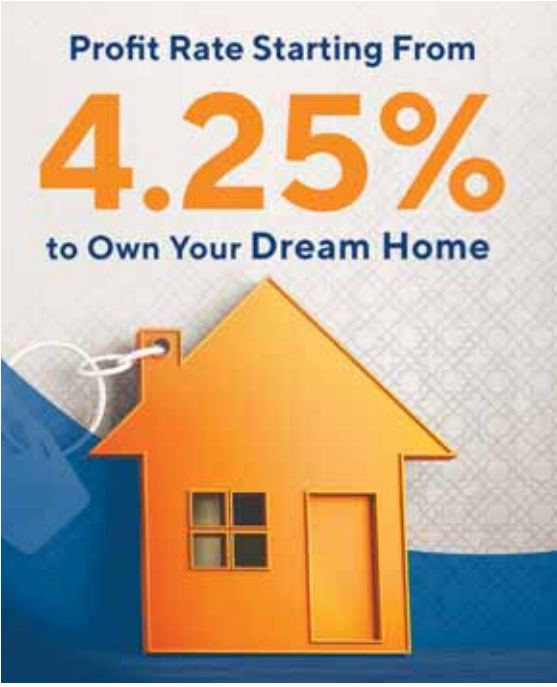
Shaikh Zeyad bin Talib al Maawali, Chairman of Awtad Copper, expressed optimism about the partnership, stating, "The exploration of Block 8 represents a significant milestone in unlocking the mineral wealth of Oman." He highlighted the combined expertise of the three entities as a critical factor in realising the project's potential.

SOHAR ISLAMIC LAUNCHES SHARIAH-COMPLIANT HOUSE FINANCE OFFER

MUSCAT: Sohar Islamic, Sohar International's Islamic Window, announces a new initiative to enhance homeownership opportunities through its fully Shariah-compliant housing finance offer. This programme features a compelling profit rate starting at just 4.25 per cent and will be available until December 31, 2024.

The initiative reinforces Sohar Islamic's commitment to providing market-leading financial solutions that blend competitive profit rates with flexible repayment options, ensuring accessible and efficient home financing while upholding the highest standards of financial integrity and customer satisfaction.

Abdulwahid al Murshidi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Sohar International, commented, "Our primary focus at Sohar Islamic is to prioritise our customers by delivering solutions that are not only value-driven but also responsive to market needs.



This new home financing offer reflects our profound understanding of customer expectations and the dynamic real estate market.

As a pivotal player in Oman's financial ecosystem, we are dedicated to supporting the real estate sector, which plays a critical role in the nation's economic growth.

Through this initiative, we aim to facilitate homeownership, stimulate real estate demand, and contribute to the overall economic stability of the Sultanate of Oman. This underscores our commitment to fostering long-term prosperity and sustainable development across the region."

The new home finance offer is available to individuals employed in the private sector, semi-government institutions, and government roles, with a minimum salary requirement of RO 300. The financing solutions come with flexible finance tenures of up to 25 years.

Dhofar Islamic reinforces commitment to Islamic finance

MUSCAT: Dhofar Islamic, a leading Islamic financial window in the Sultanate of Oman, sponsored the IFN Oman Forum 2024, a prominent event showcasing the growth and development of Islamic finance in the region.

The forum was organised by RED-money in partnership with the Financial Services Authority, where it provided a platform for industry experts, regulators, and financial institutions to discuss key trends, challenges, and opportunities in the Islamic finance sector.

Mohsin Shaik Mohamed, Head of Investment Banking & Capital Markets at Dhofar Islamic, represented Dhofar Islamic at the forum. He contributed as a moderator on a session entitled "Building on Oman's Growing Position as a Center for Islamic Capital Markets" discussing the influence of the new bond and Sukuk regulations on the Islamic capital market, the role of flourishing equity and IPO market play

The forum was organised by REDmoney in partnership with the Financial Services Authority, where it provided a platform for industry experts, regulators, and financial institutions to discuss key trends, challenges, and opportunities in the Islamic finance sector.



as part of a broader divestment programme and the meaning of the new Virtual Assets Regulatory Framework for digital assets in Oman.

The IFN Forum 2024 brought together the brightest minds in the Islamic

finance space to discuss essential developments and the ethical impact of Sharia compliant banking practices.

Attended by key dignitaries, industry experts and potential investors, the forum highlighted a selection of funda-

mental topics, including; Shariah Compliant Funds and Collective Investment Schemes in Oman, Islamic Structured Finance and Capital Markets in Oman and Shariah Compliant Marketplace Financing and Digital Initiatives in Oman among other discussions.

Dhofar Islamic's participation reaffirms the commitment to promoting responsible and sustainable Islamic banking practices in the Sultanate of Oman.

Over the years, Dhofar Islamic has maintained a prominent position as a leading financial service provider in Oman. The Islamic banking window of Bank Dhofar maintains standards of corporate governance, research and development, corporate social responsibility and customer service.

Dhofar Islamic aims to distinguish itself without standing customer experience, investing in Fintech, developing innovative products and launching state-of-the-art financial solutions.

TRADEPARTNERS



The two sides discussed ways to develop investment and trade partnerships between Oman and the US.

OMAN SHOWCASES INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE US CONGRESS

NEW YORK: Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), and his accompanying delegation yesterday met with officials United States Administration and Congress, as well as representatives of US companies specialised in the sectors of energy, health, information technology and tourism.

The two sides discussed ways to develop investment and trade partnerships between Oman and the United States. The Omani side showcased investment opportunities available in Oman with the objective of realising the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The two sides also looked into measures to make optimum use of the Oman-US free trade agreement (FTA). During the visit, Al Yousef also met with Omani students studying in the states of New York, Washington and Arizona. His delegation toured a number of American cities. On the sidelines of the visit, the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the United States of America organised a reception at the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center in Washington. In a speech on the occasion, Al Yousef outlined the objectives of the visit and its desired outcomes.

For his part, the Vice-President of the US Export-Import Bank spoke about the strong bonds between Oman and United States. She expressed appreciation for Oman's efforts to enhance joint economic cooperation. — **ONA**

OQ HOSTS ENERGY SECTOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

MUSCAT: OQ Group, in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Center, held a seminar today focused on emergency management in Oman's energy sector. The event aimed to address risk challenges, prevention strategies, and effective response mechanisms.

Attendees included experts from both government and private institutions, with discussions centred around risk management in the energy sector, its alignment with the national risk register, and emergency response strategies.

The second session highlighted the medical response to sector-related injuries and the role of hazardous material management in addressing accidents in oil and gas operations. — **ONA**

Significant progress achieved in construction of Manah 500 MW solar project

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

Muscat-based construction firm Trade Links and Services (TLS) has announced remarkable progress in the construction of critical infrastructure for the 500 MW Manah-1 IPP Solar Power Plant, one of the most significant renewable energy projects in Oman.

The company was entrusted with the construction, testing, and commissioning of the project's 400kV substation by the EPC contractor, Shanghai Electric Company. This development is a key component of Oman's broader push towards renewable energy.

The company's scope of work includes the construction of several essential facilities, such as a 400kV switchgear building, control room building, and a 33kV switchgear room.



All major buildings have been completed and are ready to receive the necessary equipment, with installations scheduled to begin in mid-September.

Additional facilities include administrative buildings, warehouses, and firefighting systems.

Crucially, the work also involves the installation, testing, and commissioning of key equipment, in-

cluding 400kV switchgear, two 275 MVA transformers, 33kV switchgear, and advanced control, protection, and SCADA systems.

Despite the ambitious timeline of just 11 months, TLS is on track

Oman ranked 21st in the world for investment

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman is ranked 21st globally in the list of best countries for investment and doing business for the year 2024, according to a report issued by the American CEO World magazine.

This advanced classification reflects the tireless efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman to improve the business environment and enhance its attractiveness to foreign direct investment.

The report indicated that the Sultanate of Oman enjoys an economic stability score of 92.12 points, in addition to positive assessments of its government policies and skilled workforce.

These factors, along with the classification of its institutional framework, which reached 92.34 points, confirm its attractiveness to foreign investment and entrepreneurship.

This advanced classification comes as a culmination of the Sultanate of Oman's efforts to implement Oman Vision 2040, which aims to diversify the national economy and reduce dependence on oil revenues.

It also highlights the role of the Invest in Oman Lounge, the leading official interface for major investments in the Sultanate of Oman, in simplifying the investor journey



Oman aims to diversify the national economy and reduce dependence on oil revenues.

The report indicated that the Sultanate of Oman enjoys an economic stability score of 92.12 points.

and providing comprehensive services.

The remarkable development in the infrastructure in the Sultanate of Oman, including free zones and special economic zones, which has enhanced its ability to attract foreign direct investment, and the focus on digital transformation and promoting technology-driven businesses has contributed to

strengthening Oman's position as a leading investment destination.

As the Sultanate of Oman continues to improve its business environment and provide innovative investment solutions, economists expect the Sultanate of Oman to maintain its attractiveness to international investors and continue to advance in global rankings in the coming years. — **ONA**

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR LEADS OMAN'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

FROM PAGE 13

Furthermore, the Ministry encourages the use of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) in factories, improving production processes' efficiency and accuracy while reducing costs.

Dr Masan emphasised the importance of adopting digital solutions such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and AI, which are becoming increasingly vital for modernising Oman's manufacturing sector.

By investing in R&D and innovation, Oman seeks to attract foreign investments in advanced industries and position itself as a leader in technological advancements in the region.

EXPORT GROWTH AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Oman's growing industrial sector has also led to a substantial increase in non-oil exports. By



Oman's industrial sector is outperforming the global average.

the end of May 2024, non-oil exports had risen by 11.2 per cent, reaching RO 3.045 billion and accounting for 31 per cent, of the country's total exports.

A notable success story is the exponential rise in exports to South Korea, which increased by 1000 per cent, fuelled by the free trade agreement between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and South Korea. Exports to South Korea during the first five months of 2024 amounted to RO 288 million, driven by

products such as naphtha, methanol, aluminium, and fish.

As the free trade agreement takes full effect, Omani non-oil exports are expected to further increase in the coming years.

The agreement aims to reduce or eliminate customs tariffs and enhance competition between markets, promoting open economies and economic cooperation between the GCC and South Korea.

FUTURE PROSPECTS AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Oman's Industrial Strategy 2040 outlines the government's vision for the sector's sustainable growth. Key initiatives include promoting national products in both local and international markets, developing human resources for the industrial sector, and modernising infrastructure.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Pro-

motion is collaborating with various entities to offer specialised training programmes and foster innovation in the workforce.

Mazen bin Humaid al Siyabi, Assistant Director-General for Industry, emphasised that the government is actively supporting industrial entrepreneurship by organising trade events and providing export facilities.

These initiatives, combined with strategic investments in infrastructure, aim to boost industrial output and create new job opportunities.

Oman's industrial sector is set to remain a central pillar of economic growth and diversification. With continued investment in technology, innovation and infrastructure, the sector is well-positioned to achieve sustained growth and contribute to the nation's long-term economic objectives under Oman Vision 2040. — **ONA**

to meet the project deadline. The company recently announced that all major buildings have been completed and are ready to receive the necessary equipment, with installations scheduled to begin in mid-September.

The project team is committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety, in line with guidelines established by EDF France, Shanghai Electric Company, and Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC).

The Manah-1 IPP Solar Power Plant, located in the Wilayat of Manah in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, is being developed by Wadi Noor Solar Power Company, a consortium formed by EDF Renewables and Korea Western Power Co Ltd (KOWEPO).

The plant will cover a 7.8 km² site and will feature more than 1 million bifacial solar photovoltaic

(PV) modules, supplied by JA Solar.

These bifacial modules, which can generate electricity from both sides, will be mounted on single-axis trackers to maximise solar energy output throughout the day.

Once operational, the plant will dispatch renewable electricity to the national grid through 400kV high-voltage cables, contributing significantly to Oman's energy diversification efforts. The project is expected to achieve commercial operations by the first quarter of 2025.

Moreover, the project aims to deliver at least 20 per cent in-country value (ICV) during its EPC phase, benefiting local suppliers, the workforce, and service providers.

This commitment underscores the project's alignment with Oman's national objectives of bolstering the local economy through sustainable development.

OPINION

Why do companies go bankrupt?



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

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

OVER the past four years, a significant number of companies in the West have gone bankrupt for various reasons. Many of these bankruptcies can be attributed to decisions to restructure balance sheets and refocus on working capital to manage market declines. Additionally, rising annual interest rates for financial and banking institutions have created significant challenges for businesses. In the region, the bankruptcy of national companies is often due to rampant mismanagement, unfair competition against local businesses, and financial problems linked to high loan interest rates. Today, thousands of companies in Britain, the United States, Germany, Japan and other major industrial countries are filing for bankruptcy. The Covid-19 pandemic, which dispro-

portionately affected the poor while enriching the wealthy, was also a major factor. It led to widespread insolvency and bankruptcy due to imposed restrictions, mounting debts, and a series of global financial crises. These pressures forced many companies to reorganise, liquidate assets and, ultimately, declare bankruptcy. In some countries, companies struggled with soaring interest rates—the highest in recent years—and difficulty accessing new commercial loans, compounded by declining consumer demand. Thousands of Western and American companies have submitted bankruptcy applications, which, in turn, contributes to declining inflation, lower borrowing costs, and reduced anxiety among business owners. The situation is similar in Europe, Japan, China, and other countries, where many companies have also

Highlights

According to Moody's, corporate default rates since the beginning of this year have reached

3% in Europe and 4.8% in the United States.

declared bankruptcy. Experts predict that this wave of corporate bankruptcies will escalate this year and next as countries enter an economic slowdown. According to Moody's, corporate default rates since the beginning of this year have reached 3 per cent in Europe and 4.8 per cent in the United States. These rates affect various sectors, including media and entertainment, consumer goods, utilities, transportation, healthcare, mining and steel, with sector-specific variations. Similar challenges may also affect companies in the region, including the Omani market, amid declining business activity, rising commercial loan interest rates, and difficulties faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in repaying debts. Furthermore, the issue of bounced checks due to reduced market activity and daily business declines is also prevalent.

MUTUAL DISCONTENT IS A GOOD PLACE FOR ASIA'S COAL SECTOR

Asia's coal industry isn't too happy about current market conditions, with miners, traders, shippers and end users all having various complaints at this week's annual gathering of the sector. The export-focused miners from top shippers in Indonesia and Australia may be content with the solid volumes they are achieving but feel prices for seaborne grades are too low. The freight sector complains that shipping rates are too low, especially given what they see as a looming shortage of vessels in coming years. Traders are concerned margins are being compressed as they seek to maintain volumes. And finally, end users such as electricity utilities and industries like cement feel that prices are still too high and don't reflect the economic struggles in much of Asia, especially in China, the world's biggest coal importer. Put together, the sentiment at the Coaltrans Asia event on the Indonesian resort island of Bali could be described as mutual discontent. But while it may seem counter-intuitive, that may actually be a comfortable spot for the coal industry. If one player is happy, say miners, by extension, others will be unhappy.

Highlights

Australian coal with an energy content of 5,500 kcal/kg, a grade popular with buyers in China and parts of Southeast Asia, ended last week at \$86.83 a tonne, down slightly from the \$90.29 it was at the same week last year. Lower-grade Indonesian coal with an energy content of 4,200 kilocalories per kilogramme (kcal/kg), as assessed by commodity price reporting agency Argus, ended last week at \$50.38 a metric tonne. This is largely unchanged from the \$52.23 a tonne that prevailed in the same week in 2023, and since then the price has been relatively stable with only a mild rally over the peak northern winter demand period, which subsequently eased. Australian coal with an energy content of 5,500 kcal/kg, a grade popular with buyers in China and parts of Southeast Asia, ended last week at \$86.83 a tonne, down slightly from the \$90.29 it was at the same week last year. Higher-grade 6,000 kcal/kg Australian coal, which is mainly bought by utilities in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, ended last week at \$143.64 a tonne, according to data compiled by global COAL, a level that continues its recent run of stability. The market isn't anticipating much change either, with global COAL's forward curve for 6,000 kcal/kg coal being virtually flat for the rest of this year and only showing a mild increase for the first half of 2025. It's a similar story for seaborne coal volumes, with top exporter Indonesia showing steady shipments, allowing for small changes due to seasonal demand shifts. Indonesia exported 43.09 million tons of all grades of coal in August, up only slightly from the 41.16 million from the same month in 2023, according to data. —Reuters

Resetting US-China economic relations



BARRY EICHENGREEN

The author, Professor of Economics and Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, is a former senior policy adviser at the International Monetary Fund

THE year 1979 was a pivotal one in Sino-American relations. On a historic visit to the United States, Deng Xiaoping, China's paramount leader, met with President Jimmy Carter at the White House and attended the Round-Up Rodeo in Simonton, Texas, where he donned a ten-gallon hat and charmed the crowd. And, reflecting the rapid normalisation of bilateral relations over the course of the decade, the two countries signed the US-China Science and Technology Agreement, which provided a framework for regulating technology, exchanging scientists, scholars and students and developing joint projects. Now, 45 years later, that historic agreement has been allowed to lapse, a casualty of an American presidential-election year and heightened US-China tensions. And this breakdown comes on top of US tariffs on imports from China, prohibitions on exports of advanced technologies to the country, and, most recently, the addition of 42 Chinese firms to a trade restriction list for supplying the Russian military. Economic relations between the US and China have never been worse. The implications are profound because several of the world's most pressing economic problems can be solved only with contributions from both countries. And, to address global challenges, active cooperation between the two economic powers is indispensable. That said, there are at least a few faint glimmers of hope. US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan's trip to Beijing in August – the first by a national security adviser since 2016 – created the possibility of a constructive dialogue between President Joe Biden and President Xi Jinping. More consequentially, the next US administration may better appreciate the need for bilateral cooperation and take steps to rebuild it. A starting point for rapprochement could be collaboration on the regulation of artificial intelligence. Absent such an agreement, a race to the bottom is inevitable, because both the US and China would shun regulations that risked leaving them behind in the development of this breakthrough technology.



US President Joe Biden meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 leaders' summit in Bali, Indonesia, in this file photo. — Reuters

artificial intelligence. Absent such an agreement, a race to the bottom is inevitable, because both the US and China would shun regulations that risked leaving them behind in the development of this breakthrough technology. A rehabilitated US-China Science and Technology Agreement would be the obvious framework for negotiating an appropriate set of standards. Second, there must be cooperation on the climate crisis, since only the largest countries, which are also the largest greenhouse-gas emitters, can lead the way. The Sunnylands Agreement negotiated late last year indicates awareness of this fact on both sides and suggests that there remains scope for two countries to work together. But progress also requires taking advantage of China's prowess in manufacturing green products. By making its subsidies regime more transparent, China could reassure the US that it is not dumping solar panels, windmills, and electric vehicles onto world markets. The US could then be induced to remove the tariffs that make importing China's green-technology products more expensive. In fact, there is a bargain to be had on trade more generally. If China did more to boost domestic consumption of manufactured goods, the US would have less reason to worry about the bilateral trade imbalance and about China's surplus vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Rebalancing the Chinese economy in this way could

then prompt a reduction in bilateral tariffs and support efforts to revive the World Trade Organization. China and the US will also have to work together to reduce low-income countries' debt burden and help them to finance their green transitions. Similarly, they will have to agree on a regime to limit unhealthy competition in outer space. Their mutual interest in countering the production and trafficking of fentanyl and other narcotics is already obvious. To be sure, there remain serious obstacles to cooperation: tensions over human rights, Taiwan, Ukraine, and China's failure to help broker a truce in the Middle East. For its part, China is angry about US trade and technology policies. The hope is that the US and China can compartmentalise areas where the two countries have irreconcilable differences and those where they can cooperate, as the economist Fred Bergsten has suggested. Whether this proves possible remains to be seen. A future Kamala Harris administration will highlight China's human-rights violations and privilege the complaints of American unions. And it seems unlikely that Trump in his second term would turn on a dime and embrace Xi in the manner he has embraced other strongmen, such as Vladimir Putin, Viktor Orbán, and Kim Jong-un. This is not to say that US politics is the only obstacle to progress. ©Project Syndicate, 2024

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

• Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
• Choose from a wide range of brands & models
• PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
• Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

أوربيت
Car Rental & Lease

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Panchakarma, Yoga, Kalari, Massage Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Marma Therapy & Post Delivery Care

Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair Service Road, Near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-King
Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com

SIT. VACANCY

BACHELOR degree in mechanical or electrical engineering ASNT level 2 (NDT), ASNT level 3 (NDT) additional advantage. LEAA foundation, LEAA lifting accessories diploma (LAC). Contact: pipe2566@yahoo.com

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

SIT. WANTED

29 YEARS old Indian female, MBA holder with 2 years experience. Seeking a suitable position. Currently in Muscat on visit visa. Contact: 78641071, shazashakeel@gmail.com

SIT. WANTED

Indian male 14 years experience light/ heavy driver. Looking for suitable opening currently in Oman. Contact: 77050986/ 91280205, email: kokkadmou@gmail.com

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

Indian male 6 years experience in accounts/ automobile/admin. Seeking for suitable opening in any field, currently in Oman. Contact: 78988055/ 92850930, email: ullasmon8@gmail.com

SENIOR accountant - Indian male above 12 years experience (8 years in Oman). Seeking for suitable opening. Currently in Oman. Contact: 98957235. Email: unnikrishnanalwys@gmail.com

28 YEARS Experience in Oman in sales, marketing and management, Indian with DL and release. Looking for a good job change. Contact: 78501743.

INDIAN male 6 years of experience in accounts / automobile / admin. Seeking for suitable opening in any field, currently in Oman. Contact: 78988055 / 92850930, email: ullasmon8@gmail.com

INDIAN MALE, 10 years experience in Oman as Coordinator have diploma, valid D/L with NOC ready to join. Contact: 95645241.

A SUDANESE resident in Salalah, Bsc of administrative sciences with 21 years of experience in the fields of (sales/ management/ logistics and fleet). Contact: +968 98510880.

Indian male Mechanical Engineer have overall 3 years experience in Oil and Gas Piping Field as QA/ QC and welding inspection. Seeking for suitable in any filed, currently in Oman.

Contact: 78805060.
Email: princeroyaranmula@gmail.com

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 | RABEE AL AWWAL 8, 1446 AH

FOR RENT

WAREHOUSE / workshop 2,600 sqm for rent in Misfa near Oman Cement Factory including accommodation contact: GSM 98286899, email: sales@jetsoman.com

16,000 sqm (2 portions of 8,000 sqm each). Open yard/ storage area with compound wall 24 hours CCTV surveillance & other amenities for rent in Jifnain close to Muscat Nizwa Highway. Contact: 99105784.

IN Ruwi, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, hall, kitchen, with car parking, RO 150 monthly only. Tel: 94402003.

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocoraches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

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

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

SIT. WANTED

Accountant with overs 6 years of experience Detail-Oriented Financial Professional: Expert in Accounting, Audit Prep, and Expense Management: Contact: +968 78320801, Ready to join immediately.

Indian Female
B.Com having 9 years experience as assistant accountant and administration looking for any suitable job. Contact 98500291. Email: andreacardoz23@gmail.com

FOUR STAR TECHNICAL SUPPLIES LLC
(FORMERLY) OMEIR NASSER AL FALAHY & PARTNERS TRAD. CO. (LLC)
"Quality products defined by exceptional service"

Our Products:
ELECTRICAL, BUILDING MATERIAL, HARDWARE, OILFIELD INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT & TOOLS

KRUPP, DEWALT, Schneider Electric, Hilti, DELTA, HITACHI, DORMER, Makita, BOSCH, Beta, Milwaukee, STANLEY, MOKYSLIP, IRWIN, MK, OLFA, SUNNELL, shindaiwa, Clarke, USRG, KUNGSPO, PCE, SENCOR, METZ CONNECT, CRO, Wera, DEVCON, BLACK & DECKER

P.O. BOX 3897, P.C. 112, RUWI, MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN
Tel: +96824837874, Fax: +96824831341
Mobile: +96899354944
Email: onasser@omantel.net.om / nelson@onasser.com

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: **99639264**

To advertise in Ministry of Information channels

إذاعة الشبياب | إذاعة سلطنة عمان | إذاعة القرآن الكريم | الرياضية | الثقافية | مباشر

To advertise | 71455532- 71455531- 71455530 | adv@omaninfo.om | izdiyar_info | izdiyar.info

إذهار izdiyar

QR Code: IZDIYAR_INFO



TRENDS

Visitors pose for photographs in Galeries Lafayette, one of the many iconic Paris locations to feature in the hit Netflix series "Emily in Paris", in Paris. —AFP

FOOD SCENE

Traders and customers are seen at the Maquis, an open air restaurant, in Bouake, Ivory Coast. —AFP

FASHION

Anna Wintour and Suki Waterhouse attend the Michael Kors Spring/Summer 2025 fashion show during New York Fashion Week in New York. —AFP

LIFESTYLE

A worker of Domaine Sermier holds a batch of grapes as part of a pinot noir grape harvest for Cremant at a vineyard, in Brery, in the eastern French Jura wine region. —AFP

TRAVEL

Palm trees surround a structure in ancient city of Babylon, some 100 km south of the Iraqi capital Baghdad. —AFP

art & life

THURSDAY | SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 | RABEE AL AWWAL 8, 1446 AH | OMAN OBSERVER | www.omanobserver.om | features@omanobserver.om

MASIRAH ISLAND'S
CRITICAL ROLE IN
THE CONSERVATION
OF SEA TURTLES

Masirah Island plays a critical role in the conservation of sea turtles, hosting four species, including endangered loggerheads. Despite facing threats like bycatch, light pollution and marine debris, ongoing conservation efforts—local engagement, beach cleanups and satellite tracking—offer hope for safeguarding these turtles' future and preserving the island's unique ecosystem... **P20**

FILM

New
'Beetlejuice'
creeps its way
to top of N
America box
office

IT WAS 36 YEARS in the coming, but Warner Bros.' new comedy horror "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" scored a sensational opening this weekend, earning an estimated \$110 million in North American theatres, analysts said.

Tim Burton's original "Beetlejuice" had a slow start -- it took in a mere \$8 million at its 1988 opening -- but "this time, audiences knew what to

expect and it's a mainstream smash," said David A. Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research.

The new film again stars Michael Keaton in the grimly hilarious title role and includes two other veterans of the campy original, Winona Ryder and Catherine O'Hara.

New to the cast are Jenna Ortega (whose role as TV's creepy "Wednesday" made her a natural for the role), Justin Theroux, Monica Bellucci and Willem Dafoe.

Longtime box-office leader "Deadpool & Wolverine," the Disney and Marvel superhero comedy, was a very distant second, with \$7.2 million in ticket sales for the Friday-through-Sunday period, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations said.

Overall, the Ryan Reynolds/Hugh Jackman film hasn't done badly, however, taking in close to \$1.3 billion domestically and abroad in its seven weeks out.

In third, up one spot from last weekend, was biopic "Reagan" from

ShowBiz Direct and MJM Entertainment, at \$5.2 million.

Dennis Quaid stars in a sympathetic look at the life of the 40th US president.

In fourth place, down two spots, was sci-fi horror film "Alien: Romulus," from Disney-owned 20th Century Studios, at \$3.9 million.

Cailee Spaeny and David Jonsson play space colonists who encounter deadly xenomorphs in an abandoned space station.

The weekend's fifth spot went to Sony romance drama "It Ends With Us," at \$3.8 million. Blake Lively stars and co-produced the film, whose accumulated foreign and domestic ticket sales now surpass \$300 million.

Rounding out the top 10 were: "The Forge" (\$2.9 million) "Twisters" (\$2.3 million) "Blink Twice" (\$2.1 million) "Despicable Me 4" (\$1.8 million) "The Front Room" (\$1.7 million) —**AFP**

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



rmaqballi18

Follow

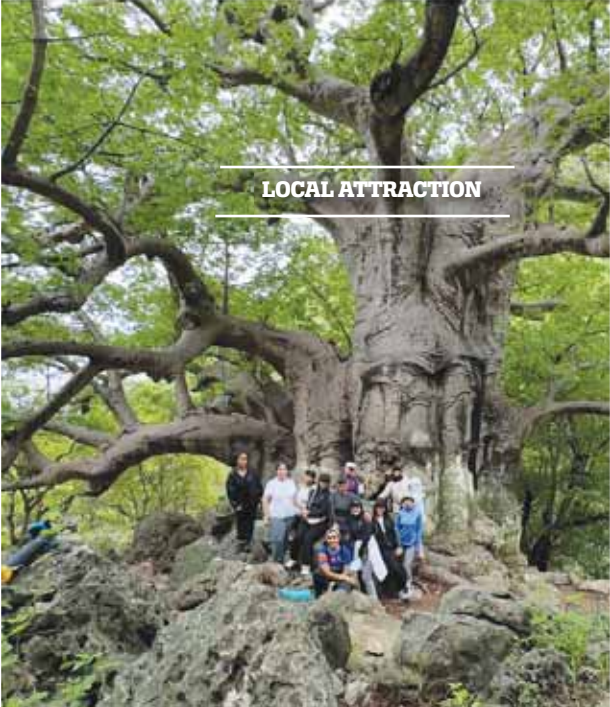


GRACEFUL JUMP



salalah_explore

Follow

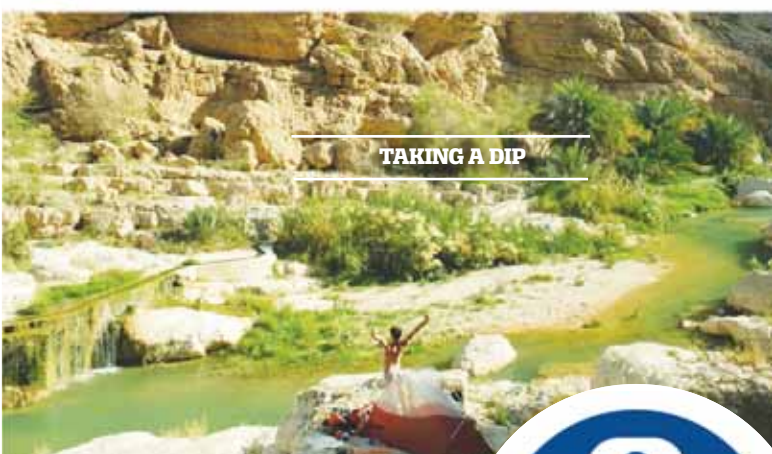


LOCAL ATTRACTION



vali.levi

Follow



TAKING A DIP

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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

0



‘Emily in Paris’ spotlights designer looks with product placement

FROM GOOGLE AND Samsung to LVMH, AMI, Jacquemus and even Lidl, brands galore take centre stage in the latest season of Netflix hit series “Emily in Paris”, outshining its plot and characters.
The US streaming giant has teamed up with Google to redirect viewers, using its Lens tool, to a website selling every outfit worn by the protagonists simply by photographing the screen.
With clicks spiking, Netflix is cashing in on commissions and a “next-level kind of engagement”, the firm said in a statement.
Emily Cooper, the series’ ditzy American heroine

who relocates to Paris from Chicago to work for fictional luxury marketing agency “Savour”, is conveniently tasked in the show with developing innovative partnerships for real brands.
Such practices are restricted by French law regulating product placement and surreptitious advertising in film and television productions -- but that legislation does not apply to streaming content.
“This way of working is new, for us French people, but it is common in American markets where brands are integrated very early on, from scriptwriting and where advertisers put down significant amounts

of cash. Jean-Dominique Bourgeois, who heads a French agency dedicated to product placement, said.
Bourgeois, whose firm Place to Be Media developed the partnership between “Emily in Paris” and McDonald’s in season three, says companies have budgets ranging from 500,000 to one million euros (between \$550,850 and \$1.1 million) for a “scripted placement”.
“It’s a good deal for brands that would spend a lot more for a multi-country campaign,” he said.

NEW CLIENTS
Second-hand designer clothing platform Vestiaire Collective paid for a few minutes of fame when Emily’s best friend Mindy -- supposedly broke -- sold pieces from her designer wardrobe in a detailed scene.
The French company, contacted by AFP, did not reveal the cost of the deal but said it aimed to boost its brand’s reputation, targeting growth in the US, which makes up 20 per cent of its sales.
The fashion firm, which offers 900 reference pieces inspired by Emily’s wardrobe, has recorded an increase in new clients, sellers and buyers.
Emily’s ever-more extravagant looks across four seasons are nevertheless high-selling hits.
Memorable clothes include a passe Kangol bucket hat in the first season, a plethora of bright yellow looks and berets in the second season, as well as a masquerade ball striped suit and Mindy’s fuzzy blue hat in season four.

MAKING ‘EYES BLEED
The programme’s costume designer Marilyn Fitoussi, who says she makes “eyes bleed” with her bold fashion choices, has turned Emily’s wardrobe into a character in its own right.
“I am often called up by brands whose visibility has slightly declined or that are looking to reach different, younger customers,” Fitoussi told French financial newspaper Les Echos.
The designer pointed out that the first season’s limited budget meant she had to dress the protagonist only in second-hand and vintage clothing.
“I don’t get paid by brands and I don’t want to be,” she said.
Since then, fashion magazines have picked apart each and every attire as they would a runway show -- with every branded scene, displaying a Louis Vuitton belt or Emily’s running gear, carefully shot.
“Watching the series gives you the troubling impression of wandering around a massive mall,” GQ journalist Adam Sanchez said.
The culture and cinema reporter says the practice “has ramped up insanely” in the most recent season, with four product placements in the first four minutes of episode one.
But viewers know what to expect, Sanchez says -- and they are asking for more.
“It is a particular kind of viewing experience,” he said.
“They don’t really come for the plot, which is minimal, as much as for what Emily is wearing and consuming.” --AFP



Nobel peace laureate Malala brings new documentary to Toronto

NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE Malala Yousafzai, who unveiled her first documentary with Apple TV+ at the Toronto film festival, said on Monday that its inspiring story of elderly South Korean women sea divers dovetails perfectly with her own activism.
“The Last of the Sea Women” tells the compelling story of the matriarchal haenyeo community, whose members support themselves by fishing off South Korea’s Jeju island, using only wetsuits, masks, flippers, baskets and hooks.
The traditional community, inscribed on Unesco’s intangible

speaking candidly about their difficult jobs, which involve holding their breath underwater for up to two minutes and includes beautiful under-sea images of them at work.
It explores how the haenyeo are attempting to breathe new life into their culture through training and social media outreach and how they work together to prevent over-fishing.
It also examines the threat they believe is posed by the release into the Pacific Ocean of wastewater from Japan’s stricken Fukushima nuclear power plant.
“I met them first when I was a



cultural heritage list in 2016, has existed for centuries but is at risk as many of the women are now in their 60s, 70s or even 80s.
“I was looking for stories of women... I wanted stories of their resilience. And when I heard about this project from Sue, I was like, ‘This is exactly what I’m looking for,’” Yousafzai said in an interview with Korean-American director Sue Kim.
“When I look at the stories of the haenyeo, it inspires me about the possibilities and the capabilities that women have in their bodies, in their minds,” said the 27-year-old Pakistani activist, who is one of the film’s producers. “They have inspired me in so many ways, in their activism and how they are cooperating with nature, how they have built the community.”
In the 1960s, 30,000 women plucked everything from abalone to octopus from the sea to support their families. Today, that number has dwindled to 4,000.
The film shows the women

child, and I was so struck by them, because they cut such a confident, bold figure,” Kim, making her feature directorial debut, said.
“They’re so physically agile and adept and strong, and they’re advocating for the environment, and they’re caring about the next generation.”
As a teenager, Yousafzai survived a 2012 assassination attempt by the Taliban over her campaigning for education rights for girls. She was co-awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 at age 17.
She signed a deal with Apple TV+ in 2021 to produce content focused on women and girls and has started her own production company.
“Storytelling has been part of my activism, and I believe that we need to create platforms and opportunities for girls and women to reflect on the world as they see it,” Yousafzai said.
“I hope to continue to work with these incredible female directors and storytellers to bring more stories to the screen.” --AFP



Masirah Island's Critical Role in the Conservation of Sea Turtles

BY NAJAH AL RIYAMI
AND YERU EBÜEN

Sea turtles, the elegant and ancient mariners of our oceans, play a vital role in the marine ecosystem. Out of the seven known species of sea turtles worldwide, four regularly nest on Oman's Masirah Island, making it a significant sanctuary for their continued survival. The island's unique ecosystem provides the ideal environment to support the diverse feeding habits of these species, from loggerheads feasting on crabs, clams and sea snails to green turtles grazing on seaweed, sea grass and algae. Hawksbill turtles, with their preference for sponges found in coral reefs, and olive ridleys, whose varied diet includes crabs, shrimp, sea urchins, and jellyfish, also thrive in the waters around the Wilayat of Masirah.

These remarkable creatures demonstrate a strong connection to their birthplace, often returning to the same shores to lay their eggs. From May to September, sea turtles from across the globe migrate back to Masirah to nest, as their ancestors have done for generations. The loggerhead, green, hawksbill, and olive ridley turtles all select different nesting sites across the island. The east coast of Masirah, with its rugged and underpopulated landscape, is the most favoured location. Loggerheads nest along the coastal strip, while green turtles and olive ridleys favour the areas of Bayadh and Ras Abu Rasas. Hawksbills are more selective, nesting exclusively at Ras Abu Rasas.

The sight of these turtles nesting is awe-inspiring, drawing visitors from around the world eager to witness this natural phenomenon. Sea turtles often dig two nests, one thought to be a decoy, to protect their eggs from predators. Yet, despite their remarkable survival instincts, these creatures face numerous challenges. Fishing nets, light pollution, marine debris, and ocean traffic threaten their existence, not just in Oman but globally. Raising awareness and taking action is crucial to safeguarding their future.

Both loggerhead and green turtles are classified as critically endangered, while olive ridleys and hawksbills are listed as vulnerable. Oman is playing an active role in the global efforts to conserve these species, with support from the Environment Authority, Environment Society of Oman, Future Seas and international organisations.

Through collective action, we are working to protect these majestic animals, ensuring their continued survival by addressing the threats they face and enhancing conservation measures.

A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

With approximately 30,000 loggerheads arriving each year, the island hosts one of the largest aggregations of these turtles globally, making it a critical site for conservation efforts. Despite its importance, loggerhead turtles on Masirah face numerous threats, spurring ongoing collaborations between the Omani Environment Authority, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and local conservation groups.

Masirah's secluded beaches and warm waters offer ideal conditions for sea turtles. The island's remote, arid landscape ensures relatively undisturbed nesting sites, while the surrounding ocean provides abundant food sources. Loggerhead turtles, locally known as rimani, have been nesting on the island for centuries, and their consistent return speaks to the suitability of the habitat.

However, Masirah's role as a key loggerhead rookery isn't limited to its geography. Conservationists, scientists, and the local community have long worked to preserve this fragile ecosystem. Since the 1970s, when turtle research first began on the island, efforts to monitor, tag, and protect loggerhead turtles have shaped Masirah into a conservation hub.

Despite its natural advantages, Masirah is also changing. As development increases, light pollution, bycatch from fisheries, and habitat degradation pose significant risks to the turtles. Artificial lighting from homes and infrastructure disorients nesting females and hatchlings, making it difficult for them to find the ocean. Some turtles mistakenly head inland, where their chances of survival plummet.

Another critical threat is bycatch—

turtles becoming entangled in fishing nets. Surveys conducted by the Environment Society of Oman (ESO) revealed that an estimated 2,000 loggerheads are caught annually in local fisheries. This high level of bycatch is contributing to a decline in the loggerhead population, which is now listed as critically endangered in the Northwest Indian Ocean.

Additionally, the ingestion of marine debris, particularly plastic has become a growing concern. Turtles often mistake plastic waste for food, leading to digestive blockages and, in many cases, death. This issue is exacerbated by the presence of plastic pollution in the waters around Masirah, a problem that requires urgent attention.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS ON THE GROUND

Efforts to safeguard Masirah's sea turtles have intensified in recent years. One of the primary strategies involves reducing light pollution. A collaborative project between the ESO, the Environment Authority, and local partners aims to install turtle-friendly lighting along prime nesting beaches.

By shielding bright lights and encouraging low-glare bulbs, conservationists hope to provide turtles with a safe, dark environment conducive to successful nesting.

Local engagement has also been crucial to these efforts. The fishing community on Masirah, historically a source of bycatch, has been involved in bycatch reduction programmes. Workshops on sustainable fishing practices, combined with the deployment of remote fisheries observers, have helped fishermen understand the impacts of their activities on turtle populations. Initiatives like these ensure that conservation isn't just driven by scientists but by the community itself.

In addition to light and bycatch management, beach cleanups have played a vital role in turtle conservation. In 2017, volunteers removed over 38 tonnes of

discarded fishing nets from Masirah's beaches. Such initiatives have not only helped protect nesting turtles but have also raised awareness about the broader environmental issues affecting the island.

The Masirah Turtle Conservation Project (MTCP), which ran from 2004 to 2008, was the first large-scale initiative in the region to study the turtle populations on the island. The project aimed to assess the nesting turtle populations and provide environmental education, in addition to developing a sustainable General Management Plan for the island. In collaboration with local authorities, fisher associations, and schools, the MTCP also introduced satellite telemetry to track loggerhead, olive ridley, and green turtles during their nesting periods.

Using satellite transmitters, the team successfully tracked several turtles between 2006 and 2008, revealing important insights into their migratory patterns.

Loggerhead turtles primarily remained in oceanic areas near Socotra Island, while olive ridley turtles migrated to neritic zones within 120 kilometres of their nesting sites. Green turtles, on the other hand, travelled over 2,400 kilometres into the Red Sea, selecting foraging grounds hundreds of kilometres apart.

Although extensive tracking of loggerhead turtles continues today, further tracking of green and olive ridley turtles remains necessary to verify previous findings and better understand their behaviours. Hawksbill turtles have since been studied, with 10 individuals tracked in 2011 and 2012.

Improving conservation efforts, enhancing regional understanding of turtle populations and ensuring the sustainable management of these endangered species in Oman's waters are crucial.

A HOPEFUL FUTURE

The combined efforts of local communities, government bodies, and international partners offer hope for the sea turtles of Masirah Island. With ongoing monitoring, public education, and targeted conservation programmes, the island remains a beacon of hope for one of the world's most endangered turtle populations.

As development continues, finding a balance between human activities and wildlife conservation is key to ensuring the survival of these ancient creatures.

THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES, GOVERNMENT BODIES, AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS OFFER HOPE FOR THE SEA TURTLES OF MASIRAH ISLAND. WITH ONGOING MONITORING, PUBLIC EDUCATION, AND TARGETED CONSERVATION PROGRAMMES, THE ISLAND REMAINS A BEACON OF HOPE FOR ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST ENDANGERED TURTLE POPULATIONS.