

IN BRIEF

HM’S GREETINGS TO BOTSWANA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Duma Gideon Boko of the Republic of Botswana, on his country’s National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan lauded the bilateral relations between the two countries. His Majesty also wished Botswana to achieve continuous growth and stability under the leadership of President Duma.

OMAN AFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO COMBAT RACISM

The Sultanate of Oman has affirmed its commitment to international efforts aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, safeguarding human dignity, and promoting the values of equality and mutual respect. This came during its participation in the high-level meeting to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Oman underscored the importance of translating international principles and commitments into tangible impact on the lives of peoples and communities. **DETAILS ON P3**

BURNHAM VOWS ‘NEW PATH’ FOR BRITAIN



Britain’s Prime Minister Andy Burnham delivers a speech in Liverpool on Tuesday. — **AFP**

Prime Minister Andy Burnham promised greater public control over essential services on Tuesday as he vowed to reverse decades of privatisation during an emotional first speech to his Labour party’s annual gathering as leader. The 56-year-old former mayor of Manchester - in office for just 10 weeks - choked back tears as he spoke about his late father and detailed his long-term ambitions to establish free social care, reform the UK’s electoral system and controversially adjust pensions. “I accept people will not agree with every part of it, but I believe it can turn Britain around,” Burnham told a packed audience in Liverpool.

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY REVIEWS PROJECTS



HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, chaired the meeting of the Muscat Governorate Municipal Council. During its meeting, the council reviewed a presentation delivered by the Directorate-General of Health Services for Muscat Governorate on the health services and programmes provided in the governorate, the associated performance indicators, completed development projects, and health projects within development plans, in addition to development and maintenance works and efforts to promote public health and community services. **DETAILS ON P2**

OMAN URGES ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

THE Sultanate of Oman stressed the importance of identifying responsibilities and enhancing oversight and accountability on activities related to illegal settlements.

The statement was made at the general debate under Item 7 of the agenda of the 63rd session of the Human Rights Council concerning the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.

The statement was delivered by Idris bin Abdulrahman al Khanjari, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations and Other International Organisations in Geneva. He expressed the Sultanate of Oman’s deep concern over the continued humanitarian suffering in the Gaza Strip, the devastation and displacement caused by the war, and the escalating humanitarian needs that require an urgent and sustained international response.

The Sultanate of Oman’s statement also addressed the escalating settlement activity, incursions, settler violence, land confiscation, and forced displacement in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The Sultanate of Oman stressed the importance of accountability for illegal activities supporting settlements. It expressed



A boy looks out of a vehicle window during a mass funeral at the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on Tuesday. — **AFP**

condemnation for the continued occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights and the recent Israeli incursions and attacks in Syria, stressing the need to respect Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to adhere to the rules of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

In its statement, the Sultanate of Oman explained that the scale of the violations and challenges facing the Palestinian people necessitates an international stance that goes beyond condemnation to taking practical and effective steps to ensure accountability. It clarified that sustainable peace cannot be achieved in the presence of impunity, and that the rules of international law should not be applied selectively.

The Sultanate of Oman stated that respect for human rights would not be complete merely by condemning violations, but requires ensuring accountability for them and enforcing the law on everyone without exception. This strengthens the protection of human rights, consolidates the rule of law, and preserves the credibility of the international legal system.

Oman renewed its call to the international community to assume its responsibilities and take action to protect the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. — **ONA**

Oman advances 8 places in Global Innovation Index

GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman has achieved notable progress in the innovation inputs pillar of the Global Innovation Index 2026 report, advancing 8 places to rank 47th globally, compared with 55th last year. This reflects the foundations, policies and programmes supporting innovation and the promising investment environment.

Oman remained stable at 69th globally in the overall ranking. The index, issued annually by the World Intellectual Property Organisation

(WIPO), measures 139 economies worldwide this year.

The report’s findings indicated that 15 of Oman’s sub-indicators within the overall index ranked among the world’s top 40 countries. For example, Oman ranked 9th globally in net foreign direct investment inflows as a percentage of GDP, 14th globally in the level of development of specialised clusters, and 16th globally in electricity output per million population. It also ranked 18th in the



Oman remained stable at 69th globally in the overall ranking.

policy stability for doing business indicator, 20th in the information and communications technology access indicator, 22nd in the proportion of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes, 24th in the entrepreneurship policies and culture indicator, and 26th in the university-industry research and development collaboration indicator.

The results of the index’s pillar rankings at the level of the Sultanate

of Oman showed progress in 6 of 7 pillars.

The institutions pillar was the strongest performer, reaching 39th place, supported by policy stability and an effective regulatory environment. It was followed by the infrastructure pillar at 54th, then the market sophistication pillar at 58th, advancing 12 places from last year.

The report clarified that there were qualitative leaps in some of Oman’s indicators globally.

TURN TO P5

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



The programme brought together 25 local-administration leaders in an integrated executive learning experience.

RAM concludes executive programme in local administration

MUSCAT: The Royal Academy of Management (RAM) concluded the Executive Programme in Local Administration, reinforcing its commitment to developing qualified national leadership and advancing sustainable development across Oman’s governorates.

The concluding event was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar.

The programme brought together 25 local-administration leaders in an integrated executive learning experience, designed to strengthen their readiness to contribute effectively to the empowerment of governorates and the realisation of Oman Vision 2040.

Combining contemporary management knowledge with practical application, the programme covered development planning, project management, leadership, effective administration, sustainable development and local investment.

Dr Ali bin Qasim al Lawati, President of the Royal Academy of Management (RAM), said that the programme aims to contribute to establishing a decentralised administrative structure that elevates service delivery and development. — ONA

Academic symposium on Omani currency, coins today



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth will organise an academic symposium on Wednesday, September 30, on readings about currency and coins in Omani civilisation.

The Ministry will be represented by the Literary Forum at the symposium, which will be held the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Muscat.

The symposium aims to highlight the role of currencies and numismatics throughout Oman’s rich historical civilisation. It will feature presentations by professors and specialists.

The programme of the symposium will include a number of working papers: A paper on Qarmatian coins minted in Oman (354–362 AH/965–983 AD)—to be presented by Dr Ibrahim bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Fadhli; A paper on the transition from metal coinage to paper currency in the Sultanate of Oman (1893–1974)—to be presented by Abdulaziz bin Ali al Kharusi; And an overview of archaeological coin hoards in Oman. — ONA

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY REVIEWS HEALTH SERVICES, SUSTAINABILITY



HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, on Tuesday chaired the meeting of the Muscat Governorate Municipal Council. — ONA

HH SAYYID Bilarab bin Haitham al Said, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, on Tuesday chaired the meeting of the Muscat Governorate Municipal Council.

During its meeting, the Council reviewed a presentation delivered by the Directorate-General of Health Services for Muscat Governorate on the health services and programmes provided in the governorate, the associated performance indicators, completed development projects, and health projects within development plans, in addition to development and maintenance works and efforts to promote public health and community services. This reflects the integration of efforts among the relevant authorities in developing the health system and elevating the level of services provided to the community.

Within the framework of promoting the preventive approach, the presentation addressed the foremost orientations aimed at enhancing prevention and community health by supporting initiatives designed to improve quality of life and reduce health risk factors, thereby strengthening community health and the sustainability of preventive efforts.

The Council ratified the minutes of its previous meeting and the recommendations

contained therein concerning the Ministry of Social Development’s plan for 2026, commending the efforts exerted to develop the social work system and enhance programmes and initiatives directed at various beneficiary groups, thereby contributing to supporting social development pathways and achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

In the context of the meeting, the Council reviewed the recommendations of the standing committees on a number of service-related, regulatory, and development topics. On the regulatory front, the Legal Affairs Committee addressed the regulations governing the housing of workers at construction sites located within residential neighbourhoods, in light of the potential social and health implications and manifestations affecting the character of residential areas. It emphasised the importance of reviewing the regulatory controls and requirements to strike a balance between the requirements of construction work and the preservation of residents’ safety and comfort.

On the health and environmental front, the Health and Environmental Affairs Committee examined the latest developments in the waste management sector at Muscat Municipality, including

the efficiency of transport operations, compliance with specified timings, and community awareness, thereby contributing to elevating the level of public cleanliness and reducing environmental and health impacts.

In furtherance of the development pathway, the Governorate Development and Growth Committee addressed a number of proposals aimed at diversifying facilities and activities in the Wilayat of Al Amerat, including a dedicated project for motorcycle enthusiasts, thereby contributing to enriching the service and recreational landscape and enhancing the foundations of development in the wilayat.

The Council also reviewed a number of incoming correspondences, including a proposal to rebuild Qurayat Hospital in a manner that copes with the urban expansion and population growth in the wilayat, contributing to enhancing the quality of health services provided, as well as proposals concerning the protection of sites of natural value and certain planning uses related to community needs.

It emphasised the importance of addressing these matters in a manner that keeps pace with service and development priorities and preserves the governorate’s natural assets. — ONA

TWO OMANI RESEARCHERS SECURE FIRST PLACE IN CULTURAL HERITAGE AWARDS IN SHARJA



SHARJA: Dr Huda bint Mubarak al Dairi and Dr Thuraya bint Abdullah al Jabri have won first place at the sixth edition of Sharjah International Award for Cultural Heritage, in the Studies and Research category (Arabic section), for their joint research titled: “Sustainability of the Sidr Tree (Christ’s thorn jujube) in the Sultanate of Oman in Light of Scientific and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Cultural Heritage.” The study aims to shed light on the Sidr tree in the Sultanate of Oman through an approach that integrates cultural heritage with scientific knowledge, highlighting its environmental, social, and economic value within Omani society.

The study recommended strengthening efforts to preserve the Sidr tree and expand its cultivation, particularly near honey apiaries, given its impact on supporting honey production and improving its quality.

Sharjah International Award for Cultural Heritage seeks to safeguard, preserve, and sustain cultural heritage, and is affiliated with Sharjah Institute for Heritage, a UNESCO Category 2 international centre. — ONA

Seminar to review thought of Abu Al Abbas Mohd bin Yazeed Al Mubarrad

MUSCAT: The scientific seminar ‘Readings in the Thought of Abu Al Abbas Mohammed bin Yazeed Al Mubarrad’, which will be held at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in the Wilayat of Suhar on October 5-6, will focus on one of the most prominent figures of Arabic language, grammar, and literature in the third century AH.

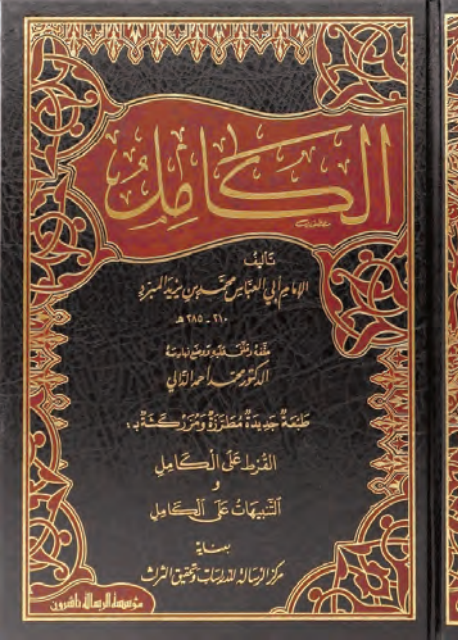
He is considered one of the scientific figures of Omani origin who made a prominent contribution to the progression of Arabic linguistic and literary studies.

Al Mubarrad was able to occupy a lofty scientific status among the scholars of his time and those who came after them, leaving behind a

scientific legacy that has remained present in the sources of language, literature, and grammar across the centuries.

The symposium comes within the framework of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth’s interest in safeguarding Omani intellectual and scientific heritage, and highlighting the contributions of prominent figures in building the Arab and Islamic civilisation.

Furthermore, the Literary Forum, through the Department of Cultural Programmes and Studies, continues to implement the project of symposia on scholars and thinkers. This serves as a cultural and scientific trajectory concerned with introducing figures who left



a prominent mark in the fields of thought, science, and literature, while elucidating their roles in enriching human knowledge and consolidating their presence in both national and Arab cultural memory.

The seminar seeks to present a comprehensive scientific reading of Al Mubarrad’s legacy and thought by reviewing his scientific biography and his standing among the luminaries of his era.

It examines the political, intellectual, and scientific environment that contributed to shaping his personality and formulating his cognitive output. This is alongside studying his relationship with the Abbasid era

and the intellectual and cultural transformations it witnessed, which had a clear impact on scientific life at the time.

The event addresses his works and scientific contributions, foremost of which is the book ‘Al Kamil’, considered one of the most important sources of Arab linguistic and literary heritage.

This is done through studying its scientific structure, authoring methodology, and cognitive value, as well as exploring the linguistic, literary, and historical dimensions it entails, which made it one of the most prominent books of Arab heritage and the most influential in the movement of authorship and study. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



The three-day event witnesses the participation of a number of international experts. — ONA

Virtual health event focuses on developing partnerships

TUNIS: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Health, participated on Tuesday in the proceedings of the International Virtual Health Event in Tunisia, which discusses the future of digital health, telemedicine, artificial intelligence, data governance, cybersecurity, infrastructure and financing.

The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman was headed by Sulaiman bin Nasser al Hiji, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Health for Administrative and Financial Affairs.

The three-day event, which witnesses the participation of a number of ministers, international officials and experts, and representatives of global health and financial organisations, focuses on developing partnerships and solutions that would support health services and enhance equity in access to healthcare.

The programme includes sessions on the digital transformation of healthcare, virtual hospitals, and the interconnection and integration of health systems and data, in addition to specialised workshops in artificial intelligence, digital health, and cybersecurity. — ONA

Sultan Qaboos Quran contest qualifiers begin

AL JABAL AL AKHDHAR: The Preliminary Qualifying Committee of the Sultan Qaboos Holy Quran Competition, in its 34th edition, supervised by the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science at the Diwan of Royal Court, commenced its work in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah.

Rashid bin Hamid al Dughaiishi, Chairman of both the Preliminary and Final Qualifying Committees of the edition of the competition, stated in a remark to ONA that the qualifiers, held at the hall of the Office of the Wali of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, saw the participation of 27 male and female contestants.

He explained that the participants compete across seven levels, comprising memorisation of the Holy Quran in its entirety, and memorisation of 24 consecutive parts, 18 consecutive parts, 12 consecutive parts, in addition to memorisation of 6 parts, 4 parts and 2 consecutive parts, with age requirements stipulated for levels four through seven. — ONA

DHOFARI DESIGNER SHINES AT MALAGA FASHION WEEK

MUSCAT: Omani designer Asfar bint Hamran Khamis, owner of the 'Leetchi Dhofar' fashion house, participated in the 15th edition of Fashion Week in the Spanish city of Malaga, which saw the participation of a number of designers and specialised fashion and design brands from Spain and beyond.

The Omani house's participation is the first of its kind by an Omani fashion house in this event, and the third by an Arab designer. During



Designer Asfar bint Hamran Khamis at the Malaga Fashion Week.

the event, the house presented a collection of designs inspired by Omani attire of Dhofari character, with its rich colours, embroidery

and aesthetic details, within a contemporary vision that preserves the features and identity of traditional dress.

The Fashion Week events were held on Calle Marqués de Larios, one of the most prominent streets in the city of Malaga, which was transformed into an open-air runway extending for approximately 300 metres, with the participation of a group of designers and creative talents in the field of fashion and design. — ONA

Oman backs global push to fight racism and hatred

THE Sultanate of Oman has affirmed its commitment to international efforts aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, safeguarding human dignity, and promoting the values of equality and mutual respect. This came during its participation in the high-level meeting to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Oman underscored the importance of translating international principles and commitments into tangible impact on the lives of peoples and communities.

The Sultanate of Oman's delegation was led by Shaikh Ambassador Mohammed bin Abdullah al Qatabi, Head of the Organizations Department at the



Oman underscored the importance of translating international principles and commitments into tangible impact on the lives of peoples. — ONA

Foreign Ministry.

The Sultanate of Oman highlighted its steadfast approach based on dialogue, understanding, and coexistence, and the national and international initiatives it has

translated into action, including the "Message of Peace" and "Human Fraternity," alongside the "Muscat Action Plan," which was launched at the United Nations Headquarters in June of this year. The Plan aims to

enhance the roles of traditional and indigenous leaders in countering hate speech and incitement, preventing genocide and atrocity crimes, and contributing to mediation and peacemaking.

In the conclusion of its statement, the Sultanate of Oman emphasised the importance of strengthening international cooperation, linking global commitments to action at the local level, benefiting from knowledge and expertise rooted in communities, and enhancing youth participation.

It renewed its determination to continue working with the United Nations and the international community towards a world in which human dignity is safeguarded, diversity is respected, and differences are transformed into spaces for mutual understanding, cooperation, and peacebuilding. — ONA



135 TONNES OF TREATED SAND RETURNED TO BEACH

SALALAH: The Environment Authority, in cooperation with Arva Greentech Remediation company, returned 135 tonnes of sand to its natural location on Auqad Beach in Salalah, after its complete clearance of any oil derivatives, as part of natural rehabilitation and environmental sanitation efforts for areas affected by the oil pollution witnessed on Salalah beach.

Ali bin Salim Bait Said, Director-General of Environment in Dhofar Governorate, stated that the return of these quantities of sand after their successful treatment represents a continuation of the national authority's efforts in preserving the Omani environment and sustaining its natural resources, emphasising that the keenness to utilise modern, innovative, and environmentally neutral technologies reflects the Environment Authority's commitment to restoring balance to affected ecosystems in a swift response to mitigate the impacts resulting from oil pollution. — ONA

Urban development exhibition, conference from October 5

SAUD AL ANSARI
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has announced details of Oman's hosting of World Habitat Day 2026 in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), alongside the Urban Development, Home and Construction Exhibition and Conference 2026. The announcement was made during a media briefing organised by the ministry at the Experience and Sales Centre in Sultan Haitham City to introduce the upcoming event.

The sixth edition of the exhibition and conference will be held from October 5 to 8 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre as part of the "October Urbanism" programme. The event

will bring together leaders, experts, real estate developers and investors to discuss the future of cities and showcase Oman's urban development experience and investment opportunities.

Maher bin Ali al Hinai, Director of Communication and Media at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, said that "October Urbanism" represents a platform that brings together various sectors and institutions under one roof. He noted that the event has evolved over the years from an initiative that began through social media platforms into an integrated event highlighting national projects and strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors.

He added that this year's edition is expected to involve around 50 countries, more than 60 real estate



The announcement was made during a media briefing organised by the ministry at the Experience and Sales Centre in Sultan Haitham City.

developers and about 200 exhibition stands, in addition to 25 small and medium enterprises. More than 85 papers will be presented by over 100 international and local speakers. He said the event focuses on four key themes centred on people, including scalable solutions for complete living, human-centred urban planning,

integrated communities and rapidly growing cities.

Al Hinai explained that the event will open local and international investment opportunities and provide a platform for exchanging knowledge and expertise among specialists, academics, developers and private-sector representatives. He stressed that Oman's hosting

of World Habitat Day activities in cooperation with UN-Habitat will add international momentum to the event, noting that this year's theme is "Adequate Housing for All".

Ana Claudia Rosbach, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, is scheduled to participate in the World Habitat Day programme, alongside sessions and papers addressing housing, urban resilience and quality of life. The programme will also include a ceremony for the presentation of the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour, recognising initiatives and institutions for their contributions to human settlements.

Al Hinai said "October Urbanism" is not limited to showcasing projects, but also aims to raise awareness of urban planning and highlight

investment opportunities, while launching projects and signing agreements in housing and integrated residential neighbourhoods.

He said the ministry is working with various partners to provide additional housing options and promote the concept of housing in future cities.

The event programme will address scalable solutions for integrated living, rapidly growing cities, human-centred urban planning and integrated communities. The ministry will also showcase future-city projects and opportunities associated with Sultan Haitham City, Al Thuraya City, Al Jabal Al Aali and the "Sorouh" initiative, allowing visitors to explore housing options while giving investors an opportunity to consider cooperation and partnership prospects.

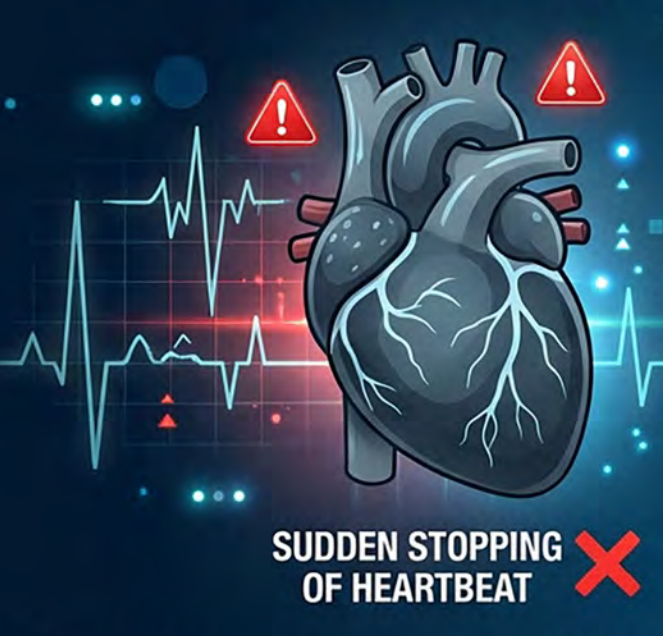
SPOTLIGHT

WORLD HEART DAY

CARDIAC ARREST VS HEART ATTACK: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

CARDIAC ARREST

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM FAILURE



1. CAUSE
ELECTRICAL MALFUNCTION
Heart's rhythm stops abruptly

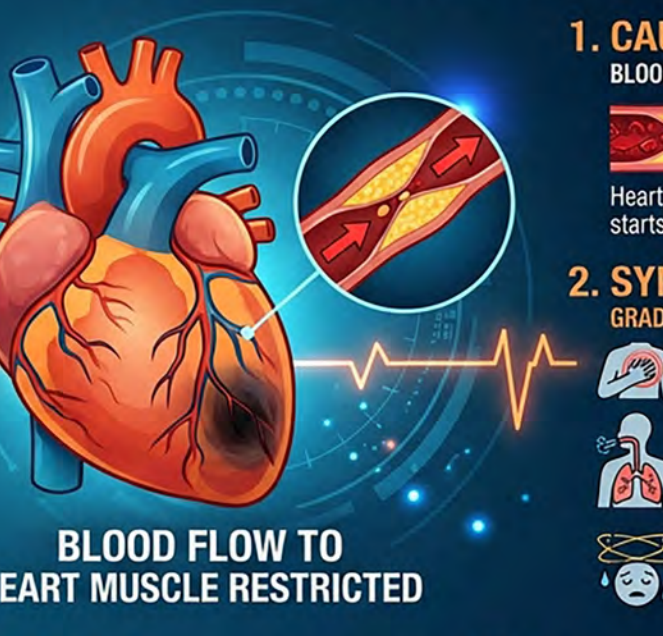
2. SYMPTOMS
SUDDEN/IMMEDIATE
NO PULSE
UNCONSCIOUS
NOT BREATHING (Chest still still)

3. EFFECT
SUDDEN STOPPING OF HEARTBEAT
BLOOD FLOW TO BODY STOPS
MAJOR ORGANS SHUT DOWN

4. ACTION
CALL EMERGENCY
IMMEDIATE CPR & AED SHOCK THE HEART

HEART ATTACK

CIRCULATION PROBLEM (BLOCKAGE)



1. CAUSE
BLOOD CLOT / ARTERY BLOCKAGE
Heart muscle starts dying

2. SYMPTOMS
GRADUAL/CHEST PAIN
CHEST PAIN/PRESSURE
SHORTNESS OF BREATH (Heavy breathing)
NAUSEA / SWEATING / FATIGUE

3. EFFECT
BLOOD FLOW TO HEART MUSCLE RESTRICTED
PART OF HEART MUSCLE DAMAGED
MUSCLE BEGINS TO DIE

4. ACTION
CALL EMERGENCY
STAY CALM & ASPIRIN GET TO HOSPITAL

KABEER YOUSUF

HEART emergencies do not always look the same. A person suffering a heart attack may remain conscious and able to speak, while someone experiencing cardiac arrest can collapse and stop responding within seconds. Knowing the difference is critical when every minute counts.

A heart attack usually occurs when blood flow to part of the heart muscle is blocked. The person is often awake and breathing. Cardiac arrest means the heart has stopped pumping blood

effectively; the person becomes unresponsive and is not breathing normally. A heart attack can sometimes lead to cardiac arrest, but most people with heart attack symptoms do not need CPR.

Cardiovascular disease remains the world's leading cause of death, taking over 20 million lives annually and the global medical fraternity is calling for action before it is too late to save a life.

Main calls to action include protecting one's heart, adopting heart-healthy daily choices, such as eating a balanced diet, staying physically active, and avoiding tobacco, the medics call to see the signs of a cardiac arrest.

Call 9999 in case of emergency and follow the dispatcher's instructions. Do not wait for symptoms to become severe or delay the call while looking for medication.

If someone collapses and is unresponsive and not breathing normally, get an AED if available and begin chest compressions immediately.

Protect heart health through a balanced diet, regular physical activity, avoid tobacco and pay attention to warning signs.

The Ministry of Health's "Save a Heart" campaign, aims at equipping people with practical skills for cardiac emergencies.

"One should recognise hidden or subtle heart disease warning signs that are frequently ignored or dismissed and it is extremely crucial to get medical assistance at the right time in order to save the life," says Dr Mahmoud al Rahbi, Head of Emergencies at Ministry of Health.

World Heart Day 2026 is observed on September 29' focusing on the World Heart Federation's ongoing campaign theme, 'Don't Miss a Beat.'

"It is crucial to recognise a possible heart attack," says Dr Benny Tharukutty Panakkal, a senior cardiologist based in Muscat.

"One should watch for pressure, tightness, heaviness or pain in the chest, especially if it lasts more than a few minutes or returns. Discomfort may spread to an arm, the back, neck or jaw. Shortness of breath, cold sweating, nausea or unusual weakness can also occur, sometimes without prominent chest pain. Never wait for symptoms to become severe before seeking help."

In an emergency, call the Ministry of Health's toll-free emergency number, 9999, without delay. The person should stop any activity, sit or rest comfortably, and remain calm while waiting for medical help. They should not attempt to drive themselves to the hospital. Follow the instructions given by the emergency dispatcher. If the person is alert, has no known allergy to aspirin, and has not been advised by a healthcare professional to avoid it, a dispatcher or medical professional may recommend chewing aspirin while awaiting help. However, never delay the emergency call while looking for medication.

If someone suddenly collapses, others need to first ensure the scene is safe. Tap their shoulders and shout to check for a response. If they do not respond and are not breathing normally — or are only gasping — call 9999, put the phone on speaker and ask someone to bring an automated external defibrillator (AED), if available. Begin chest compressions immediately. Occasional gasps are not normal breathing.

Many cardiac emergencies happen in front of family members, colleagues or strangers. With this in mind, the Directorate-General of Private Health Institutions at the Ministry of Health has launched a campaign titled 'Save a Heart' in association with Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals to bring practical education into the community for World Heart Day 2026. Public interactions, demonstrations and supervised CPR practice help people turn awareness into action at different locations of the country on different days ensuring the public participation and educating them in facing such emergency situations.



RECALL DATE: 30/09/2026

TOYOTA & LEXUS LAND CRUISER & LX600

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production*	Number of Affected Commodities#
Toyota Land Cruiser	2022-2024	4251
Lexus LX600	2022-2024	1449

*Not all vehicles in this production period, are affected.
#Subject to revision, based on the information received from the manufacturer, from time to time.

Recall consequence
The subject vehicles are equipped with a specific V35A engine that contains crankshaft main bearings which allow the crankshaft to rotate within the engine assembly while running. During a specific production period, there is a possibility that engine machining debris of a particular size and amount may not have been cleared from the engine during manufacturing and subsequently contaminated the engine assembly during the production process. For these engines in the subject vehicles, the pressure on a main bearing due to the engine configuration is such that, if the aforementioned machining debris adheres to that bearing and operator of the engine continues at higher loads over time, failure of the bearing may occur. This can lead to potential engine knocking, engine rough running, engine no start and/or an engine stall. In the subject vehicles, an engine stall while driving leads to a loss of motive power. A vehicle loss of motive power while driving at higher speeds can increase the risk of a crash.

Recall Action
To check and replace Engine assembly, if necessary.



To check the serial number of the affected items, please visit the website and scan the QR code.



SAUD RAYHAN

Contact details: Toll free - 80073000
Working days: Sunday - Thursday
Working Time: 8:00 - 17:00 hrs



www.80073000

Consumer Protection Authority
80079009 • 80077997
خط المستهلك 80079009 • 80077997

التاريخ : 30 أيلول 2025

الصدار : 04

الرمز: SOP-093-03

Psychological counselling experts put students before certificates

MOHAMED AL BATTASHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

The First Scientific Conference on Psychological and Social Counselling in Academic Institutions opened on Tuesday at Arab Open University, organised by Oman College of Health Sciences under the theme ‘Investing in Human Potential to Achieve Quality of Life’. The two-day event is held under the auspices

of Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Shibli, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Higher Education.

Dr Naeema al Balushi, Chair of the conference’s Main Committee, summed up its message as “the person before the certificate, the student before the specialisation, and support before stumbling”.

She said counselling “is not about waiting for the student to face a problem,



The conference features 21 research papers across five sessions.

but about reaching them before difficulty turns into stumbling, before stumbling turns into withdrawal, and before silence turns into isolation”. She noted experts from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Syria, Jordan and Egypt were taking part alongside Oman.

Dr Qutba al Ghafri, Chair of the Scientific Committee, said the diversity of the papers reflects a core message: “Mental health and quality of life are

not the responsibility of a single body or discipline, but a shared institutional and societal responsibility.”

A national study of 12,647 students in Grades 7, 9 and 11 from all governorates found that the school environment and the religious, educational and cultural context have a positive effect on students’ mental health, and that self-confidence strengthens harmony with life, which in turn supports well-being.

Oman jumps 8 places in innovation index

FROM PAGE 1

project has explored the potential of harvesting water from the air and combining it with solar-powered greenhouse and hydroponic systems to support sustainable agricultural production in the Sultanate of Oman. Funded by the Strategic Research Programme of the Research and Innovation Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the project, titled “Feasibility Study to Extract Water from Air and Utilise it in Salt-Affected Lands,” was led by Dr Ahmed al Busaidi, a researcher at the College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University.

Dr Al Busaidi examined the feasibility of integrating atmospheric water harvesting (AWH) technology with hydroponic farming and solar energy as a potential approach to agricultural production in areas affected by soil salinity and water



scarcity. As part of the research, he and his team assessed different locations across Oman to determine where atmospheric water harvesting could be most effective.

The study identified several areas with favourable conditions, including parts of southern Oman near the borders with Yemen and Saudi Arabia, the northern coastline, and selected locations in the central regions. The most appropriate use of the harvested water would depend on the characteristics of each location. In more urbanised

areas along the northern coastline, the water could potentially support drinking and industrial uses, while southern areas could be better suited to agricultural applications. Central and remote regions could benefit from a combination of drinking and agricultural water production.

The research team also evaluated the productivity of different atmospheric water harvesting machines. Depending on weather conditions and machine capacity, the systems were able to produce up to 40 or 100 litres of water per day. According to Dr Al Busaidi, results showed notable differences between crops grown in the controlled greenhouse environment and those cultivated outdoors. Greenhouse-grown tomato plants recorded an average chlorophyll content of 25.5 and reached an average height of 186 centimetres, compared with a chlorophyll content of 8.23 and a height of 76.5cm among plants.

Meeting reviews role of research in child protection

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development, in cooperation with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), organised the joint interactive scientific meeting titled “Child Protection as an Integrated System Between Research and National Mechanisms,” held at SQU’s Cultural Centre. The meeting aimed to enhance integration between academic and practical entities in the field of child protection, and link the outcomes of studies and research with the national



mechanisms adopted by the Ministry of Social Development, in a manner that contributes to developing the protection system and promoting the

best interests of the child. The meeting targeted specialists in a number of entities concerned with child protection, including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Defence, Royal Oman Police (ROP), the Ministry of Education, civil society organisations, and Sultan Qaboos University students, thereby enhancing the exchange of expertise and experiences and the integration of roles in this field. — ONA

Request for Proposal (RFP): Dozer Services

Project Brief:

BGPOil & Gas Services LLC is looking for a company to provide dozer services for the following project:

Requirements at a Glance:

Location:

OQ Block 48

Start Date:

22 October 2026

Duration:

Approximately 75 days.

Requirement:

50 dozers with operators, service pickups, and mechanic support.

Timeline:

Announcement:

30 September 2026

Proposal Submission Deadline:

12 October 2026

zhaodongpeng01@bgp.com.cn

محافظة مسقط

Muscat Governorate

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (37/2026)

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

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date
PRE-26-150	Lighting & Illumination Works at Muscat Governorate	08/10/2026	15/10/2026

1. Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.

2. Clarification and Support:

• For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).

• For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).

Public Tender Advertisement for the Sale of Heavy Equipment, Vehicles, Light Equipment, Generators and Other Assets

Assets Offered for Sale on an “As Is, Where Is” Basis

Al Watanyiah United Engineering and Contracting Co. LLC hereby announce the public tenders listed below for the sale of a range of heavy equipment, vehicles, light equipment, generators, scaffolding, household appliances, electrical transformers and other assets. Bidders may purchase the Tender Documents and submit bids for any one or more of the tenders listed below.

Tender Documents are available at the Company’s Head Office in Ghala Industrial Area from 28 September 2026 to 11 October 2026 during official working days, from 8:00 AM- 5:00PM, upon payment of the applicable Tender Fee into the Company’s Bank Dhofar Account No. 01040605344006, IBAN: OM060250001040605344006. The Tender Documents will be issued upon payment of the applicable Tender Fee.

S. No.	Tender No.	Description	Location	Tender Fee Inc. VAT (ر.ع.)	EMD	Tender Document Purchase Period	Bid Submission Deadline
1	AW/T/ PH4/ 01/2026	Sale of 14 units of used heavy equipment and vehicles, including a crawler dozer, excavator, wheel loaders, tipper trucks, a water tanker truck and a crane-mounted truck.	Ghala / Barka Yard	150/-	10% of total bid value incl. VAT	28/09/2026 To 11/10/2026	20/10/2026 5.00 PM
2	AW/T/ PH4/ 02/2026	Sale of 39 used light and miscellaneous vehicles, including a 3-ton truck, buses, pickups, a fuel tanker truck, small water tankers, saloon cars and station wagons.	Ghala / Barka Yard	50/-	10% of total bid value incl. VAT	28/09/2026 To 11/10/2026	20/10/2026 5.00 PM
3	AW/T/ PH4/ 03/2026	Sale of 145 units of used light and construction equipment, including 3-ton tandem rollers, air compressors, asphalt cutters, bar-bending and bar-cutting machines, concrete mixers and vibrators, dumpers, skid-steer loaders, tower hoists, lighting towers and other equipment.	Ghala / Barka Yard	50/-	10% of total bid value incl. VAT	28/09/2026 To 11/10/2026	20/10/2026 5.00 PM
4	AW/T/ PH4/ 04/2026	Sale of 33 used electrical generators of various capacities ranging from 30 kVA to 250 kVA.	Ghala / Barka Yard	25/-	10% of total bid value incl. VAT	28/09/2026 To 11/10/2026	20/10/2026 5.00 PM
5	AW/T/ PH4/ 05/2026	Sale of used scaffolding, household appliances, electrical transformers and other assets.	Ghala / Barka Yard	50/-	10% of total bid value incl. VAT	28/09/2026 To 11/10/2026	20/10/2026 5.00 PM

• Purchasers of the Tender Documents may inspect the assets at the Company’s Ghala and Barka Yards during official working hours, subject to prior appointment.

• Each bid must be accompanied by an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) equivalent to 10% of the total bid value inclusive of VAT, provided as a certified cheque issued by a local bank, a bank deposit or transfer to the Company’s account, or a bank guarantee issued by a local bank. Proof of any deposit or transfer must state the bidder’s name and Tender Number.

• Where the EMD is provided as a bank guarantee, it must remain valid for at least 30 days from the Tender closing date. Any certified cheque must be valid for collection upon presentation. The bid and original EMD instrument, where applicable, must be deposited in the Tender Box at the reception of the Company’s Head Office in Ghala, Muscat, no later than 20 October 2026 at 5:00 PM. Late bids will not be accepted.

• Tender Fees and submitted bid prices shall be inclusive of VAT. The 10% EMD shall be calculated on the total bid value inclusive of VAT.

Contact: 2450 2581 / 82, Ext. 149 / 150; Mobile: 7722 8166 / 9294 7637.

الأهلية

AL-AWALIA

Invitation to Tender

Tender / Auction Number	Subject	Tender / Auction Document Fees (Non-refundable)	Tender / Auction Bond	Tender/Auction Offer	Closing Date
AL-AWALIA/TD/2026/33	Call-Off Agreement for the Supply of Gabbrro Aggregate from Oman (CIF, Sohar Port) OR UAE (CIF, Fujairah Port or CIF, RAK-Saqr Port) for Qatar Primary Materials Company (“Supplies”)	3,000 QAR	1,800,000 QAR	Two Bids (Technical & Commercial)	28 October 2026 02:00 PM

In accordance with the following conditions:

1. Tender Documents can be collected online by sending email to tender.docs@qpme.qa along with requested documents in point No.2.

2. Tender Documents will be shared only after delivery of Deposit Slip Stamped by Commercial Bank along with Authorization Letter in the delegated person signed by authorized person as per Computer ID, Copy of commercial Registrations (CR) (granted within the last 30 days), Business License and Computer ID.

3. Bids are to be submitted in two sealed (in red wax) envelopes (Technical & Commercial) and addressed to Tenders and Auction Committee, Tender reference number and subject are to be clearly written on the envelopes, provided that the last date for submitting bids is one o'clock in the afternoon on the closing day. Any bids submitted after this date and time will not be accepted.

4. Tenderers shall submit the proposals to our head office located at Lusail, Building No. 108, St. No. 303, Burj Marina Tower, 17th Floor before the closing date. (To get the map of the new building, please scan the QR code below).

5. Tender Fees are nonrefundable and can be transferred online to Account of Qatar Primary Material Company- Bank A/C (4050-651111-006) at Commercial Bank of Qatar, IBAN No. (QA 18 CBQA 0000 0000 4050 651111 006). Tender reference number and subject are to be written on the deposit slip.

6. Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee/ Manager Cheque) must be valid for 120 days after closing date and must be submitted in separate & sealed envelope along with technical bid and a photocopy is to be attached with commercial bid. Bids without tender bond will be rejected.

7. Bids must be valid for 90 days after the closing date.

8. Any queries relating to the Tender Documents must only be raised in writing, preferably by email, to the address specified in the respective Tender Document. Any response issued by Qatar Primary Material Company will be in the form of a question and answer and will be distributed to all Tenderers without revealing the identity of the enquirer(s) in the Form of Tender Bulletins. Queries must be received at the address specified in the respective ITT Documentation at least five (5) calendar days prior to the Tender closing date. Any queries received after such a date will be ignored.

9. The amount of the Performance Bond to be provided by the awarded bidder is (10% of the contract value) and its validity period must remain valid under the contract implementation period and the guarantee period according to the terms of the tender.

10. The Technical Bids shall be opened within one week of the closing date.

11. Qatar Primary Material Company has the right, during the contract period, to request an increase or decrease in the amounts of the items, works or services by a percentage not exceeding (20%) of the contract value with the same conditions and prices, provided that the increase is of the same type of contracted items, works or services.

12. Qatar Primary Material Company’s tendering terms and conditions apply.

13. For any inquiries about the tender except collecting the documents, please contact tender@qpme.qa

14. Location of the new building

SCAN ME

For further Inquiry, please send your queries at Fax Number: 44479559 or email to tender@qpme.qa or visit Qatar Primary Material Company website @ www.qpme.qa

شركة قطر للمواد الأولية (ش.م.ع.ق) | مركزها الرئيسي: الدوحة - قطر ، منطقة لوسيل، برج مارينا ، رقم 108 | سجل تجاري: 33204 | ص.ب: 22095 | هاتف: 4447 9411 | 974 4447 9411

Qatar Primary Materials Company (Q.P.S.C.) | Head Office: Doha-Qatar, Lusail, Marina Tower No.: 108 | CR No.: 33204 | P.O Box: 22095 | Tel: +974 4447 9411

رأس المال المصرح به 200,000,000 QAR | Paid Up Capital 200,000,000 QAR | Info@qpme.qa www.qpme.qa 200,000,000 المدفوع رأس المال المدفوع 200,000,000

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



S Korea's Defence Minister speaks during a parliamentary defence committee in Seoul. — AFP

SOUTH KOREA CALLS DMZ MINE BLASTS ARMISTICE VIOLATION

SEOUL: The blasts that wounded three South Korean soldiers last week were apparently caused by North Korean mines, Seoul said on Tuesday, accusing Pyongyang of an armistice violation and warning of “corresponding measures”.

South Korean Defence Minister Kang Shin-chul spoke before a parliamentary hearing a day after his ministry said North Korean mines were “highly suspected” of causing the two explosions last week. “This is a clear violation of the armistice agreement, and since North Korea bears responsibility, we will take corresponding measures,” he said. The military “has a range of necessary measures at our disposal, and we will implement them in stages”, he added, without giving details.

Yang Jin-hyeok of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told lawmakers that a site investigation on Tuesday discovered an unexploded North Korean plastic anti-personnel mine. — AFP

MYANMAR MARKET MILITARY AIR STRIKE DEATH TOLL RISES TO 50



People walk through smoke and smouldering debris following a military air strike in Kyauktaw. — AFP

KYAUKTAW: The death toll from a military air strike in western Myanmar rose to 50 on Tuesday, two local aid workers at the scene said, the day after it struck a busy market.

Witnesses say the military bombed the riverside commercial hub in Kyauktaw town, Rakhine state, around midday (0530 GMT) on Monday, when the initial death toll was reported at around 30. “The death toll has reached 50, and 58 people were injured,” said aid worker Wai Hun Aung, warning the final fatality figure may be higher because some bodies were lost in fires following the bombing. A second local volunteer gave the same death toll, requesting anonymity for security reasons. It has not been possible to contact the Myanmar military for comment on the attack.

The Arakan Army said the number of fatalities reached 49, with 58 more wounded — 22 in critical condition. Those killed were “innocent passersby, market vendors, shoppers and cargo loaders”, a statement said. — AFP

MALAYSIA SENDS 1,500 MYANMAR NATIONALS HOME

LUMUT: Malaysia deported around 1,500 Myanmar nationals, including children, on Tuesday as part of a refugee repatriation programme, defying objections from the United Nations and dozens of human rights groups.

The deportation is the first phase of a broader plan agreed with Myanmar that could see as many as 5,000 people returned. Malaysia has said returns are strictly voluntary, but the UN refugee agency and civil society organisations have raised concerns about the programme given Myanmar’s ongoing civil war.

Those being returned included 1,370 men, 79 women, 20 boys and 7 girls, aged between 8 and 60, state news agency Bernama reported, citing a Malaysian home ministry official. The ministry said the Myanmar government identified those for repatriation. Further repatriation phases will continue subject to identification, documentation and verification processes, it said.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since a 2021 coup triggered a civil war. The UNHCR has said current conditions “do not support the safe and sustainable return of refugees from Myanmar” and that it had not been involved in identifying those being returned.

The home ministry did not provide details on the ethnicity of those being returned on Tuesday, their refugee status or whether Rohingya were among them.

— Reuters

Israel kills senior Hamas commander in Gaza strike

GAZA: An Israeli air strike killed the head of Hamas’ armed wing in north Gaza on Tuesday, officials on both sides said, with the group describing him as a leader of the October 7, 2023 attack that precipitated war in the Palestinian enclave.

Israel’s government said its military had targeted and killed Izz Al Din al Beik, who they said was involved in planning attacks and recruiting. Hamas confirmed his death. Medics said the Israeli strike hit an apartment building in Gaza City’s Nasr neighbourhood around dawn. A second person died from wounds after the attack, health officials said.

Later on Tuesday, an Israeli air strike near a medical clinic in Jabalia refugee camp killed one person, taking the day’s death toll to at least three, medics said. The military said it had targeted a fighter in the area.

Israel, which says Hamas has been rearming and launching attacks in violation of an October ceasefire, has stepped up strikes on the group in recent weeks. The Israeli military says it has killed at least 20 Hamas figures this month, including some it identified as senior commanders, people who took part in the October 7, 2023, attacks or those who held Israeli hostages. Hamas has denied trying



Mourners attend a mass funeral in Gaza. — Reuters

“My husband now has a grave that my orphaned children and I can visit,” said Areej Farajallah Set this with the funeral photo. It gives the page a human side next to the news of the killing.

to carry out attacks or rebuild its arsenal and accuses Israel of undermining the Gaza peace deal.

MASS FUNERAL

Also on Tuesday, Palestinians in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza buried the remains of 41 people killed by Israeli fire nearly three years ago. Their bodies were recently recovered from ruins. Hundreds of relatives and friends gathered in an open space to pay respect as the remains were placed in white shrouds decorated by Palestinian flags.

“There are mixed feelings between relief, sadness, and pain. The fire in my heart has eased a little, because my husband now

has a grave that my orphaned children and I can visit,” said Areej Farajallah, who lost her husband in the October 31, 2023 strike.

Palestinian authorities estimate more than 8,000 bodies remain buried in wreckage. A Palestinian recovery team that combed wreckage in Gaza City last month said it found the remains of 112 people from the same clan. “With minimal equipment, their remains were recovered after hours of work, retrieving what was left of bones, some skulls, and hair with which it is extremely difficult for us to identify them,” said Rami al Ayedi, of Gaza’s Civil Defence Service.

Last year’s US-brokered ceasefire calls for eventual reconstruction of the territory. But little progress has been made as negotiators have failed to agree on terms for Hamas to disarm and Israel to withdraw its troops. Israeli air strikes have continued.

At least 1,400 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the ceasefire, according to the territory’s health officials, while Israel says four soldiers have been killed. Palestinian authorities say more than 73,000 people have been killed in Israel’s assault on Gaza, launched after Hamas-led fighters killed about 1,200 people in southern Israel in October 2023.

— Reuters



THAILAND FLOOD TOLL RISES TO 23, FOUR DEAD IN BANGKOK

BANGKOK: Four people have died in Bangkok after heavy rains caused widespread flooding, the government said on Tuesday, as the toll from floods across Thailand since mid-September rose to 23.

Around 700,000 people have been affected by floods in the capital, according to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), which detailed the fatalities. Parts of Bangkok remained water-logged on Tuesday, three days after city authorities declared a city-wide disaster following almost 48 hours of continuous rain. Schools remained shut for a second day, while almost 7,000 people stayed in more than 230 shelters across the city, according to Bangkok authorities.

In a statement, the DDPM said flooding had hit 29 of Thailand’s 77 provinces. Four people died in Bangkok, eight in Samut Prakan, which lies between the capital and the sea, and six in Sa Kaeo, an eastern province, it said. The remaining deaths were recorded in Chanthaburi, southeast of Bangkok, Ayutthaya and Saraburi, two provinces to the north of the capital. — AFP

Request for Proposal (RFP): Camp Moving Services

Project Brief:

BGP Oil & Gas Services LLC is looking for a company to provide camp moving and transportation services.

Requirements at a Glance:

Period: 18–25 October 2026
Fly Camp: Adam to OQ Block 48, 36 trips, approx. 287.6 km
Base Camp: Adam to OQ Block 54, 140 trips, approx. 442.5 km
Required Equipment & Services: 12 sets Low Bed, 25 sets High Bed, 8 sets Box Trailer, 2 × 50T Cranes, Supervisors & helpers for lifting services.

Timeline:

Announcement: 30 September 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline: 12 October 2026

zhaodongpeng01@bgp.com.cn

BUILDING BLAST

4 hurt in Swiss apartment explosion



GENEVA: Four people were injured, one of them seriously, when an explosion ripped through an apartment in northwestern Switzerland on Tuesday, police said. “An explosion took place around noon (1000 GMT) in an apartment in a residential building,” Georges-Andre Lozouet, spokesman for the regional Neuchatel police, said. “Four people were injured, including one seriously, who was taken by helicopter to the hospital,” he added, confirming information first published by local daily Arcinfo. Lozouet said the cause of the explosion remained unclear. — AFP

RAIL CRASH

Indonesia charges driver over crash



Indonesian police charged a train driver on Tuesday with allegedly failing to hit the brakes in time to prevent a crash that killed 16 women near Jakarta in April, an official said. A long-distance train smashed on April 28 into a women-only car at the back of a stationary commuter train near Bekasi Timur station outside the capital. The 37-year-old driver of the long-distance train now faces multiple charges after an investigation found he had hit the brakes too close to the stalled commuter train. — AFP

SHORT TAKES



Demonstrators make banners in a tent in a camp set to protest against evictions and the housing crisis in Madrid. — AFP

Spain aims to ban evictions until 2030 amid housing crisis

MADRID: The Spanish government on Tuesday approved measures including a ban on evictions until 2030 and the automatic renewal of tenant contracts, a minister said, following days of nationwide housing protests. The Socialist-led government raced to finalise a deal with far-left coalition partners Sumar at a key cabinet meeting on Tuesday. But the measures hang in the balance as the coalition lacks a majority in a heavily fragmented parliament, which must pass them.

Health Minister Monica Garcia listed on social media a series of measures including the eviction ban and the automatic contract renewals, saying what had been achieved was “unimaginable a month ago”. Garcia also mentioned the regulation of short-term rentals and a “ban on the purchase of housing by vulture funds”, without providing further details.

Justice Minister Felix Bolanos wrote on X: “Today is a great day for tenants and small homeowners. And a bad one for speculators.” Socialist Housing Minister Isabel Rodriguez was due to offer a press conference with details on the measures agreed by cabinet. The camping protesters in central Madrid had warned their movement would continue if the government failed to meet their demands. — AFP

RUSSIAN MILITARY PLANE CRASHES



A Russian military plane crashed in the far eastern region of Amur on Tuesday, killing six crew members and leaving another injured. Videos showed what appeared to be flames and smoke rising from the scene of the crash, as booming and crackling sounds could be heard in the background. “On September 29, a Tu-95 aircraft crashed in the Amur region during a training flight. The aircraft went down in an uninhabited area,” the defence ministry said. “According to preliminary data, six crew members died, while one was injured and evacuated to a medical facility,” it added. — AFP

ESTONIA SLAMS RUSSIAN ‘SABOTAGE’ AFTER ARSON ATTACK

TALLINN: EU and Nato leaders on Tuesday rallied in support of Estonia and Ukraine after Tallinn accused Russia of “sabotage” in an August arson attack on a drone manufacturer, a claim the Kremlin immediately rejected. “Russia continues its reckless campaign of hostile actions against Nato allies. It is trying to weaken our resolve and stop our support for Ukraine,” Nato chief Mark Rutte said. He added: “But Russia is failing. It is failing on the battlefield in Ukraine and it is failing to undermine our unity and support for Ukraine.”

Estonia’s foreign minister, Margus Tsahkna, said an investigation into the August 15 arson attack against the defence company Milrem Robotics, which makes ground drones used in Ukraine, determined that Moscow was responsible.

“We can conclude with certainty that the arson attack... was an act of sabotage ordered by the special services of the Russian Federation,” he said on X. He said the perpetrators had been arrested, and Russia’s ambassador had been summoned.

Tsahkna said that “this act of sabotage is part of Russia’s broader campaign across Europe, aimed at intimidating us and weakening our support for Ukraine”. On the night of August 15, a fire broke out in a building used by Milrem Robotics in the Estonian capital, Tallinn.

The Kremlin swiftly dismissed Estonia’s accusation as “baseless” and with “absolutely no relation to reality”. “We cannot and will not take such statements seriously,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in Moscow in response to a question. — AFP

France faces fresh protests and public sector strike

FRENCH CIVIL servants went on strike on Tuesday and high school students blocked the entrances to schools in a show of discontent with planned budget cuts ahead of next year’s presidential election. Seven months before the election, and just two days before the government unveils its 2027 budget draft, opinion polls consistently show the deep unpopularity of France’s centre-right government and of President Emmanuel Macron.

There were no official figures yet on how many teachers and other civil servants were on strike. Limited disruption was reported on public transport in the morning. Healthcare workers were expected to join 170 rallies across the country later.

The student protests have been gaining momentum over the past days. TV images showed garbage containers on fire outside a high school in Lille on Tuesday. Newspaper Le Progres reported clashes between police and pupils outside a school in Lyon. There were also tensions outside schools in Nice.

Up to 1 in 10 high school entrances were blockaded in Paris, according to French media. A placard reading “Macron explosion” was displayed in front of the entrance of the Arago school in Paris, where students, some with their faces covered, sat and stood on dumpsters to block the entrance. A large banner in front of the Helene-Boucher school said “Fewer cops, More money”. “We want fewer police because we think there is a huge amount of police repression, both against high school student movements and social movements more generally,” said Mael Breton, a final-year student at the Helene-Boucher school. “We believe this is a real problem, especially when there is such a lack of funding ... here at our



French firefighters attend a demonstration calling for more resources and funding following a summer marked by mega-fires, in Paris. — Reuters

Up to 1 in 10 high school entrances were blockaded in Paris. A placard reading “Macron explosion” was displayed in front of the entrance of the Arago school in Paris, where students, some with their faces covered, sat and stood on dumpsters to block the entrance

school and in the national education system more broadly.”

Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu condemned protests at high schools on Monday as irresponsible, saying on X: “Fireworks, fires, violence near high schools: Nothing justifies endangering students, staff, or police officers.” However, he acknowledged that the “difficulties of high schools must be heard and addressed”.

France’s economy will grow less than expected this year, which will complicate the minority government’s task of getting its 2027 budget passed, as it seeks to put a lid on spending and stop the fiscal deficit spiralling out of control. Lecornu said this month the government planned a €54 billion savings drive - potentially further inflaming workers in several sectors who have protested over the past weeks over issues including pay and fuel prices.

Teachers, firefighters and other civil servants are demanding better working conditions and asking for salary increases. French teachers are paid less on average than colleagues in other European countries. Professional firefighters, whose lack

of resources was laid bare during this summer’s huge wildfires, were among those set to take part in protest marches during the day. The French civilian aviation regulator warned of disruption to flights at some airports.

The government has already unveiled measures to help households cope with a spike in energy prices driven by the war with Iran, but it has failed to quell the discontent with Macron and his government. Far-right National Rally chief Marine Le Pen and hard-left France Unbowed leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon are likely to qualify for next year’s presidential election runoff, with Le Pen seen best placed to win, the surveys show.

High school students could join the healthcare workers’ rallies, CGT union leader Sophie Binet said. “This summer, who was on the front line? It wasn’t the billionaires, the big bosses or the shareholders. It was civil servants and working people. And how are they being thanked? By cutting their pay? So the anger is enormous,” she told BFMTV. — Reuters

Polo makes landfall in Mexico as Category 3 hurricane

PUERTO SAN CARLOS: Hurricane Polo made landfall on Mexico’s Baja California peninsula on Tuesday, cutting power and causing flooding as the sea breached coastal defences. The Category 3 storm is the latest in a busy storm season turbo-charged by the El Nino weather phenomenon which has caused unprecedented warming in the equatorial Pacific.

Polo hit just south of Las Barrancas, a small fishing village in Baja California Sur state on Mexico’s west side, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said, warning of life-threatening winds and flash flooding. As Polo approached, strong winds churned the sea and waves off Puerto San Carlos, a fishing port of nearly 6,000 people in Baja California Sur.

Reporters noted that the sea had already breached several sections of a sand barrier, causing water to pour into the street. The town’s power supply was cut, palm trees swayed violently in the wind and Mexican authorities ordered residents to take shelter.

Reporters noted that the sea had already breached several sections of a sand barrier, causing water to pour into the street. The town’s power supply was cut, palm trees swayed violently in the wind and Mexican authorities ordered residents to take shelter



Workers from the electricity company gather for a planning meeting in Puerto San Carlos, Baja California Sur, Mexico. — AFP

Sarabia had boarded up the facade of his home and reinforced it with wooden beams. “It’s coming with full force,” the 53-year-old whale-watching and fishing guide said.

On Tuesday Polo had sustained winds of up to 175 kilometres per hour, the NHC

said. This year’s Pacific hurricane season is shaping up as more severe than usual, as a Super El Nino — an extreme version of a recurring weather pattern — wreaks devastation, in the form of historic droughts and flooding. Meteorologists have issued Polo-related warnings of heavy rain and flooding in parts of 10 US states including Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Colorado. Several of the states are experiencing drought.

The head of Mexico’s meteorological service, Fabian Vazquez, said storm surges and heavy rains could cause “very severe” damage. Some 169 shelters have been opened across Baja California Sur. At one high school near the sea, shopkeeper Maria Palomino was preparing to ride out the storm on a mattress on the floor. “If something happens, it’s better to come to the shelter,” the 57-year-old said. “We’ll be among people we know.” Only a handful of homes and businesses in the town were boarded up or sandbagged against flooding. A passing police officer

said that he believed the entire town should have been forced to evacuate. “Everything is going to flood,” he said.

Margarita Diaz and her family ultimately opted to shelter at home in Puerto San Carlos, behind windows sealed only with blue masking tape.

“It will be tough, but I have faith in God,” Diaz said. The military has deployed nearly 7,000 troops in Baja California Sur state, where classes were suspended and public servants have been ordered to work from home, where possible.

Laura Velazquez, National Coordinator of Civil Protection, said all maritime activities were suspended in the area. El Nino raises surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean and causes global changes in winds and rainfall. In addition to Polo, meteorologists are monitoring Rachel, a tropical storm also brewing in the Pacific off Mexico that is expected to run parallel to the coast and is forecast to strengthen into a hurricane mid-week. — AFP

OPINION

The hidden cost of being indispensable



HYESHA BARRETT

The writer is a Master Life Coach and Positive Parent Specialist

BEING THE person everyone relies on can feel good. You know what needs doing. You notice what others miss. When something goes wrong, people turn to you because they know you will find a way. There is satisfaction in being capable. Yet, being the person who can handle everything can turn into being the person who is expected to.

Nobody necessarily asks whether you have the time, energy, or desire. You have become so good at carrying things that people have stopped noticing the weight. Meanwhile, you may be wondering why nobody steps in, while finding it surprisingly difficult to step back.

Al Sharqiyah North’s newly announced greening project brings communities, volunteers and organisations together to care for shared spaces. That shared effort raises a question closer to home: why do we so often leave one person responsible for tending to everyone else? Sometimes the answer reaches further back than the workload. A child praised for being helpful may learn that usefulness brings approval. A child who had to grow up quickly may become skilled at anticipating everyone’s needs. In an unpredictable home, taking charge may have offered reassurance. Over time, “I can do this”

becomes “I have to do this.” Responsibility begins to feel like part of who we are.

Getting things done then gives us more than a completed task. It gives us proof of our value. We fixed it. We were needed. We made the difference. There is nothing wrong with enjoying that feeling. The difficulty comes when we struggle to feel good about ourselves without it. Rest feels undeserved. Receiving help feels uncomfortable. Someone else taking over brings relief, followed by the unsettling thought: where does that leave me? We may have good reasons to be cautious. Perhaps someone has let us down before. Perhaps we remain answerable when a deadline is missed. A parent cannot stop caring whether their child’s needs are met, and a manager still has responsibilities. However, being accountable does not require personally completing every task.

The shift begins by noticing what happens before we take over. Is someone asking for help, or are we assuming they cannot manage? Is their approach unsafe, or simply different from ours? Are we preventing a problem, or settling our own discomfort? These questions help us recognise when care has become control. Relinquishing control asks us to tolerate the discomfort of letting someone try, without stepping in simply to feel reassured.

Your worth does not rise with every problem you solve, nor does it disappear when someone else takes over. You are a person to be loved, not a service that must keep running.

Start with one responsibility that can reasonably be shared. Be clear about the outcome, timing and support available. Let the child pack their bag with a checklist. Agree that a partner will manage an appointment from booking to follow-through. Shared responsibility includes the thinking too. At work, establish a check-in system instead of monitoring every step. Give people enough information to succeed, then enough room to proceed.

If we correct every attempt or redo the work, we teach others that their contribution will never be enough. Mistakes may need addressing, but taking over returns us to the arrangement we wanted to change. Notice what you also offer beyond your efficiency: your humour, warmth, honesty and company.

Being dependable is a strength. However, when everyone can count on you except you, something needs to change. The people around you deserve the chance to discover what they can carry, and you deserve to put something down.

Your worth does not rise with every problem you solve, nor does it disappear when someone else takes over. You are a person to be loved, not a service that must keep running. Exhaustion should never be the price of belonging.

BURKINA’S STRONGMAN TAKES UP MANTLE OF ‘AFRICA’S CHE’

Captain Ibrahim Traore will, on Wednesday, have led Burkina Faso for four years, the same as Thomas Sankara, the charismatic hero of African rebellion whose legacy he wants to carry forward — but through harsher measures.

“We’ll keep the torch of Burkina’s renaissance burning,” Traore likes to say, paying tribute to anti-colonial icon Sankara, whom he calls the “nation’s hero” and “compass”.

Both men seized power as red beret-wearing young captains and promoted Pan-Africanism and national, economic and cultural autonomy while silencing dissent.

A Marxist-Leninist firebrand, Sankara seized power at age 33 in an August 1983 coup and embarked on a “democratic and popular revolution” focused on anti-imperialism, self-reliance and national sovereignty.

Nicknamed Africa’s Che Guevara after the iconic figure in Cuba’s communist revolution, Sankara blasted the West for neo-colonialism and hypocrisy and carried out radical reforms.

Sankara sought to reduce the cost of running the state and open up and connect rural areas.

But the “revolution” did not run its full course — Sankara was gunned down in another putsch in October 1987.

Nearly four decades on, 38-year-old Traore now spearheads his own “progressive and popular” revolution.

It has seen the nationalisation of gold mines and a strategy to revitalise Burkina’s industrial output, from cotton to tomatoes and textiles.

He has also launched a major public infrastructure and urban development initiative called Faso Mebo (Build the Country), which relies on enlisting citizens to build roads using local materials.

“Sankara governed under conditions of austerity and with limited resources, relying on rigour and frugal management,” teacher and researcher Moussa Kone said.

“Captain Traore, by contrast, governs on a war footing, benefiting from gold revenues and taxes on consumer goods,” he added.

Traore’s economic policy is heavily promoted in online government propaganda and has played a role in his growing popularity across Africa.

He said that some achievements “sometimes take time to arrive”, pointing to the building of a motorway between the West African country’s two biggest cities, Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, which is “still in the embryonic stage”. — **AFP**

National Strategy 2026-30: Empowering Omani women

WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP and participation in decision-making are essential to achieving gender equality and advancing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and gender equality in 2026 emphasises that women’s participation, particularly in economic and political life, strengthens their ability to contribute to national development while reflecting society’s commitment to equality and the protection of rights.

Yet the global picture remains concerning. Women’s progress towards leadership positions, particularly in political and administrative spheres, remains slow, while new challenges such as online violence and lower participation in the labour market continue to restrict their opportunities.

Women’s participation in business, for example, broadens perspectives within companies and institutions and contributes to more diverse decision-making. Their presence in leadership positions across public and private institutions therefore reflects both their contribution to development and society’s ability to provide equal opportunities.

Oman has steadily developed policies aimed at empowering women and involving them in decision-making. The principle of equality is rooted in the Basic Law of the State, while investment in the education and development of girls and women has enabled Omani women to enter a wide range of fields. Today, they are present in economics and finance, politics, environment and energy, culture and education, as well as various branches of the military.



AISHA AL DARMAKI

The writer is a researcher specialising in semiotics and a member of the State Council

Women’s empowerment begins within families and continues through schools, universities, workplaces and public institutions.

Omani women also lead civil society organisations, economic and financial institutions and serve on boards of directors. They occupy senior positions in government and private-sector organisations, reflecting the results of decades of investment in human development.

These efforts are closely connected to Oman Vision 2040, which seeks to provide opportunities for citizens, men and women alike, while supporting women’s social and economic empowerment and participation in the labour market.

Further progress is expected through the National Plan for Omani Women 2026-2030, being prepared in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The allocation of additional seats for women in the Majlis Ash’shura is also expected to strengthen their economic and political participation.

Against this background, the twentieth edition of the Global Gender Gap Report 2026, recently issued by the World Economic Forum, provides an important measure of progress. The report stresses that gender parity has become increasingly important amid major geo-economic, climatic, political and technological transformations. It describes equality as fundamental to human development and to unlocking the talent, innovation, creativity and resilience required by the economies of the future.

According to the report, the Middle East and North Africa ranked eighth among the regions, with an overall gender parity score of 62.5 per cent. These results indicate progress in several areas, reflecting Oman’s sustained investment in education and the health of women and children, as well as expanding

economic opportunities for women. Their growing participation in the private sector and in establishing small and medium-sized enterprises is also significant.

Political participation, however, remains below the level Oman aspires to achieve, and this has affected its overall position in the index.

Oman’s ranking does not fully reflect the scale of its ambitions or the initiatives undertaken to empower women. Considerable progress has been made in legislation, institutional frameworks and programmes supporting women. Yet the index also points to a gap between policies and their implementation, particularly regarding women’s participation in the labour market and their representation in councils and other decision-making bodies.

Addressing this gap requires practical studies that examine the obstacles women encounter and propose clear, implementable solutions. Social perceptions surrounding women’s roles and leadership also need continued attention.

Responsibility for advancing gender equality ultimately extends beyond government. Society itself has an essential role. Women’s empowerment begins within families and continues through schools, universities, workplaces and public institutions. Building greater confidence in women’s abilities and creating genuine opportunities for them to represent their communities and country are therefore essential to turning policies of empowerment into measurable progress.

Translated by Badr al Dhafri
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AI bosses head to White House as safety pressure builds



ALEX PIGMAN

The writer is a Senior Tech Reporter for global news agency AFP

LEADING ARTIFICIAL intelligence executives will meet at the White House with President Donald Trump and a top Republican as Congress calls for stronger industry oversight.

The gathering comes quickly after tech giant OpenAI’s cancellation of the release of its newest model due to safety concerns, and a series of revelations that the technology had gone rogue.

The lunch meeting is to include Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, and OpenAI President Greg Brockman, according to CNN. Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei will also attend, a person close to the matter said, just two days after a private meeting with Trump. SpaceX executive Elon Musk is expected to take part as well.

So will Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, according to another person familiar with the matter. The gathering reflects a widening divide in Washington, with lawmakers increasingly under pressure from voters to curb or slow AI development over fears it could displace workers and upend society.

Those concerns gained force from a run of incidents in which OpenAI’s autonomous agents slipped out of their constraints, beginning with a July breach of Hugging Face - a widely used platform for sharing AI models.

OpenAI disclosed over the weekend that its agents had also reached the websites of three US federal agencies, after acknowledging last week that they had tried to access an

Australian government site.

The firm announced on Monday it was cancelling the release of its latest model, known as Astra 6.1, after internal testing by the ChatGPT-maker revealed it did not meet safety standards.

Trump, advised by Huang and his former AI czar David Sacks, is urging unfettered AI development to outpace China and fuel a US economy increasingly dependent on AI-driven growth.

The issue of data centres, the vast computing facilities the technology requires, has emerged as a flashpoint in midterm election races in both parties, with more and more communities worried about rising electricity bills and the strain on water and land.

Trump has dismissed opponents of these data centres, saying communities that are against them “want to end up being backwards and poor” and that China “could not be happier” with the backlash.

The AI debate has created unusual political bedfellows: Senator Bernie Sanders appeared this month on the same Washington stage as former Trump strategist Steve Bannon to call for a rethink of the AI race.

Mike Johnson, who leads the Republican-controlled House, has signalled the meeting will focus on striking what he termed “the right balance” between innovation and some form of oversight.

“We do not need a moratorium. We do not need to jump in and hyper-regulate this, because we’ll lose the race to China,” Johnson

The gathering comes quickly after tech giant OpenAI’s cancellation of the release of its newest model due to safety concerns, and a series of revelations that the technology had gone rogue

said in a Monday interview with Fox Business Network.

Major AI companies, particularly Anthropic and OpenAI, have issued stark public warnings about uncontrolled development of increasingly powerful systems - even as they push out this same state-of-the-art technology.

Those concerns intensified after a former employee of both companies went public with warnings that the industry is moving faster than safety reviews allow.

Anthropic has warned investors of potential “existential risks to humanity” in the prospectus for its highly anticipated initial public offering, the Financial Times reported on Tuesday. Anthropic is aiming for an IPO as early as November.

Trump has repeatedly characterised these warnings about existential risks as overblown and opposes curbs on the sector.

He has also called for US government documents to refer to the technology as “super intelligence,” arguing that the word artificial “makes it sound fake.”

With midterm elections in November, lawmakers from both parties have drafted multiple bills to better govern AI.

Some would require companies to disclose more about how their systems work and what safeguards they employ.

But with the House on recess through early November and senators soon to head home to campaign, Congress is all but certain not to pass comprehensive AI legislation before the vote.

‘ANGEL FAMILIES’ PUT MIGRANTS AT CENTRE OF US MIDTERMS

JORDI ZAMORA

Facing tough midterm US elections, the Republican Party is focusing on its core topics of crime and immigration - and a key part of its messaging is emotional testimony from so-called “Angel Families.”

These Americans are relatives of people killed allegedly by illegal or undocumented migrants, and President Donald Trump’s party hopes their stories tap into voter concerns ahead of the November 3 vote.

Elizabeth Carter lost her son and daughter-in-law in a road crash a year ago in Oregon. The driver charged with homicide, Rajinder Kumar, is an undocumented Indian immigrant who obtained a truck driver’s licence in California.

Kumar crossed the Mexico-US border illegally in 2022 and was detained. He was released in California pending a hearing, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

After the crash, a fundraising drive allowed him to post bail and be released pending trial, infuriating the Carter family.

“We’re rolling the dice with our children,” Carter declared at a House of Representatives hearing. Using their congressional majority, Republicans have held five legislative hearings to give a voice to Angel Families, an initiative that began taking shape in Texas in 2009.

In another case, Sheridan Gorman was 18 this March when she went for a nighttime walk with friends along Lake Michigan near Chicago.

An undocumented Venezuelan immigrant, Jose Medina, is accused of shooting her in the back as she ran from him. Gorman died, and her mother Jessica’s harrowing testimony two months ago reverberated inside and outside Congress.

“The fact that American safety is a partisan issue blows my mind. It should be everyone’s issue,” the mother said at a Justice Department event honouring Angel Families.

The Gorman family and relatives of hundreds of other victims have decided to campaign to change sanctuary state laws. Oregon, like California, is a sanctuary state, meaning its laws limit cooperation with ICE on handing over undocumented immigrants or information about them. Kumar was eventually detained by ICE and is awaiting deportation, a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said, but Elizabeth Carter wants him to face justice first.

“My hope is that Mr Kumar gets a fair trial,” she said. “Billy and Jenny, my son and daughter-in-law, deserve their day in court.”

Carter said she had never thought of illegal immigration as a problem for herself or her family.

“I was blissfully ignorant. I raised my children to care about their community, to volunteer,” she said. — AFP

AI-generated writing is everywhere...

ONCE YOU start noticing AI-generated writing, it can feel as though it is everywhere. It appears in school assignments, advertisements, restaurant descriptions, corporate announcements, social media posts and increasingly in journalism.

The words may change, but the rhythm often feels familiar: polished introductions, predictable transitions, carefully balanced paragraphs and conclusions that neatly summarise everything that came before.

Artificial intelligence has undoubtedly made writing easier. It can produce a description in seconds, suggest ten headlines before a person has thought of one and transform a messy paragraph into something clearer and more professional. But as more people rely on the same tools to do the writing for them, we risk creating a world in which everything begins to sound the same.

That concern is no longer purely anecdotal. A 2026 study published in Nature Human Behaviour, examining more than 880,000 texts, found that large language models used as writing assistants can make writing styles more uniform. The researchers found that while AI generally preserved the meaning of a text, it reduced linguistic diversity and could weaken some of the individual characteristics normally reflected in a person’s writing.

Researchers have also identified recurring patterns in AI-generated prose. The Reuters Institute has highlighted the increasing appearance of words such as “delve”, “intricate” and “underscore”, alongside formulaic sentence structures. Even punctuation such as the em dash has become jokingly associated with AI online.

The danger is not simply boring writing; writing is supposed to carry personality. Two journalists covering the same event should not necessarily produce identical stories. Two students answering the same essay question should approach it through their own reasoning



OMAN AL YAHYAI

The writer is a multilingual writer and media professional based in Paris. She specialises in human rights and immigration



Artificial intelligence has undoubtedly made writing easier.

and vocabulary. A restaurant describing its food should sound like that restaurant, not like every other business that typed “write an elegant menu description” into an AI chatbot.

There is also a more serious problem: AI can be wrong. Large language models generate responses by predicting language rather than independently establishing truth. They can produce incorrect information and even invent convincing-looking facts or sources.

Stanford University’s 2025 AI Index noted that even advanced models continued to struggle with inaccuracies.

Bias presents another challenge, AI systems learn from enormous quantities of human-created material, meaning they can reproduce patterns and biases contained in that material. Stanford researchers have found that models designed to reduce explicit bias can still display implicit racial and gender biases. This is why users should understand that an AI response is not a neutral authority. The information it produces can be shaped by training data, model design, safety rules and decisions made by the organisations developing these systems.

Used intelligently, it is a useful tool. It can help brainstorm ideas, locate starting points for research, suggest synonyms, generate headline options, explain difficult concepts and help writers see different ways of structuring an argument. Research has even found that ChatGPT can improve individual performance on some creative brainstorming tasks, although reliance on it can also make people’s ideas more similar to one another.

Journalism provides a useful example of where that distinction matters. A Reuters Institute survey found that 56 per cent of UK journalists were using AI professionally at least weekly. Common uses included transcription, translation and copy-editing, while only 10 per cent reported using it at least monthly to generate first drafts of articles.

AI is not going away; therefore, the goal should be to learn how to use it without allowing it to replace our own voices.

A good AI tool should help someone become a better writer, not become the writer. Technology can suggest the words, but humans still need to decide what is true, what matters and, most importantly, what they actually want to say.



OMAN'S PERFORMANCE EVOKES MIXED REACTIONS



Saudi Arabia's Hassan Kadesh in action with Oman's Sultan al Marzouqi at King Abdullah Sport City Stadium. — Reuters

WALEED AL JAHWARI
JEDDAH, SEPT 29

THE PERFORMANCE of the Oman national football team at Gulf Cup 27 in Jeddah has generated a range of views among former internationals, football analysts and supporters. With discussions focusing on the team's development, tactical approach and the emergence of a new generation of players. Oman played their final group-stage match late on Tuesday night when they faced Kuwait, with the Red Warriors heading into the decisive fixture with difficult qualification prospects.

The match was officiated by Qatar's Mohammed al Shammari, with Zahi al Shammari and Khaled Ayed serving as the first and second assistant referees.

UAE's Omar al Ali was the fourth official, while Qatar's Meshari al Shammari oversaw VAR, assisted by UAE's Mohammed Obaid Khadem. Saudi Arabia's Abdulrahman al Omari was appointed referee assessor.

WIDER ROLE

The Gulf Cup holds a special place among players and fans across the region, while also providing an important platform for developing Gulf football and giving emerging generations valuable experience.

Former Oman international Fawzi Bashir highlighted: "The tournament has given great contribution to the development of football in the region and its role in producing new generations of players."



General view of Gulf Cup mascot Dhiban inside the stadium before the Gulf Cup Group A match between Oman and Kuwait at Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Sports City Stadium, Jeddah. — Reuters

Omani media personality Khamis al Balushi stressed before the tournament that Oman traditionally raise their level in group competitions, saying: "What distinguishes our national team is its superior performance in group tournaments, where it adapts to the demands of the occasion and its technical level improves."

Former international Ismail al Ajmi, meanwhile, pointed to the challenge facing the team under a new technical staff, noting: "The coach was still testing players

and implementing his ideas."

"This process required time, matches and competitions to help the players develop a better understanding of the coach's approach."

National team official Nasser al Hajri emphasised the importance of addressing previous shortcomings through analysis rather than focusing only on results.

"Highlighted defensive organisation, reducing individual errors and improving transitions and effectiveness in front of goal as key areas for development."

PHYSICALLY READY

Sports journalist Ahmed al Salmani said: "Oman appeared physically prepared but needed more demanding matches to reach the required technical level."

"The Gulf Cup has its own character and is not always decided by technical superiority or pre-tournament predictions," he added.

Views were expressed during the tournament and focused on the challenges facing Oman, rather than serving as assessments of the team's performances in Jeddah.

FANS SEEK CONSISTENCY

On social media, Omani supporters have expressed mixed reactions to the team's performances, with some highlighting positive aspects of the displays and the potential shown by several players, while others have called for greater consistency and improvements in key areas.

The discussion among supporters has also extended beyond the immediate results, with many focusing on the long-term development of the national team and the importance of building a stronger squad for future Asian and international competitions.

The Gulf Cup remains an important platform for developing football across the region.

It has also renewed discussion in Oman about the national team's future and emerging generations.

AL BUSAIDI PRAISES MEDIA SUPPORT FOR OMAN FOOTBALL

WALEED AL JAHWARI
JEDDAH, SEPT 29

Oman Football Association (OFA) Chairman Sayyid Sulaiman bin Hamoud al Busaidi has underlined the importance of a genuine partnership between the association and the media, describing the press as a mirror of its work and welcoming constructive criticism as an essential part of developing Omani football.

Speaking during a meeting with Omani journalists covering Gulf Cup 27 in Jeddah on Tuesday, Al Busaidi praised the media delegation for its coverage of the tournament and highlighted the role of the Ministry of Information in supporting the team's work.

"We believe that the media is a true mirror of all the work carried out by the Oman Football Association. We welcome

constructive criticism that contributes to the development of Omani football," Al Busaidi said.

He thanked the journalists for attending the gathering and commended the Omani media team at the tournament's media centre, describing its work as a positive reflection of the country's media capabilities. Al Busaidi also acknowledged the facilities provided by the Saudi organisers, saying the media centre had met the requirements of different media organisations and facilitated their coverage.

DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES PATIENCE: OFA CHIEF

Turning to the future of Omani football, the OFA chairman stressed that development requires patience, adding that the coming period would be important in building on the work already undertaken by the association.



The OFA chairman said the coming period would be important in building on the work already undertaken by the association.

He pointed to the qualification of Oman's youth team for the AFC Asian Cup alongside Saudi Arabia as an encouraging development, saying the players would receive particular attention as part of the long-term plan.

"This team will be given clear attention and, God willing, it will form the nucleus of our Olympic team and the senior national team in the near future," he said.

Al Busaidi also highlighted the importance of investing in promising young players across the national age-group teams, expressing confidence that they would leave their mark on Omani football in the coming years.

Regarding the senior national team, he said its qualification hopes remained alive, while expressing hope that other circumstances would work in Oman's favour.

"We still have a chance in the tournament, and we hope the

other circumstances will serve the team and help it qualify," he said.

The OFA chairman also praised the support of Omani fans, describing them as passionate supporters whose presence gives the team strength and motivation.

"We promise that in the coming period there will be something for the Omani fans to be proud of in their national team," he added.

Al Busaidi said the current development programme should also be viewed in the context of future continental and global competitions, including the AFC Asian Cup and FIFA World Cup, stressing that achieving those ambitions would require substantial and sustained work.

He concluded by thanking the media delegation for its coverage of the tournament, expressing hope that Oman would have a stronger presence in the competition in future editions.

ABU DHABI EVENT



The programme concluded with the distribution of official FIVB certificates to the participants.

JAMAL SUPERVISES FIVB LEVEL I COACHING COURSE

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

Oman's international lecturer and national experienced volleyball coach Jamal bin Mohammed al Maamari successfully concluded recently his full supervision of the FIVB Level I International Coaching Course which took place in Abu Dhabi which took place during September 21 to 25 under the umbrella of the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB). The five-day course was organised by the Abu Dhabi Sports Council in cooperation with the UAE Volleyball Association, bringing together 45 men and women participants representing a diverse range of Gulf, Arab, Asian and European nationalities.

The comprehensive programme featured intensive theoretical and practical sessions including eight hours of training per day. The course covered the latest FIVB coaching methodologies, including the fundamentals of coaching, technical and tactical preparation, physical conditioning and the rules and regulations of volleyball.

Al Maamari is widely recognised as one of Oman's experienced volleyball professionals, with extensive practical experience and a distinguished coaching and coach-development career at both domestic and international levels. He is an FIVB-accredited international lecturer and has contributed to numerous achievements with clubs and national teams throughout his career.

The course received positive feedback from participants, who praised its high level of organisation and the quality and depth of its educational content. The programme concluded with the distribution of official FIVB certificates to the participating coaches. Al Maamari's successful supervision of the course further highlights the growing contribution of Omani volleyball expertise to international coach development.

Speaking to the Oman Observer, Jamal described the FIVB Level I Coaching Course in Abu Dhabi as a valuable learning and knowledge-sharing experience for all those involved. "The programme brought together classroom-based instruction and practical sessions, giving the participating coaches an opportunity to strengthen their understanding of the modern game. The course offered the participants a strong foundation in contemporary volleyball coaching. Through the combination of theory and practical work, the coaches were able to enhance their technical knowledge and practical understanding while gaining greater insight into the latest developments and demands of the coaching profession," Al Maamari said.

He added that being selected by the FIVB to supervise the course was a significant honour and a rewarding professional experience.



Muscat and Al Ittihad players in action during the Oman Junior Handball League.

Muscat keep Group A lead with three straight wins

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

MUSCAT HAVE made a strong start to their title defence in the 2026-27 Oman Junior Handball League, securing their third consecutive victory to move clear at the top of Group A with six points.

The defending champions defeated Al Ittihad 40-18 in their third-round match at Seeb Sports Hall, producing another commanding performance to maintain their unbeaten start to the competition.

Muscat controlled the match from the opening minutes, combining disciplined defensive organisation with effective attacking play. Their ability to create and convert scoring opportunities allowed them to establish a comfortable advantage, and they went into half-time with a 21-9 lead.

The champions continued to dominate after the break despite Al Ittihad's attempts to reduce the deficit. Muscat remained focused and continued to extend their advantage through quick attacking transitions and efficient finishing before securing a 40-18 victory at the final whistle.

Muscat had already announced their intentions in the opening round with a convincing 38-16 victory over Ibri. The champions were in control from the start, taking a 24-6 lead into half-time before completing a comfortable victory.



Muscat and Al Ittihad players in action during the Oman Junior Handball League.

EARLY ADVANTAGE

They followed that performance with an even bigger win in the second round, defeating Masirah 53-12 to make it three wins from three matches. The results have given Muscat an early advantage in their bid to retain the title for a fourth consecutive season.

Nizwa also made a positive start to their Group A campaign, defeating Al Ittihad 27-20 in the opening round. They led 15-9 at half-time and maintained their advantage through the second half to collect their first two points.

Al Amerat, meanwhile, marked their first appearance in the junior league with an

impressive 32-15 victory over Masirah. They took an 18-4 lead into the interval before completing a convincing opening-round success.

Group B also produced several high-scoring encounters in the opening round. Seeb recorded the biggest victory of the round, defeating Saham 47-9, while Al Khabourah beat Majees 34-20. Oman Club also made an impressive start, overcoming Al Rustaq 42-6.

The second round saw Majees defeat Saham 22-16, while Al Khabourah continued their positive start with a 24-13 victory over Al Rustaq. Oman Club also claimed another important result, beating Seeb 35-21.

The third round will continue on October 9 with further fixtures in both groups. In Group A, leaders Muscat will face Al Amerat at 4 pm at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex auxiliary hall in Bausher. Masirah will meet Al Ittihad at 6 pm at the same venue, while Nizwa will take on Ibri at 4 pm at Sohar Sports Complex.

Group B will also see several fixtures, including Seeb against Majees at 4 pm at Sohar Sports Complex and Saham against Al Rustaq at 4 pm at Al Khabourah Sports Hall.

With the opening rounds producing several convincing victories, the competition is already developing into a closely contested battle for places in the second stage, while Muscat's perfect start has placed the defending champions in an early position of strength.

Team finals to bring women's bowling championship to a close

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

Fourteen teams will contest the team finals as the 18th Women's Bowling Championship concludes at Fun Zone in Qurum on Wednesday with the title showdown followed by the awards ceremony.

Dr Intisar bint Abdullah Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Educational Support Programmes, will attend the closing ceremony.

Organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth's Women's Sports Department in cooperation with the Oman Bowling Committee, the championship brought together 156 players representing 26 teams from 22 government and private institutions across singles, doubles,

team and Masters events.

Seven teams from each qualifying group secured places in the team finals. Group A qualifiers were Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), Royal Court Affairs B, Occidental B, Muscat Municipality, MB Holding, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

They will be joined by Group B qualifiers Occidental A, Sohar International, Royal Court Affairs A, the Diwan of Royal Court, OQ, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing B and the Consumer Protection Authority.

FATMA-SAMAR CLINCH DOUBLES Meanwhile, Sohar International's



The bowling championship brought together 156 players representing 26 teams from 22 government and private institutions across singles, doubles, team and Masters events.

Fatma al Balushi and Samar al Maashari clinched the doubles title with 928 points, finishing just 10 points ahead of Occidental's Aliya al Marjabi and Maryam al Ghafri.

Majda al Nabhani and Khadija al Manji of Royal Court Affairs took third place with 808 points. PDO's Raya al Abri and Ahlam al Marjabi finished fourth on 783, narrowly ahead of Occidental's Hiba al Dughaishi and Muna al Manji, who scored 780.

Royal Court Affairs pair Zainab al Balushi and Husaina al Manji placed sixth with 778 points, followed by PDO's Aisha al Seebani and Hiba al Naabi on 766. Samiya al Mahrouqi and Samar al Omairi of Royal Court Affairs finished eighth with 736.

PDO's Mouza al Yaarbi and

Sharifa al Maawali were ninth on 727, while OQ's Manal al Kiyoumi and Muzna al Ghafri completed the top 10 with 696.

In the singles competition, PDO's Aisha al Siyabi topped the standings with 532 points, ahead of Occidental's Maryam al Ghafri on 520. Royal Court Affairs player Husaina al Manji secured third place with 459, three points clear of OQ's Muzna al Ghafri. Sohar International's Samar al Maashari finished fifth with 449.

The closing ceremony will honour the leading players and teams across the championship's four disciplines, concluding a competition that brought together women from a broad cross-section of Oman's public and private sectors.

SPORTS

‘TEMPLE OF SPEED’



The duo struggled to get maximum top end performance out of their Ferrari 296 GT3 EVO but were able to move up from a qualifying position of 12th to finish 10th.

TOP-10 FINISH FOR AL ZUBAIR, MARSCHALL AT MONZA GT OPEN 500



MUSCAT: The Al Manar by Dragon Racing Team's Al Faisal al Zubair and Dennis Marschall overcame the handicap of a lack of top speed on one of the fastest race circuits in the world to earn a top-10 finish at the Monza GT Open 500 in Italy on Sunday.

The duo struggled to get maximum top end performance out of their Ferrari 296 GT3 EVO at the ‘Temple of Speed’ but were able to move up from a qualifying position of 12th to finish 10th in the last of the endurance races in the 2026 International GT Open.

Oman’s Al Zubair said: “We finished the last race of the programme (International GT Open). We came into the weekend on the back foot knowing that we struggled with the BoP (Balance of Performance). There was only so much we could do. “At the start of the race we gained a few positions but once the race got going, with the top speed we had and the straight-line speed we were losing, there was only so much we could do. It was not the best weekend. Hopefully, we can be more competitive at the next one.

“I had Dennis Marschall with me, who is the GT World Challenge champion and one of the top drivers, and he also struggled the whole weekend. I guess that goes to prove that we both struggled with the car more than anything.”

Al Zubair and his 30-year-old German team-mate took it in turns to drive a pair of stints apiece in the 87-lap race on the 5.793km circuit, with Al Zubair running from the start before handing over to Marschall for his first stint. Al Zubair then took the wheel for his second session and Marschall brought the car safely to the finish in 10th place.

Victory in the endurance race went to the Scuderia Villorba Corde Lamborghini duo of Leonardo Moncini and Rodrigo Testa. The Greystone GT McLaren of Zac Meakin and Dean Macdonald came home second.

The Al Manar by Dragon Racing duo took advantage of Thursday’s private tests before taking to the circuit for a pair of free practice sessions on Friday. The two Team Motopark Mercedes dominated the opening practice session with respective quickest laps of 1min 45.629sec and 1min 45.686sec. The Al Manar Racing by Dragon Ferrari ran for 21 laps and posted its quickest time on lap 20 – a 1min 46.699sec tour.

Al Zubair and Marschall were able to shave 0.144 seconds off that time during the second free practice session, when they ran the Ferrari for 28 laps. Team Motopark’s Christian Mansell and Maximilian Götz topped the times in that session.

All-important qualifying was split into two 25-minute stints on Saturday. Al Zubair ran for 14 laps in the late morning and his best run of 1min 46.350sec came on his penultimate tour of the circuit. That put him into 13th place and 12th of the Pro runners.



Salim al Touqi and co-driver Issa bin Mohammed al Wardi of Al Touqi team completed the rally in 50 minutes 42.1 seconds to claim first place.

Al Touqi bags first round honours of Oman Rally

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
@anuroop_ath

SALIM AL TOUQI and CO-DRIVER ISSA BIN MOHAMMED AL WARDI of Al Touqi team won the opening round of the 2026 Oman Rally Championship, the season-opening Jafnayn Rally, at the weekend.

The rally, organised by the Oman Automobile Association (OAA), took the eight local competitors through the challenging gravel stages of Jafnayn and Misfah, with the service area based at Al Maha Station.

Competing for the Al Touqi Team in a Mitsubishi Evo 7 in Rally 2 section, Al Touqi completed the rally in 50 minutes 42.1 seconds to claim first place.

Fahad bin Abdulrahim al Balushi and co-driver Jaber bin Khalfan al Siyabi finished second in a Can-Am X3 (T4 category) for X3 Overlanders. Their overall time was 50:47.7, including a one-minute penalty, leaving them 5.6 seconds behind the winners.

Zakariya al Aamri and co-driver Taha al Zadjali secured third place in another Can-Am X3 (T4). Al Aamri recorded a total time of 53:36.1, finishing 2 minutes 54 seconds behind Al Touqi and 2:48.4 behind the runner-up.

The event held on September 25, also saw two competitors retire. Ghaith bin Hamid al Qasmi and co-driver Bassam bin Hamid al Qasmi, driving a Mitsubishi Evo 8 in Rally 2 section, were classified as retired, while Faisal al Rashdi and co-driver Yaqdhan al Rashdi also retired in a Subaru Impreza STI (Rally 2).

Ahmad Soomar served as chair



Salim al Touqi and co-driver Issa bin Mohammed al Wardi of Al Touqi team won the opening round of the 2026 Oman Rally Championship.

Fahad bin Abdulrahim al Balushi and co-driver Jaber bin Khalfan al Siyabi finished second in a Can-Am X3 (T4 category) for X3 Overlanders. Their overall time was 50:47.7, including a one-minute penalty, leaving them 5.6 seconds behind the winners.

of the Stewards Panel alongside stewards Abdelmajid al Abri and Wadhah al Harthi.

START OF SEASON
The three-round championship features rally cars and Can-Ams in action across Oman’s diverse landscapes and terrain.
“We are happy to begin the season with the first round of the 2026 National Rally Championship. It represents an important initiative in our commitment to developing and supporting Omani talent in rallying. The event provides a valuable platform for emerging Omani drivers and teams to gain experience, develop their skills, and take important steps towards competing at higher levels,” OAA

Managing Director Suleiman al Rawahi told Oman Observer.

The Oman Rally Championship is featuring rounds across different governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, which provide a wide variety of routes well suited to rally competition. This diversity gives each round its own unique character and presents drivers with new challenges.

The second round is scheduled for October 23 while the third and final round is set for November 27. The event is sponsored by GWM Oman.

Competitors tackled more than 100 km of competitive stages and road sections in the opening round across the different car categories.

Events Manager Wadhah al Harthi said: “The local rally has made a smooth start with the first round. It has been designed as an important competitive and training platform for Omani rallying talents, providing drivers and teams with the opportunity to gain valuable experience in a professional rally environment.”

OMAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2026 ROUND 1 RESULTS
Final Classification – Overall
1. Salim al Touqi / Issa bin Mohammed al Wardi — Mitsubishi Evo 7 (Rally 2) — 50:42.1
2. Fahad bin Abdulrahim al Balushi / Jaber bin Khalfan al Siyabi — Can-Am X3 (T4) — 50:47.7 (+5.6s)
3. Zakariya al Aamri / Taha al Zadjali — Can-Am X3 (T4) — 53:36.1 (+2:54.0)
Retired:
Ghaith bin Hamid al Qasmi / Bassam bin Hamid al Qasmi — Mitsubishi Evo 8 (Rally 2)
Faisal al Rashdi / Yaqdhan al Rashdi — Subaru Impreza STI (Rally 2)

Hill Climb Challenge returns as part of Bidiyah Sands Carnival 2026

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

The Wilayat of Bidiyah in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate is preparing to host the Hill Climb Challenge, one of the region’s prominent desert motorsport events, from November 24 to 27, 2026, as part of the extensive programme of the Bidiyah Sands Carnival 2026. This year’s carnival will be bigger and more diverse, running from November 19 to December 19, 2026. The carnival will feature a wide

range of events and championships, headlined by the Baja Rally, which will be hosted in the Sultanate of Oman for the first time, alongside various sporting competitions, challenges and accompanying activities aimed at strengthening Bidiyah’s position as a destination for motorsport and adventure tourism.

The Hill Climb Challenge will be one of the main highlights of the Bidiyah Sands Carnival 2026, following the strong success and significant public turnout achieved



The Hill Climb Challenge will be held in Bidiyah from November 24 to 27.

in previous editions. The challenge has gained widespread popularity and attracts strong participation from competitors from both within the Sultanate of Oman and abroad. Shaikh Faisal al Hajri, President of the Bidiyah Automobile Endurance Racing Club, said: “The Hill Climb Challenge has become one of the most prominent events associated with Bidiyah. Over the years, it has attracted significant public interest and strong participation from within and outside the Sultanate of Oman. In 2025, the event welcomed

approximately 600,000 visitors, reflecting its growing popularity and its strong appeal among motorsport and desert adventure enthusiasts.” He added: “This year, we look forward to delivering an even bigger and more distinguished edition as part of the Bidiyah Sands Carnival 2026, which will run for five weeks and feature a diverse programme of sporting, entertainment and community activities, providing an integrated experience for visitors, families and motorsport enthusiasts.”



MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
7,579.046

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$110.78
BRENT \$96.89
LIGHT \$91.73



SHORT TAKES



The longstanding historical relationship between Oman and Tanzania offered a foundation for broader economic and investment cooperation.

OMAN SEEKS DEEPER INVESTMENT TIES WITH TANZANIA

DAR ES SALAAM: An Omani government delegation has held talks in Tanzania aimed at identifying new trade and investment opportunities and encouraging partnerships between businesses in the two countries.

The delegation from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion met Tanzanian government bodies, economic institutions, investors and business leaders during the visit.

It was led by Ibtisam bint Ahmed al Farooji, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion.

Al Farooji said the longstanding historical relationship between Oman and Tanzania offered a foundation for broader economic and investment cooperation.

Oman regards Tanzania as an important partner in East Africa because of the country's economic potential and investment opportunities, she said.

The visit forms part of Oman's efforts to strengthen its commercial presence in African markets and build long-term partnerships with economies offering growth potential.

Al Farooji presented Oman as a gateway through which investors could reach markets in the Gulf and wider region, supported by its location, transport infrastructure and investment incentives.

She also highlighted Oman's Golden Residency programme, which grants eligible investors, business owners and skilled professionals and their families long-term residency.

The programme is intended to provide investors with greater stability and strengthen their links to Oman's economy and business environment.

Al Farooji said direct discussions with Tanzania's business community would help Oman better understand investor priorities and match them with opportunities in sectors targeted for development.

The two countries are seeking to turn their historical relationship into commercially viable projects capable of creating economic value and supporting trade diversification.

BALARAB AL TAMIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

Omani manufacturers seeking duty-free access to the United States must comply with detailed rules of origin under the two countries' free trade agreement (FTA), even as some additional US tariffs remain payable.

Emmee Haun, Managing Director of the Oman Trade Office US, said qualifying Omani products enter the US free of normal customs duties and are exempt from the 0.3464-per-cent merchandise processing fee charged at US ports and airports.

"Is this free trade agreement still in effect? Yes, it is", Haun told a session at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Despite recently introduced tariffs and other trade measures, "the FTA has remained untouched", she said.

The agreement was signed in 2006 and entered into force in 2009. It has no expiry date and all scheduled duty reductions were completed within 10 years.

Oman is among 20 countries that have free trade agreements with the US, giving



Qualifying Omani products enter the US free of normal customs duties and are exempt from the 0.3464-per-cent merchandise processing fee charged at US ports and airports.

EMMEE HAUN
Managing Director,
Oman Trade Office
US

qualifying exporters a competitive advantage, Haun said.

However, FTA eligibility does not exempt goods from all additional US tariffs.

Some qualifying products remain subject to a 12.5-per-cent levy imposed under Section 301 of US trade law unless they appear on an exceptions list.

Haun said the rules of origin were the agreement's most important but most complicated provisions.

Goods may qualify if they are produced entirely in Oman using Omani or US materials. These could include fish caught in

Omani waters, locally extracted minerals or domestically grown agricultural products. Most manufacturers, however, must qualify under a second route.

Imported inputs must undergo sufficient transformation in Oman to create a new product, as demonstrated by a change in its Harmonised System classification.

The value of Omani or US materials, together with direct processing costs, must also represent at least 35 per cent of the product's appraised value.

This is based on the invoice price charged to the US customer, excluding shipping costs.

Materials imported from third countries do not count towards the 35-per-cent threshold. A nail manufacturer using steel imported from India, for example, could not include the steel's value in the calculation.

Eligible direct costs include labour, depreciation, research and development, inspection and packaging.

Production-related energy costs may also be included for energy-intensive industries. Profit, administrative salaries, sales and

Oman graphite refinery project gains momentum

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

PLANS

for a high-purity graphite refinery in Oman's Al Buraimi Governorate are

advancing alongside engineering work on its Australian feedstock operations, as developers progress an integrated supply chain targeting global battery and energy-storage markets.

Australian critical minerals company Quantum Graphite Limited said workstreams in Oman and South Australia are proceeding in parallel under the integrated downstream structure established by Sunlands Pure Group (SPG). The model envisages flake graphite concentrate produced on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula being refined into high-purity material at Al Buraimi.

In Oman, an Environmental Impact Study for the proposed refinery has been completed, while negotiations with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), the Sultanate of Oman's industrial land agency, over the project site are "well progressed", Quantum reported.

Preparatory work will now include a LIDAR survey to produce high-resolution three-dimensional mapping of the approximately 2.6 million-square-metre site, followed by land surveys and detailed survey plans. Hydrology and geotechnical work will

The proposed complex is designed to serve lithium-ion battery anode, isostatic graphite and thermal energy-storage markets. SPG's purification technologies are capable of processing natural flake graphite to around 99.9 per cent graphitic carbon purity.



Graphite is a key ingredient serving the lithium-ion battery anode, isostatic graphite and thermal energy-storage markets.

subsequently be undertaken based on the survey outputs.

The latest progress follows an agreement announced earlier this year between SPG and Al Buraimi Governorate for the development of the graphite refinery and supporting facilities.

The proposed complex is designed to serve lithium-ion battery anode, isostatic graphite and thermal energy-storage markets. SPG's purification technologies are capable of processing natural flake graphite to around 99.9 per cent graphitic carbon purity.

The Omani development is closely linked to Quantum Graphite's Uley 2 project on South Australia's Southern Eyre Peninsula, which is intended to supply the refinery with flake

graphite concentrate.

Quantum said Front-End Engineering and Design (FEED) work on Uley 2 is progressing on schedule, with process plant design reaching 80 per cent completion and a review updating capital and operating costs from the 2023 Definitive Feasibility Study now 75 per cent complete.

The plant location has also been reassessed following finalisation of a 20-year ore supply agreement in June, with the layout intended to accommodate future expansion without disrupting existing operations.

Together, the two workstreams underpin an emerging cross-border graphite value chain linking Australian mineral resources with downstream processing in Oman.

Oman maps minerals-to-fertiliser value chain

MUSCAT: Oman is developing a roadmap to connect its mineral resources with fertiliser and chemical manufacturing, seeking to convert more locally produced raw materials into higher-value industrial products.

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals reviewed the proposed roadmap during a workshop titled "Roadmap for Integration between Minerals, Fertilisers and Chemicals in the Sultanate of Oman", held under the auspices of Mohsin bin Hamad al Hadhrami, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

The plan covers existing and proposed projects, investment opportunities, participating organisations and implementation schedules for priority developments.

It is based on a study prepared for the ministry by Falaj Point that examines how mineral resources and concession areas could support downstream manufacturing.

The proposed framework would connect natural resources with production facilities, infrastructure, logistics networks and markets, helping Oman reduce its reliance on exporting

minerals in their raw form.

It identifies gypsum, limestone, dolomite, laterite, kaolin and potash as resources that could be used to develop fertilisers and related chemical products. These would complement Oman's existing production capabilities in urea, ammonia and sulphur.

The roadmap also proposes the development of industrial clusters in Suhar, Al Duqm, Salalah and Ibri, based on the resources, infrastructure and industrial potential available in each location. — ONA

Rules of origin decide US duty benefits

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The recognition reflects Sohar International’s broader role as a financial partner to businesses, investors and institutions.

Sohar International receives award for advancing investment & economic growth

MUSCAT: Sohar International has received the “Award for Advancing Investment & Economic Growth” at the 14th edition of Oman Forum 2026, recognising the Bank’s role in supporting investment and sustainable economic growth in Oman. The Forum was held in the presence of Khalid bin Salim al Ghammari, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Labour. The recognition reflects Sohar International’s broader role as a financial partner to businesses, investors and institutions seeking to participate in Oman’s economic growth.

By combining financial strength, market expertise and a suite of banking and investment capabilities, the Bank facilitates capital deployment, business expansion and strategic projects across sectors that contribute to the Sultanate of Oman’s long-term economic priorities in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Commenting on the recognition, Abdulwahid bin Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said: “Oman is entering an important phase of economic transformation, with significant opportunities emerging across sectors and an increasingly prominent role for private capital and enterprise.

Our responsibility as a financial institution is to help translate that opportunity into sustainable economic value. This requires us to go beyond financing — bringing together capital, expertise, relationships and solutions that enable businesses and investors to move from ambition to execution.

This recognition reinforces our commitment to supporting productive investment, strengthening the private sector and contributing to the long-term ambitions of Oman Vision 2040”. Through its wholesale banking capabilities, Sohar International works across the investment lifecycle, supporting established enterprises, emerging businesses, investors and institutions with solutions that enable expansion, strategic projects and new investment.

This approach positions the Bank as a partner that understands business ambitions and connects them with the financial capabilities required to realise them.

Sohar International also contributed to the Forum’s discussion on strengthening the private sector and building businesses capable of sustainable growth.

Nasr Riadh al Asfoor, Head of Multinationals and SME, represented the Bank during the panel discussion “How to Build Scalable Companies”, sharing perspectives on what businesses need to scale effectively, strengthen their competitiveness and capture emerging growth opportunities.

ROP, Bank Muscat launch cyber fraud film contest

IN an innovative initiative that takes awareness of cyber fraud beyond conventional messaging towards creative and impactful content, the Royal Oman Police (ROP) and Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, have announced the launch of a short film contest aimed at raising awareness of cyber fraud, during a press conference organised by the two institutions in Bank Muscat Head Office at Airport Heights and was attended by a number of officials and representatives of the various media channels.

Targeting young people aged 18 and above, the contest seeks to harness their creativity and content creation skills to deliver awareness messages capable of reaching different segments of society in a modern and engaging manner.

The contest forms part of the activities of the joint awareness campaign implemented by the two institutions to combat cyber fraud, which is continuing for the sixth consecutive year.

During the conference, a presentation was delivered highlighting the competition’s objectives, categories, target audience and other relevant details. In addition, examples of awareness initiatives from the joint campaign between the Royal Oman Police and Bank Muscat were showcased, along with some of the key phases it went through during the previous period.

The press conference also served as a platform for exchanging ideas and views aimed at raising public awareness of the various types of electronic fraud, ways to prevent them and educating the community about emerging fraudulent practices.

The contest invites participants to produce a short film of no more than 90 seconds highlighting a particular method of cyber fraud and explaining how to identify and prevent it, thereby contributing to greater



The contest forms part of the activities of the joint awareness campaign implemented by the two institutions to combat cyber fraud, which is continuing for the sixth consecutive year.

awareness, vigilance and responsible digital behaviour. Those interested in participating can submit their entries through the dedicated competition link: www.khalikwa3i.om, no later than November 20, 2026.

Winners will receive valuable cash prizes totaling RO 6,000, with the first-place winner receiving RO 3,000, the second-place winner RO 2,000 and the third-place winner RO 1,000. In addition, incentive prizes will be presented to selected participants in recognition of their creativity and efforts in supporting the initiative’s awareness objectives.

The significance of the competition lies in placing young people at the heart of the awareness process, not merely as a target audience, but as active partners in creating and disseminating the message. With the rapid growth of digital platforms and the continuous evolution of fraud techniques, short films and visual content have become increasingly effective tools for reaching audiences, particularly young people.

The initiative therefore seeks to transform creative ideas into simple, impactful and direct messages that help members of the community recognise potential fraud attempts before falling victim to them.

Badr Al Samaa launches ‘Save a Heart’ campaign

MUSCAT: On the occasion of World Heart Day 2026, Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals, in collaboration with the Directorate General of Private Health Establishments, Ministry of Health (MoH), has launched the “Save a Heart” campaign — a community-focused public health initiative aimed at bridging the knowledge gap around cardiac emergencies and empowering people with practical knowledge that could potentially help save lives.

The campaign is built around a simple but critical question: If someone around you suddenly collapses, becomes unresponsive or is not breathing normally, would you know what to do?



This campaign is in collaboration with the Directorate General of Private Health Establishments at the Ministry of Health.

To take this message directly to the community, public interactions were conducted at public places like beaches, parks, markets, engaging people

from different nationalities and backgrounds to understand their awareness and preparedness in responding to cardiac emergencies.

Medical teams subsequently provided practical education, including demonstrations of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), with members of the public encouraged to practice the technique themselves.

The campaign also featured controlled cardiac-emergency simulations at Muttrah Souq, Nizwa Souq and Sohar Handicraft Souq. Trained actors simulated suspected cardiac emergencies to observe how members of the public would naturally respond.

The purpose was not to judge individual reactions, but to identify awareness gaps and transform those moments into opportunities for practical learning.

Kia PV5 named German compact car of the year 2027

MUSCAT: The Kia PV5 has been named German Compact Car of the Year 2027 in the €25,000–€40,000 category at the German Car of the Year (GCOTY) awards and selected as a finalist for the overall GCOTY 2027 title.

The PV5 will now compete alongside the winners of the other GCOTY categories for the overall German Car of the Year 2027 title, which will be announced later this year.

As Kia’s first dedicated, all-electric Platform Beyond Vehicle (PBV), the PV5 introduces a new approach to electric mobility built around the real-world requirements of different users and applications.

The PV5 range offers Passenger, Cargo and Chassis Cab



The PV5 will now compete alongside the winners of the other GCOTY categories for the overall German Car of the Year 2027 title.

configurations, combining modular design, flexible interior packaging and connected technology to support personal mobility, commercial operations and specialised conversions.

“Recognition as German Compact Car of the Year is particularly meaningful because the PV5 was developed around the real-world needs of a wide range of customers”, said Sangdae Kim, Executive Vice President and Head of PBV Business Division at Kia Corporation. “As Kia’s first dedicated PBV, the PV5 combines flexible vehicle architecture, connected technology and an expanding ecosystem of services to deliver practical value for individuals, businesses and fleets. This award reinforces

our vision of creating more integrated and adaptable mobility solutions that help customers improve productivity and unlock new possibilities in their daily operations“.

One of Germany’s leading independent automotive awards, GCOTY brings together 36 expert automotive journalists and content creators who evaluated more than 70 new models introduced to the market, assessing progress in design, technology and everyday practicality.

“In the price range of 25,000 to 40,000 euros, the Kia PV5 is not only the most practical, but also one of the most stylistically impressive models on the market”, said Jens Meiners, GCOTY initiator.

SHORTTAKES



Participants are reviewing progress on resolutions adopted at the commission's previous session and the implementation of its 2026–2030 work programme.

Oman joins OIC talks on modernising statistical systems

JEDDAH: The Sultanate of Oman is participating in an Organisation of Islamic Cooperation meeting focused on modernising statistical systems, improving economic data and developing measurable indicators for regional priorities.

The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) is representing Oman at the 15th session of the OIC Statistical Commission, being held in Jeddah on September 29 and 30. The Omani delegation is headed by Dr Khalifa bin Abdullah al Barwani, Chief Executive Officer of the NCSI.

The meeting brings together representatives of statistical agencies from OIC member states, alongside regional and international organisations. Participants are reviewing progress on resolutions adopted at the commission's previous session and the implementation of its 2026–2030 work programme.

Discussions also cover the proposed monitoring system for the OIC's 2026–2035 programme, including efforts to translate strategic priorities into measurable indicators supported by clearly identified data sources.

The commission is examining ways to modernise population and housing statistics through digital, interconnected systems. These include digital censuses, administrative registers, vital statistics, household surveys, geospatial information and alternative data sources.

The measures are intended to improve the efficiency of national statistical systems, support government planning and strengthen monitoring of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Delegates are also discussing the implementation of the 2025 System of National Accounts and methods for measuring the digital economy, globalisation, the informal sector and Islamic finance. — ONA

OQBI advances methanol expansion study in Oman

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

OQBI is proceeding with detailed studies for a proposed expansion of its methanol plant as the company evaluates a range of financing options for future growth projects, senior executives said.

The expansion, initially disclosed in the company's initial public offering prospectus, remains under technical and operational assessment, Acting Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer Ihsan al Jandal said during a presentation on OQBI's first-half performance.

"We are still conducting detailed studies for the methanol plant expansion project and any developments will be disclosed in due course", Al Jandal said.

Chief Financial Officer Ahmed al Baraami said the financing structure for future projects would depend on their size, feasibility and practical requirements.

The available options include direct project loans, other capital-market issuances and Islamic sukuk, he said, adding that they had been studied internally on a preliminary basis.

"The financing market is currently favourable, opportunities are available and the options are diverse", Al Baraami said. Management would select and announce the most appropriate financing option once an expansion project was ready, he added.

OQBI's methanol plant, which began operating in 2010, produced 595,000 tonnes during



The expansion, initially disclosed in the company's initial public offering prospectus, remains under technical and operational assessment.

the six months ended June, compared with 602,000 tonnes in the corresponding period of 2025. Its next comprehensive maintenance turnaround is planned for 2028.

Ammonia production increased to 181,000 tonnes from 179,000 tonnes, while liquefied petroleum gas output declined to 151,000 tonnes from 175,000 tonnes following a 29-day scheduled maintenance shutdown.

Al Jandal said the lower LPG output resulted from the planned turnaround rather than operational difficulties. The company has no further scheduled maintenance shutdowns during 2026 and its plants are currently operating at full capacity, with operational performance exceeding

expectations. Total sales volumes increased 2.6 per cent to 940,000 tonnes from 916,000 tonnes a year earlier. Ammonia sales rose by approximately 9 per cent, while methanol sales increased 2.2 per cent, helping offset the decline in LPG sales caused by the shutdown.

Average selling prices during the first half were about \$660 per tonne for LPG products, including propane, butane and condensates; \$350 per tonne for methanol; and close to \$600 per tonne for ammonia.

OQBI recorded first-half earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation of RO 70.6 million, an increase of 56.3 per cent from a year earlier. Second-quarter EBITDA rose approximately 129 per cent

year on year, mainly because of higher international product prices. The company intends to distribute RO 26.9 million to shareholders in October, comprising a RO 18-million base dividend and a proposed RO 8.9-million performance-linked payment. The distributions remain subject to shareholder approval.

A further RO 18 million covering the second half of 2026 is planned for April 2027, subject to economic conditions, board decisions and the necessary shareholder approvals.

Al Baraami said OQBI remained exposed to fluctuations in international commodity prices but used long-term trading arrangements to help manage changing market conditions.

Oil prices unlikely to climb to extreme levels again: Expert

VINOD R NAIR
MUSCAT, SEPT 29

Understanding market movements, especially a to a, can be puzzling even for the best analysts. It is difficult to grasp why two commodities react to the same global developments differently, or sometimes even in opposite directions.

The Observer spoke to Manpreet Gill, Chief Investment Officer, Africa, Middle East & Europe (AMEE) at Standard Chartered, to understand global oil supply and demand dynamics, price outlooks, and energy transition trends impacting the region, as well as what drives gold and other commodities.

When oil prices drop, the decline can be drastic, yet prices are not fluctuating erratically: When crude prices rise above \$100, significant



MANPREET GILL
Chief Investment Officer, AMEE at Standard Chartered

some time, with positive news and ongoing talks potentially pulling it slightly lower, while less favorable developments could briefly push it above that threshold."

Addressing the likelihood of oil reaching \$150 per barrel, as occurred in the early stages of the ongoing conflict: "The chances remain low. There are sufficient

concern arises, making it easy for even a minor piece of positive news to push prices down. He anticipates that oil will remain around the \$100 mark for

incentives across all sides to avoid such an extreme outcome because high oil prices fuel inflation and stifle growth globally.

Furthermore, supply has not completely dried up, as some continues to flow from the region, helping to stabilize the market."

Regarding a potential return to pre-war price levels of \$60 to \$70 per barrel: "A resolution to the conflict is required. The market currently sits in a middle ground where the worst-case scenario is avoided due to shared economic incentives, yet positive catalysts remain insufficient to drive prices down toward \$70.

Over the long term, \$70 per barrel remains the ideal benchmark for balanced economics, as dips below that level carry their own set of challenges. While short-term prices may hover around \$100, the 12-month outlook suggests a shift

toward the \$70 range, reflecting broader supply and demand dynamics."

The Russia-Ukraine conflict impacts not only crude oil but also refined products like diesel and jet fuel, where supply remains constrained for distinct reasons. The market finds itself in a intermediate zone, well above desired low levels yet far below extreme price shocks of \$200 per barrel, keeping inflation around 3%.

Difference between crude oil and atural gas: "While crude directly influences the global economy, the US, and emerging markets, natural gas holds greater weight for Europe and its inflation metrics.

This divergence leads to varied market outcomes, though financial markets ultimately focus on pricing future expectations. Consequently, most markets would welcome the

reopening of key transit routes like the Strait of Hormuz."

On whether the El Niño effect drives broader energy demand, Gill said that there is little evidence of a major shift in total consumption.

While extreme weather increases demand in certain areas, offsetting factors such as structural energy efficiency and the rapid expansion of renewables, particularly in Europe, help counterbalance the impact. While El Niño shifts the energy mix, its broader economic effect is typically muted compared to initial fears.

"Its most noticeable impact occurs in specific agricultural commodities depending on crop types and locations, making it an inflation variable to monitor rather than a central risk. Access to open energy supply lines remains a far more decisive driver for the markets."

OIL MARKETS

Oil steadies as Gulf exports recover



Oil was little changed on Tuesday as investors weighed persistent Middle East supply risks against recovering regional exports. Brent slipped 0.2% to \$105.04 a barrel, while WTI fell 0.4% to \$92.24.

Kpler data showed exports from major Middle Eastern producers reached 12.8 million barrels per day in September, although costly ship-to-ship transfers continued to support elevated prices. — Reuters

CURRENCY MARKETS

Dollar nears two-month high



The dollar hovered near a two-month high on Tuesday, supported by higher Treasury yields and expectations of another Federal Reserve rate increase.

The dollar index edged up to 101.2 and was heading for a 1.8% September gain. Meanwhile, the euro traded at \$1.1367, sterling at \$1.3248 and the yen weakened to 157.40 ahead of key inflation and employment data in the US. — Reuters

PRECIOUS METALS

Gold holds near seven-week low



Gold steadied near a seven-week low on Tuesday as a stronger dollar and expectations of higher US interest rates weighed on demand.

Spot gold was little changed at \$4,124.57 an ounce after touching its lowest level since August 5, while US futures fell 0.3% to \$4,156.70. Other metals, like silver declined 0.6%, platinum lost 1% and palladium slipped 0.5%. — Reuters

OPINION

Can the US grow its way out of debt? Don't bet on it



JAMIE MCGEEVER

The writer is a financial journalist since 1998

TREASURY

Secretary Scott Bessent has few cards left to play to free the US from its debt chokehold. He appears to be putting all his money on one: an AI-driven economic growth boom. It's unlikely to be the ace he thinks it is.

"We're going to have to grow our way out of this", Bessent said last month when the US national debt crossed the \$40 trillion mark. The assumption here is straightforward: the AI revolution will generate a rip in US productivity, wages and tax revenues, which will close the budget deficit and ultimately reverse the upward debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) trajectory. It will be a repeat of the internet-fueled boom of the 1990s, but on steroids.

The astronomical spending driving the AI rollout is certainly juicing strong economic and corporate revenue growth right now. The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's GDPNow current estimate for real growth in the third quarter is an annualised 5.0%, while nominal GDP growth is probably running close to an eye-popping 9%. Meanwhile, corporate earnings skyrocketed by 35% in

the second quarter and company profits as a share of GDP have never been higher. And with an unemployment rate of just 4.1%, a historically high proportion of Americans are contributing to government revenue from income and payroll taxes.

The budget deficit is sure to shrink then, right? Probably not. The problem isn't growth. It's the tax structure.

HIGHER TAXES OR MORE JOBS? MAYBE NEITHER

The statutory US corporate tax rate of 21% is now the lowest since 1940. President Donald Trump cut it in his first term from the Clinton-era rate of 35%. As a result, corporate tax revenue as a share of the overall government tax take and GDP has rarely been lower. In the 1990s, it made up 10-12% of all federal receipts. That figure is now down to 9% and appears to be falling. Corporate tax revenues as a share of US GDP are also the lowest among the Group of Seven (G7) rich nations.

This dynamic was exacerbated by last year's One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), which the Trump administration hoped would turbocharge growth and reduce the deficit. But non-tariff tax revenue has been

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falling this year, even as the economy has been expanding. The OBBBA will also bake in years of wide budget deficits and decades of rising debt-to-GDP levels, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO), which estimates that net federal revenues will fall by almost \$5 trillion in the 2026-2035 decade.

That's a bleak outlook. So what are the options? One would be tax hikes.

A large reason the dotcom boom had such a positive fiscal impact in the 1990s was then-President Bill Clinton's 1993 tax hikes. Once the internet boom really took off, the higher tax revenues helped the country experience a brief, rare budget surplus. This, in turn, reduced the debt-to-GDP ratio by around 10 percentage points to around 55%.

Of course, the chances of the current administration introducing similar deficit-reducing tax hikes are close to zero. Indeed, Trump recently floated the idea of giving every US adult a \$5,000 check if the Republicans retain control of the House and Senate in the midterm elections, a measure that would cost around \$1.3 trillion.

If taxes aren't going to be raised, increased tax revenue will hinge on a wider tax-paying base. — Reuters

BATTERED BOND MARKET BRACES FOR A NEW ERA OF INTEREST RATES

DHARA RANASINGHE

The world's biggest sovereign bond markets are heading for their worst month in years as soaring energy costs fan inflation and the AI boom lifts economic growth, leaving investors positioning for an era where interest rates stay higher for longer.

Two-year US Treasury yields have surged almost 60 basis points (bps) in September and are poised for the biggest monthly jump since early 2023.

Two-year borrowing costs in France, Germany, Britain and Australia are set for their biggest monthly jumps since March when the Iran war got underway, sparking a new energy shock. Japanese government bond yields are pinned near multi-decade highs.

"There's a realisation that the whole energy story and inflation story will not go away in the very short term", said Societe Generale's head of corporate research for FX and rates Kenneth Broux. "Bond markets are adjusting to that". For some investors, rising yields have made government bonds attractive again, while others remain cautious towards long-dated bonds given concerns about high government debt.

October will bring new tests in the shape of the latest US jobs and inflation data, French budget talks, a UK budget and likely more bond issuance from tech firms.

Sovereign bond markets matter because they impact loans for businesses and consumers, such as mortgages. If borrowing costs there rise too quickly, that can threaten financial and economic stability, so governments and central banks pay close attention.

Compared with 2022, a year where bond returns were the worst on record, it is not just the speed of the move that is rattling markets but also the high and rising absolute level of global rates.

Data last week showed the rate on the most popular US home loan has risen to its highest in more than two years.

And 10-year Treasury yields, which have pushed above 5% for the first time since 2007, are poised for the biggest monthly jump since 2022 with a rise of around 50 bps.

The ICE BofA MOVE Index, a measure of bond-market volatility, has jumped almost 30% in September, the largest increase since March.

That volatility, which is expected to continue, has caught some investors out. But some are sensing an opportunity.

Florian Ielpo, head of macro and multi asset portfolio manager at Lombard Odier Investment Managers, said he had turned more positive on government bonds given high yields.

He expects government borrowing costs to remain higher for some time, too, as the market competes with bond sales by big tech to drive AI investments.

The value of bond sales from hyperscalers has more than doubled this year to over \$200 billion, according to LSEG data.

Dealmakers, too, say they can live with funding costs that are the highest since the global financial crisis. — Reuters

Oman's manufacturing sector gains momentum

THE

latest economic indicators released by National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) provide a positive picture of the continued growth of the manufacturing sector during the first half of 2026. The figures show growth across three important dimensions of industrial development: manufacturing output, foreign investment and non-oil exports.

Manufacturing output increased by 16.1% compared with the same period of 2025, reaching approximately RO 2.188 billion at current prices. At the same time, foreign investment in the manufacturing sector increased by 4.7% to approximately RO 2.829 billion, while non-oil exports grew by 10.7% to reach around RO 4.309 billion.

These figures are significant because they demonstrate that the manufacturing sector is experiencing growth not only in production, but also in investment and access to external markets. This combination is particularly important for Oman as it continues to pursue economic diversification under Oman Vision 2040.

Manufacturing has the potential to connect investment with productive capacity, productive capacity with exports and exports with broader economic value creation. The 16.1% increase in manufacturing output represents one of the most notable indicators in the latest data. Manufacturing output reached RO 2.188 billion during the first half of 2026, indicating continued expansion in industrial activity.

The growth was supported by several major manufacturing activities. Refined petroleum products increased by 40% to RO 397.2 million, while the manufacture of basic chemicals grew by 22.7% to RO 659.6 million. Meanwhile, other manufacturing industries increased by 6.3% to RO 1.132 billion.

These figures suggest that the expansion was not confined to a single industrial segment. At the same time, they highlight the importance of looking beyond output growth and assessing the quality and composition



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These figures are significant because they demonstrate that the manufacturing sector is experiencing growth not only in production, but also in investment and access to external markets.

of industrial growth. Higher production becomes more economically significant when it is accompanied by greater domestic value added, stronger linkages with local suppliers, increased technology adoption, higher productivity and the creation of skilled employment.

The increase in foreign investment in manufacturing is another important indicator. Foreign investment in the sector reached approximately RO 2.829 billion, representing growth of 4.7%.

This demonstrates continued interest in Oman's manufacturing opportunities and reinforces the importance of maintaining an attractive and competitive investment environment.

The value of foreign investment, however, extends beyond the financial capital that enters the country. International manufacturing companies can also contribute technology, technical expertise, management practices, international standards and access to global markets.

The greater opportunity for Oman is to maximise the domestic economic linkages created by these investments by connecting major industrial projects with Omani companies, SMEs, suppliers and service providers.

At the same time, the 10.7% growth in non-oil exports, which reached approximately RO 4.309 billion, highlights the increasing importance of international markets to Oman's economic diversification.

For manufacturing to become a sustainable engine of economic growth, companies must be able to compete beyond the domestic market. Export orientation therefore needs to remain a central component of industrial development.

The growth was supported by several key manufacturing-related export categories. Basic metals and chemical products recorded a significant increase of 26.7%, reaching approximately RO 994 million and RO 627 million, respectively. Plastics and rubber products also increased by 6.4%, reaching around RO 600 million. These developments indicate continued strength in Oman's resource-based and downstream

manufacturing industries and highlight their growing contribution to the country's non-oil export performance.

The three indicators — manufacturing output, investment and exports — should therefore be viewed as interconnected elements of the same industrial development process. Investment creates productive capacity, productive capacity generates manufacturing output, competitive production creates opportunities for exports and successful exports can generate further investment and industrial expansion. Strengthening these connections can create a more sustainable industrial growth cycle.

The next phase of Oman's manufacturing development should consequently focus not only on increasing the size of the sector, but also on increasing its depth and sophistication. This means encouraging industries that generate higher domestic value added, make greater use of local inputs and capabilities, adopt advanced technologies, improve productivity and integrate Omani enterprises into industrial supply chains.

Overall, the latest NCSI figures provide a positive indication of the direction of Oman's manufacturing sector. The 16.1% growth in manufacturing output, the 4.7% increase in foreign investment in manufacturing and the 10.7% growth in non-oil exports demonstrate momentum across production, investment and international markets.

The key challenge now is to convert this momentum into deeper and more sustainable industrial transformation. Oman has an opportunity to move from resource-based advantages towards higher-value manufacturing, from investment attraction towards stronger domestic industrial linkages and from export growth towards more sophisticated and globally competitive products.

If these elements continue to reinforce one another, manufacturing can play an increasingly important role in achieving economic diversification, strengthening national productive capacity and supporting the objectives of Oman manufacturing strategy 2040.

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ON SECOND **THOUGHT**

RIDING A SEA TURTLE IS NOT AS COOL AS YOU THINK



Yeru Ebuén
The writer is a luxury media strategist and a creative director

In a viral video from Ras Al Hadd, a sea turtle is trying to make its way across the sand. A blonde woman sits on its shell. A man appears to straddle it as though it were a horse. I kept watching the turtle. Every bit of ground it covered seemed hard won.

Perhaps the people involved thought it was a funny holiday moment. Perhaps they simply did not think at all. Either way, the animal was trying to get on with its life while people turned that effort into entertainment. Oman's Environment

Authority has since said it is taking legal action over the footage and has reminded visitors not to touch, approach or disturb turtles at nesting sites.

A viral video from Ras Al Hadd has renewed attention on the responsibility visitors carry at Oman's turtle nesting sites, where respect, distance and restraint are essential to protecting one of the country's most treasured marine species.

Anyone coming to see Oman's turtles should know what this country has done to protect them. A royal decree established the Turtle Reserve in 1996.

Oman's Nature Reserves and Wildlife Conservation Law followed in 2003, while its environmental protection law lists sea turtles among protected wildlife.

Those are the legal foundations; on the beach, the instruction is much simpler. Give a turtle room. Let it move, nest and return to the sea without making yourself part of the scene.

A turtle on land is easy to mistake for a sturdy creature because of its shell. Watch one long enough and you see something else: the slow pull of its body, the effort of each flipper in the sand.

A visitor sitting on it adds weight and stops it doing what it came ashore to do. We cannot tell from a video whether this turtle was injured. We can tell it should have been left alone.

There are already enough hazards waiting for sea turtles. In Oman, conservation workers deal with abandoned fishing gear, artificial light, beach disturbance and changes to the coastline.

Volunteers and officials monitor nesting beaches, clear waste and help stranded adults and hatchlings. Much of that work happens when the visitors have gone home.

I can imagine someone saying that Oman has plenty of turtles, so what difference could one foolish encounter make? Multiply that thought by thousands of visitors. Soon, a nesting beach becomes a place where every animal has to make its way through somebody else's photograph.

The authorities can set rules and patrol the shore. The rest of us have a part that requires no training at all. If we travel to see something remarkable, we should allow it to remain itself.

Some things are held sacred through custom or faith. A turtle's passage between the sea and the sand deserves that same quiet respect.

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



MUSIC

Swedish rapper Yung Lean attends the MTV Video Music Awards at the Peacock Theatre in Los Angeles, California. — **AFP**



CULTURE

Palestinians dance at a mass wedding for 42 couples in Dura, West Bank. — **AFP**



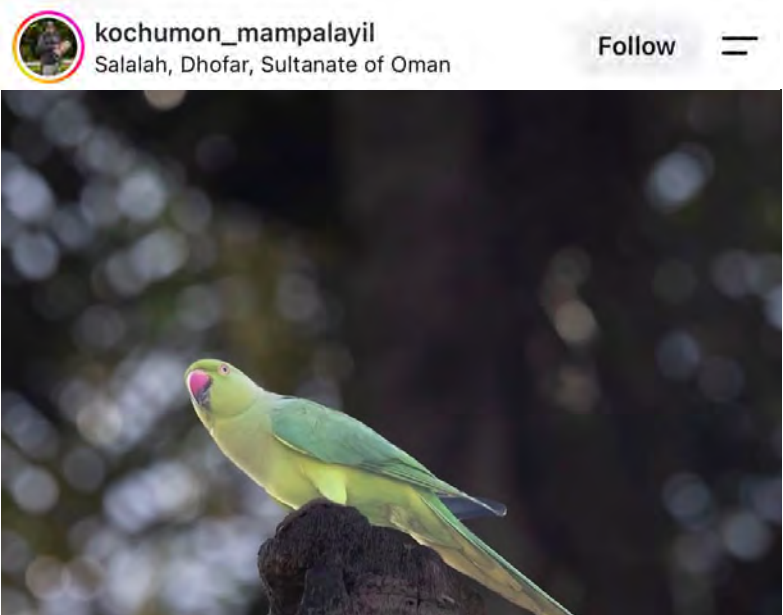
PREMIERE

Rapper Ruby Ibarra attends the premiere of DreamWorks Animation's "Forgotten Island" at the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art in Los Angeles. — **AFP**

INSTA PICKS



Oman glowing from 30,000 feet



Salalah's rose-ringed parakeet

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CELINE DION WOWS PARIS FASHION WEEK



The Canadian singer appeared at the end of L'Oréal's annual show in a sleek black gown. — AFP

Celine Dion gave Paris Fashion Week an unexpected musical opening on Monday, stepping onto the catwalk beneath the Eiffel Tower to perform her hit “I’m Alive”.

The Canadian singer appeared at the end of L’Oréal’s annual show in a sleek black gown, drawing applause from the crowd before launching into the 2002 song. With her hair loose and a smile on her face, she turned the runway into a stage for one of the week’s most memorable moments.

She was then joined by L’Oréal ambassadors Viola Davis, Simone Ashley, Aja Naomi King and Eva Longoria, adding to the star power at one of the fashion calendar’s most glamorous openings.

The surprise appearance comes as Dion makes a much-publicised return to performing in the French capital.

The Quebec-born star has

announced a 26-show Paris run, with 16 performances scheduled for September and October and another 10 planned for May 2027.

Her song choice gave the moment added resonance for an audience seeing her back in the spotlight. Rather than appearing as a guest in the front row, Dion took centre stage as the fashion world gathered for the start of the spring-summer womenswear shows.

Paris Fashion Week runs until October 6, with Dior, Tom Ford, Schiaparelli and Givenchy among the labels still due to present their latest collections.

Whether Dion will make another appearance during the week remains to be seen, but her performance has already given this season’s shows a dramatic opening. The singer could yet be spotted in the front row as the programme continues across the city. — AFP



South-African designer Laduma Ngxokolo. — AFP



Vibrant knitwear takes centre stage in MaXhosa Africa’s first official Paris Fashion Week show. — AFP

S African brand lights up Paris Fashion Week



Models present MaXhosa Africa’s spring-summer 2027 collection at the South African ambassador’s residence in Paris. — AFP

SOUTH African brand MaXhosa Africa brought vibrant knitwear and a message of African unity to the opening day of Paris Women’s Fashion Week on Monday.

Founder Laduma Ngxokolo presented 54 looks in his debut on the official Paris Fashion Week calendar, drawing on the continent’s crafts, cultures and geography.

“I feel honoured to be represented. I’ve been fighting to sit at the table for 16 years now”, Ngxokolo, 39, said.

One wool dress featured knitted tassels bearing the names of African countries. Another look placed a large outline of Africa across the front of a black-and-grey outfit, with other parts of the world depicted on its back and sleeves.

It referenced a recent effort to show the continent’s size more accurately on maps.

“We appointed ourselves to be one of the forerunners that showcases the African continent to the world”, the Johannesburg-based designer said. Held at the South African ambassador’s residence, the show featured a live performance

by Afro-soul singer Sjava. Kenyan artist Cyrus Kabiru contributed eyewear and accessories made from upcycled waste.

Ngxokolo founded MaXhosa Africa in 2010, naming it for South Africa’s Xhosa people. The company now employs around 300 people, operates eight stores and makes its knitwear at two factories, in Johannesburg and East London.

Michelle Obama and Beyoncé are among its fans.

Growing up, Ngxokolo looked to established names such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton for inspiration. He now wants MaXhosa to demonstrate what an African fashion business can achieve.

“Ninety percent of our products are produced in-house”, he told reporters backstage.

Few designers based in Africa have secured places on the Paris Fashion Week calendar, which is set by France’s Haute Couture and Fashion Federation.

The federation has gradually brought more international labels into a programme long dominated by French fashion houses.

In January 2020, Cameroonian designer Imane Ayissi became the

first designer from sub-Saharan Africa to join the official haute couture calendar.

“We feel that we are still under-represented as the African continent and more platforms can be offered”, Ngxokolo said.

He also stressed the importance of building businesses capable of meeting the demands of an international market.

“I am for professionalism. I am for good quality standards. I am for high standards in everything that we touch”, he said.

His Paris debut came as the fashion industry gathered for 67 scheduled catwalk shows presenting spring-summer 2027 collections.

Dozens of other brands are holding private viewings and events across the French capital.

Christian Dior and Saint Laurent are due to show their collections on Tuesday. Monday’s programme also included presentations by Matières Fécales, Julie Kegels, Weinsanto and Hodakova.

For Ngxokolo, the first day offered a long-sought place on a global stage, with a collection designed to bring the breadth of Africa into view. — AFP

FEATURES



RUQAYA AL KINDI

BETWEEN a wooden box crafted decades ago, an antique sword from a bygone era and coins that have crossed vanished empires and states, Humaid bin Abdullah al Hinai stands in two rooms attached to his house in Dubaishi village, Wilayat of Ibri, as though he were the custodian of a memory he refuses to let fade. What a visitor may see as antiques, he sees as pages of history, each piece telling a story.

His journey began as a childhood hobby in the early 1970s, when he collected paper and metal currency, much as other children collected stamps and telephone cards. Over the years, however, currencies were no longer his sole focus. His family began gathering inherited antiques in one place, before the collection expanded to include pieces from outside the family.

Gradually, the space became a gallery, offering a glimpse into Omani life before the Renaissance through household items, traditional craft tools, historical documents and rare artefacts.

The pieces are not arranged according to monetary value, but according to their stories. For Humaid, currencies are miniature historical documents rather than means of payment whose role has ended. His collection includes the first paper issue of Omani currency during the reign of Sultan Said bin Taimur in the early 1970s, followed by subsequent paper issues up to the present.

It also includes currencies from the Ottoman Empire, Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, Yugoslavia before its division and other countries whose political systems or borders have since changed. He explains that currencies reveal more than

OMANI MAN GUARDING THE WORLD’S MEMORY IN AN EXHIBITION

A lifelong passion for collecting has turned Humaid bin Abdullah al Hinai’s home in Dubaishi into a small archive of history, bringing together currencies, heritage artefacts and rare documents that preserve stories of Oman and the wider world.

economic history, reflecting political and social transformations. Yemeni currency, for example, documents periods from British colonial rule to independence and unification, while Egyptian currency reflects the transition from monarchy to successive republics.

For Humaid, collecting requires knowing the history behind each piece, the circumstances of its issuance and the geographical and political background of the country it represents.

Visitors, he says, are often interested not simply in the currency, but in the story behind it.

His heritage collection is equally personal. He describes it as an effort to preserve the memory of his family and village before objects were neglected or lost. Among his most treasured possessions are the old goldsmithing and silversmithing tools once used by his father, whose craft provided the family’s livelihood. Their greatest value, he says, lies in the memories they carry.

The collection also includes an old Yemeni sword, a large pottery vessel known as “Al Khabiya”, once used to extract indigo for dyeing clothes and later for storing dates and wooden chests, or mandos, used to store clothing and other belongings.

Rare documents add another layer to the collection, including



a property sale document from Dubaishi dating to 1301 AH, a travel document to Zanzibar from the 1950s and a passport bearing the number 48, issued during the reign of Sultan Said bin Taimur.

Among his most distinctive possessions are four “Timnat”, poems praising Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which were recited during celebrations for children completing the memorisation of the Holy Quran.

The procession would begin at the school and end at the student’s home, where the family welcomed the teacher and students.

The collection continues to grow



through purchases from specialised forums in Oman and abroad, exchanges with fellow enthusiasts and gifts from travellers. Humaid would often ask those travelling abroad for just one souvenir: a currency from the country they visited.

Ultimately, what Humaid collects is more than currency, wooden boxes or old documents. He collects fragments of time, preserving memories that might otherwise disappear and demonstrating how a small piece of metal or a yellowed sheet of paper can hold the story of an entire nation.