

HM to preside over Military Parade

Sultanate of Oman celebrates 54th National Day on Monday

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK, the Supreme Commander, will preside over the military parade on Monday, to be staged at Al Sumoud Ground of the Sultan's Special Force on the occasion of the 54th Glorious National Day.

Symbolic units representing the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), the Royal Guard of Oman (RGO), the Sultan's Special Force (SSF), the Royal Oman Police (ROP), the Royal Court Affairs (RCA) and the joint military musical band will take part in the military parade.

The parade will be attended alongside His Majesty the Sultan by members of the Royal Family,

ministers, chairmen of the State Council and Majlis Ash'shura, advisers, commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), military and security services, heads of the diplomatic missions of the Arab and foreign countries accredited to the Sultanate of Oman, under-secretaries, retired military commanders, judges, members of the Public Prosecution, ambassadors, walis, shaikhs and dignitaries.

It will be also attended by the military attaches of the Arab and foreign embassies in the Sultanate of Oman, senior military officers, senior state officials, senior retired officers, commissioned and non-commissioned officers at SAF, RGO, military and security services.

Oman on Monday celebrates the

54th glorious National Day, marking milestone accomplishments in different areas. The citizens of Oman and various state institutions have rendered an indispensable contribution to the continuous achievements in the path of the comprehensive development during the renewed renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, who has outlined a wise and sound vision that leads to progress and prosperity in all fields.

His Majesty's directives to all state institutions to continue improving the missions entrusted to them and to develop appropriate conditions to upgrade performance at all levels have contributed positively over the past five years in achieving success in various targets of Oman Vision 2040. **FULL DETAILS ON P3**



On the occasion of Oman's 54th National Day, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik - the leader of Oman's renewed renaissance.

Under his visionary leadership, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing a resilient and sustainable energy sector, aligned with the strategic objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and look forward to a future marked by progress, prosperity, and enduring purpose.



شركة تنمية طاقة عُمان
ENERGY DEVELOPMENT OMAN



We extend our most heartfelt congratulations and warmest wishes to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** on the occasion of the 54th glorious National Day. The Sultanate of Oman, under his distinguished and visionary leadership, continues to reach new heights of excellence and progress.

RENEWED RENAISSANCE

Oman marks 54th National Day

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN will celebrate the 54th glorious National Day on Monday, marking milestone accomplishments in different areas. The citizens of Oman and various state institutions have rendered an indispensable contribution to the continuous achievements in the path of the comprehensive development during the renewed renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, who has outlined a wise and sound vision that leads to progress and prosperity in all fields.

His Majesty's directives to all state institutions to continue improving the missions entrusted to them and to develop appropriate conditions to upgrade performance at all levels have contributed positively over the past five years to achieving success in various targets of Oman Vision 2040.

The government of His Majesty the Sultan has managed to improve the state's economic and financial performance and reduce debt and increase the gross domestic product; as the state's public revenue at the end of August 2024 amounted to RO 8.106 billion, up by RO 183 million compared to RO 7.923 billion registered over the same period in 2023.

The state's general budget until August 2024 achieved a surplus of about RO 447 million, while the public debt portfolio declined by the end of June 2024 to RO 14.4 billion, compared to RO 20.8 billion in 2021.

The Sultanate of Oman also launched this year (2024) the social protection system by unifying and merging pension funds, and restructuring the schemes.

Oman succeeded in reducing the ratio of public debt to GDP from 62.3 per cent in 2021 to 35 per cent in mid-2024 and achieving a budget surplus for consecutive years, recording 2.7 per cent and 2.2 per cent in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

This has led to a remarkable improvement in the credit rating of the Sultanate of Oman by credit rating agencies, as Standard and Poor's raised its second credit rating for the Sultanate of Oman to "BBB-" from "BB+" with a stable outlook. Further, Moody's revised its outlook for the Sultanate of Oman from a stable to a positive, confirming the credit rating at "Ba1".

These ratings affirm that the Sultanate of Oman is a safe investment environment, as it returned to this rating category after a decline of nearly 7 years (since 2017) due to the repercussions of the crises resulting from the slump in global oil prices and the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, the Sultanate of Oman has also advanced in many international indicators, as it rose 39 ranks in the 2024 Index of Economic Freedom issued by the Heritage Foundation to obtain the 56th place



The citizens of Oman and various state institutions have rendered an indispensable contribution to the continuous achievements in the path of the comprehensive development during the renewed renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

globally after being ranked 95th globally in 2023. In the Entrepreneurship Index, it came in the 11th place globally, advancing 27 places from its ranking in 2022/2023. It also came in the 50th place globally in the Environmental Performance Index after being ranked 149th in the 2022 ranking.

In the education sector, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) achieved a remarkable progress in the 2025 World University Rankings to obtain the 362nd place, advancing 92 places from its previous classification.

Meanwhile, the volume of foreign direct investments (FDI) in the Sultanate of Oman until the end of the fourth quarter of 2023 amounted to RO 25.05 billion, an increase of 21.6 per cent compared to the same period in 2022, which amounted to RO 20.59 billion.

Regarding the government investments, Oman Investment Authority (OIA) is exerting sincere efforts to make the Sultanate of Oman an attractive investment destination and achieve sustainable economic development. The Authority's assets increased to RO 19.2 billion compared to about RO 17.9 billion at the end

of 2022. It contributed to achieving profits exceeding RO 1.7 billion, and supporting the state's general budget with an amount of RO 800 million, and repaid RO 300 million of loans from its subsidiaries before their due date in 2023. The OIA invests in 13 global funds, such as the Platinum Investment Fund and the Global Infrastructure Fund, in addition to direct investments in global companies, such as the American "Our Next Energy" Company and the Australian "Hysata".

One of the most important strategic projects that were inaugurated at the beginning of this year (2024) is the Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The refinery is the largest joint investment project between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait, integrated between the Omani OQ Group and Kuwait Petroleum International Company, with a capital exceeding RO 3.5 billion.

The Sultanate of Oman has witnessed the implementation of many projects in the field of renewable energy, most notably Manah Solar Power Project with

a production capacity of 1,000 megawatts located in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Ibri Solar Power Project with a production capacity of 500 megawatts located in Al Dhahirah Governorate, Barka Solar Power Project with a production capacity of 500 megawatts located in Al Batinah South Governorate, the Amin Solar Power Plant Project with a production capacity of 100 megawatts located in Dhofar Governorate, Sohar Solar Power Project with a production capacity of 100 megawatts in Al Batinah North Governorate and Dhofar Wind Farm with a production capacity of 50 megawatts located in Dhofar Governorate.

The Sultanate of Oman is pressing ahead with boosting public and private sectors partnership, as the private sector is the key driver of the economic development and GDP growth in various sectors. The private sector also contributes remarkably to the economic diversification efforts, as it is a peer to the public sector in social development through the contribution of its institutions to education, health and social investment. — ONA

MoHUP keen to provide housing options to citizens

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, NOV 16

This year, the Sultanate of Oman celebrates its 54th National Day amidst continuous achievements and ongoing efforts to support the welfare of citizens and achieve comprehensive and sustainable development in all sectors.

At the heart of this strategic vision, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MoHUP) played a major role by developing innovative housing programmes that seek to meet the needs of citizens, provide diverse housing options, and facilitate access to suitable and stable housing.

The "Integrated Residential Neighbourhoods" service is one of the leading housing options provided by the ministry, as it allows citizens the opportunity to own ready-made residential units in fully-serviced residential neighbourhoods.

This option includes a variety of units, such as detached villas,

attached villas, apartments, and "townhouses", providing a variety to suit different tastes and needs. These neighbourhoods aim to provide an integrated residential environment that provides all basic services and achieves quality-of-life standards that are in line with Oman's future vision.

The ministry has also made available the "Integrated Residential Plans" option, which provides citizens with residential lands within fully-serviced plans at subsidised prices that suit the purchasing power of different segments of society. This option enhances the possibility of living in luxury in integrated residential neighbourhoods that contribute to providing stability and comfort.

As part of future plans, the ministry has introduced the "Future Cities" option, which seeks to accommodate those eligible within new city projects, such as Sultan Haitham City. This option allows citizens to live in a modern urban environment

that achieves a balance between the requirements of modern life and psychological comfort, by providing various facilities to enable them to own residential units in future cities that offer an advanced standard of living. These cities come as part of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to achieve comprehensive development in various sectors.

All of the above comes within the vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to enhance the standard of living in Oman, as the government, under his leadership, stressed the importance of developing the housing sector in a way that serves the well-being of citizens and enhances their stability.

These efforts have been reflected in the policies implemented by the ministry, which are based on providing diverse housing options that take into account the aspirations of citizens in various governorates of Oman.





شركة تنمية نفط عُمان
Petroleum Development Oman

Warm Felicitations To
HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK
And The People Of Oman
On The Occasion Of
The 54th National Day



Major road projects fuel economic growth

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 16

OMAN'S JOURNEY of comprehensive development showcases the vision of its wise leadership and the aspirations of the Omani people for a prosperous future. Over the past five years, the Sultanate of Oman has undergone significant transformation across diverse fields, including education, healthcare, economy and infrastructure, with a focus on building a sustainable and thriving society. Central to this vision are modern road projects that strengthen connectivity across cities and governorates, enhancing the transportation network to support economic and social progress.

Key initiatives like the dual carriageway from Ibri to Al Batha, the development of Al Rusayl Road, and the first phase of the Batinah Coastal Road reflect Oman's commitment to advanced infrastructure that caters to citizens and residents and drives economic growth.

The dual carriageway from Ibri to Al Batha is a landmark project enhancing the land connection between Oman and Saudi Arabia. Stretching across the Empty Quarter Desert, this 725-kilometre route begins at Ibri roundabout in Al Dhahirah Governorate and ends at Al Batha Junction in Saudi Arabia. The Omani segment covers 161 kilo-



metres, while the Saudi portion spans 564 kilometres. Since its inauguration in December 2021, this vital road has been a key artery for trade and tourism, facilitating the movement of goods and travellers and significantly reducing travel time and distance, thus enhancing Oman's competitive edge in the region.

This collaborative project adheres to global safety and mobility standards, with added rest stops and services for travellers. The road strengthens economic and trade ties with Gulf countries and supports Oman's goals of sustainability and inclusive development.

Al Rusayl Road, a critical part of Oman's road network, connects Muscat to key industrial and commercial zones like the Al Rusayl Industrial Zone. Extensive upgrades have reduced congestion and improved traffic flow, addressing the demands of increasing transportation activity. Given the pres-

ence of major industrial areas along this route, its development boosts the industrial and commercial sectors, streamlines logistics, and improves services for investors and industrialists.

These improvements, which include bridge additions, intersections and lane expansions, align with Oman's vision for enhanced quality of life and smoother mobility. The upgraded road reduces travel time, bolsters safety and supports Oman's economic aspirations.

In another significant infrastructure milestone, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology signed a RO 79-million contract in April 2024 to complete the first phase of the Batinah Coastal Road. This phase includes paving remaining segments, dualising links between Barka and Al Suwaiq, and constructing an alternative bridge for Al Suwaiq roundabout. The project is expected to stimulate commercial and industrial activities by improving connections between logistics hubs at Barka, Al Suwaiq ports and Khazaen Economic City. Enhancing connectivity along coastal areas will also support tourism by providing better access to popular coastal destinations.

Paving the Way for Economic Expansion and Sustainable Development

These road projects form part of Oman's national strategy to enhance its transportation network and improve logistical service efficiency.

MUSCAT GETS A NEW 'LANDMARK'



MUSCAT: The Muscat Municipality unveiled the 'Muscat Sign' project on Friday, a new addition to the landmarks of the capital. Placed at the top of the mountain at Al Jabal Street (Bausher-Amerat Road), the project includes illuminated letters from a height of 16 metres and a width of 42 metres. The lighting can be seen from a distance from Muscat Expressway and also from some areas around Sultan Qaboos Street.

TENDER NOTICE No. 006/2024/OETI

OETI Group (Sohar University, TAHJEEZ, TASEES) invites sealed tenders from specialized, professional, and experienced insurance companies for providing various insurance policies. The tender details are as follows:

Tender	Description	Fees OMR	Submission Date
006-2024-OETI	Insurance Program 2025 (Various Insurance Policies)	100/-	27/11/2024

Description	Deadline
Tender Release Date	17/11/2024
Last Date for collection of tenders after paying tender fee	19/11/2024
Receiving clarifications, if any, from bidders	24/11/2024
Respond to bidder clarifications	25/11/2024
Receiving bids	27/11/2024

The tender document will be mailed to you / your company after paying non-refundable amount of **RO. 100,000/-** via depositing the money in bank or by cash on or before **19/11/2024**. Cash will be collected by **Mr. Saud Al Jarwani**, OETI, Building 20, Sohar University, Sohar.

Provide the email id to be sent along with the copy of the receipt. For Bank Transfers our account details as below:

Beneficiary : **Oman Education & Training Investment Company SAOG**
Account No : **002020004442**
Bank : **Bank Sohar**
Branch : **Sohar Branch, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman**
Swift Code : **BSHROMRU**

Please send the transfer receipt to sjarwani@oeti.om & insurance@su.edu.om to receive the tender documents via email / link.

Tenders offers must be submitted online (softcopy with password protected) or in closed envelopes sealed, delivered at the OETI premises, tender number shall be written only on the envelope, no indication shall be made, and deadline for submission of offers is **27/11/2024 14:00 hours**.

Tender should be addressed to CEO, OETI Office submitted to **Mr. Saud Al Jarwani** as given below during office hours 08:00 to 15:30 Sunday to Thursday.

CEO OETI Office
Building 20, Sohar University Campus
P.O Box 44, P.C. 311, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman.
Telephone: 26850100 Ext.: 611 / 613

Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)		
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies	Property Owner
484/2024	Provision of medical staff of doctors, nurses, legal nurses, nutritionists and clinical psychologists, Nursing assistants, and health care technicians for persons with disabilities for the Department	Companies specialized in the field of hospital services and care homes and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree.	Thursday 5-12-2024 02:00 PM	Monday 30-12-2024 10:00 AM	12 R.O	60 R.O	60 R.O
486/2024	Leakage treatment works at the National Autsim Center in Al-Khoud	Required projects in the field of construction contracting and maintenance services, registered with the General Secretariat, fourth degree.	Tuesday 26-11-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 8-12-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O	-
487/2024	Cleaning works of air ducts for air conditioning units in the Ministry of Social Developmet building	Companies specialized in the field of industrial workshop services, blacksmithing, carpentry, machinery and vehicle repair, and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with excellent or first class.	Tuesday 26-11-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 8-12-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O	-

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On **Sunday 17/11/2024**.
- ❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. **(24402200)**.

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

www.mosd.gov.om

Oman resident feted by Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis

MUSCAT: Federal Minister of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, conferred a 'Certificate of Appreciation' upon Oman resident Syed Shaandar Ali Shah Bukhari for his philanthropic and commendable social welfare services for destitute expatriates, including Pakistanis residing in the Sultanate of Oman.

Hussain praised Bukhari for his work as an unsung good Samaritan, representing both Oman and Pakistan without official support. He noted that such individuals play a crucial role in strengthening the social fabric of both societies.

The commendation ceremony took place in the Minister's office in Islamabad.

Hussain expressed his best wishes and appreciation for Bukhari's efforts, calling him a pride of Pakistan and assuring him of their support for his noble causes.

Shaandar Bukhari is the son of the late Honourable Syedzada Sakhawat Ali Shah Bukhari, who was a well-known figure for social welfare among the expatriate community in Oman.

**MUSCAT GOVERNORATE
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY**

Advertisement No. (37/2024)

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

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date
PRE/24/326	Bidding for design, implementation and management of restaurants at the Muscat Nights 2024-2025	27/11/2024	02/12/2024
PRE/24/323	Organizing and holding Gulf plays and concerts, Muscat Nights events 2024-2025	27/11/2024	02/12/2024

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

OMAN

O M A N T V

Playing a vital role for 50 years

THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, represented by the Sultanate of Oman TV, will today celebrate the 50th anniversary of the start of broadcasting of the Sultanate of Oman TV, (November 17, 1974). It is an important historical milestone in the journey of Omani media and reflects the interest that the Sultanate of Oman has given to this sector since the beginning of the blessed renaissance.

Over the course of 50 years, the Sultanate of Oman TV has been able to play a pivotal role in the local and Arab media scene, and has succeeded in consolidating its role as a national media institution thanks to its strategic orientations in developing content and technologies and enhancing its role as a media platform that reflects the vision of the Sultanate of Oman towards a brighter and more developed future.

The Sultanate of Oman TV began its journey four years after the start of the Omani Renaissance led by the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to become a media window that conveys Oman's voice and vision to the world, reflects the cultural, social and political identity, enhances communication with the people of the nation and supports their participation in construction and development. Over the past five decades, the Sultanate of Oman TV has witnessed major transformations in content and technology, and has gone through different stages of development, to keep pace with technological changes, and to play major roles in transmitting events and enhancing national awareness.

In the first step the Sultanate of Oman TV began with limited broadcasting in Muscat and some neighbouring areas using simple devices through which it presented local news bulletins, the Sultan's speeches, and educational programmes to introduce modern concepts of the Omani Renaissance. Over the past 50 years, it has gone through major stages following the founding phase, which is the expansion phase that extended for 10 years since 1980, during which the broadcast network was expanded to cover most of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. The content was also developed to provide educational and entertainment programmes, and the infrastructure of the transmission network was developed.

In 1990, the digital transformation phase began using digital broadcasting technologies to enhance the quality of



The Sultanate of Oman TV has kept pace with all stages of development in the long journey of the development of Omani media and has played a great role in educating and enlightening the Omani people.

DR ABDULLAH BIN NASSER AL HARRASI, Minister of Information

image and sound, as the world entered the era of globalisation. The Sultanate of Oman TV worked to improve the quality of production, by launching talk shows covering political, economic and social issues.

The Sultanate of Oman TV continued its development journey through the satellite broadcasting phase, which enabled its channels to reach all parts of the world, while specialised channels were launched, such as Oman Culture and Oman Live, which allowed for the diversity of content to include news, culture, sports and live coverage of official events, as the number of broadcast hours exceeded 100,000 broadcast hours annually, including various types of programmes.

NATIONAL IDENTITY
Since the establishment of the Sultanate of Oman TV, it has played and continues to play a role in strengthening the national identity by broadcasting programmes that focus on Oman's heritage and ancient history. It has carried out its mission in transmitting major national events and lofty speeches that have enhanced the spirit of national belonging and linked the various governorates of the Sultanate of

Oman together. It has also contributed to spreading community awareness through its awareness programmes, supporting local artistic production through Omani drama and entertainment programmes, and spreading Omani culture and heritage through documentaries and coverage of heritage festivals, in addition to its digital presence on social media platforms, which has helped reach a wider segment of the public.

Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information, in an interview with Youth Radio, said that the Sultanate of Oman TV has kept pace with all stages of development in the long journey of the development of Omani media and has played a great role in educating and enlightening the Omani people and spreading awareness, developing art and entertainment, broadcasting events in various fields, establishing specialised channels such as the sports channel and the cultural channel, and finally developing electronic platforms.

Said bin Taman al Amri, Acting Director-General of the Sultanate of Oman TV, said: "Throughout its history, the Sultanate of Oman TV has been keen to uphold the values and principles of the

Omani Renaissance, and has contributed in consolidating the national identity and noble values, and highlighting the successes and achievements that Oman is proud of." He said that with the development of the media and the diversity of its tools, the Sultanate of Oman TV has remained a fortress and a reliable contributor to confronting rumours and misinformation, as it is "the voice of truth, reality and logic."

He added that over the past decades, the Sultanate of Oman TV has not only been a channel that broadcasts news, but has also been a window to diverse cultures, a platform that embraces creators and artists to convey their messages and visions to a wide audience, a bridge that enhances understanding between nations and a mirror that reflects the development in the Sultanate of Oman; as it has played an important role in documenting the various achievements made by the country in various fields.

He said that launching channels specialised in the cultural and sports aspects is an affirmation of the development of the Sultanate of Oman TV, as sports bring hearts together and enhance the collective spirit. — **ONA**



UPDATING SUPPLIERS & CONTRACTORS DATA IN 'VENDOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF NAMA GROUP'

Nama Group would like to draw the attention of all contractors and suppliers dealing with the Group to update their data in the I-Supplier Registration System (www.nama.om). Kindly diligently respond to any notifications and emails you receive in this regard.

Please be informed that starting from **January 1, 2025**, suppliers and contractors who have not completed their profile data will not be allowed to participate in tenders. In addition, the Group companies will not be able to complete financial procedures of suppliers from issuing purchase orders (PO) and pay dues.

For further clarifications and inquiries, please contact the Procurement Departments of the respective Group subsidiary or via the following email:

Fatma.AIMahrouqi@holding.nama.om

Thank you for your cooperation.



TO ENSURE A SMOOTH OPERATION, UPDATE YOUR DETAIL BY SCANNING QR CODE

Oman promotes green economy at COP29

BAKU: The Sultanate of Oman showcased its commitment to climate resilience and sustainable development during the high-level ministerial session of COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The conference, which focused on green transformation and its role in combating climate change, witnessed active participation from Oman, represented by Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority.

During his keynote address, Dr Al Amri highlighted Oman's significant strides toward achieving a green economy. "Since joining the Global Green Economy Alliance, Oman has made substantial contributions to global efforts aimed at reducing emissions in key sectors such as energy, transportation, and industry," he said.

The Sultanate of Oman's initiatives align closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development



Oman is represented at COP29 by Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority

Goals, emphasising renewable energy adoption, biodiversity preservation, and climate-resilient economic practices.

Dr Al Amri also discussed Oman's progress in implementing carbon neutrality policies, including the development of solar and wind energy projects across the country.

With 89 nations collaborating under the Global Green Economy Alliance, Oman's participation at COP29 reinforced its role as a proactive player in addressing climate change challenges and fostering international partnerships to accelerate the transition to a sustainable future. — **ONA**

SHORT TAKES



Gaza: a ‘horror film,’ says Norwegian NGO head

The situation in the north of the Gaza Strip resembles a ‘dystopian horror film’ and has recently worsened, according to the head of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). During a recent visit, Jan Egeland drove through “endless areas with completely destroyed houses.” Despite this, people are still holding on there, he told Germany’s Zeit Online news website.

Aid deliveries are often looted, said Egeland, who witnessed this himself at the Kerem Shalom border crossing near the town of Rafah in the south of the coastal zone. “Maybe 100 men were standing there with sticks, waiting to stop the trucks coming behind us and jump on them,” he said.

Published on Saturday, Egeland’s comments come as Israeli forces press home their offensive against the Hamas in Gaza.

In Rafah and in the refugee districts of Jabaliya and Beit Lahia in the north, a number of fighters have been killed, positions destroyed and weapons caches dug up, military officials said. — **dpa**



Georgian anti-government demonstrators protest the results of the parliamentary elections outside the national election commission's headquarters in Tbilisi. — **AFP**

GEORGIA’S POLL BODY CONFIRMS RULING PARTY’S VOTE WIN

TBILISI: Georgians protested on Saturday as the poll commission rubber-stamped the ruling party’s victory in a controversial parliamentary vote marked by claims of Russian meddling and Western calls to investigate fraud allegations.

The Caucasus nation’s pro-Western opposition has denounced the October 26 vote as “fraudulent”, while the European Union and the United States have called for a probe into alleged electoral “irregularities”.

The Georgian Dream party won 53.93 per cent of the votes against 37.79 per cent garnered by a union of four opposition alliances, the national election commission said.

Critics have blamed the increasingly conservative party for derailing Georgia from its European path and bringing Tbilisi back into Moscow’s orbit. Saturday’s final results by the electoral commission give Georgian Dream 89 seats in the 150-member parliament, which the opposition deems “illegitimate” and has refused to enter. — **AFP**

ILLEGAL ENTRY

Thailand detains migrants from Rohingyas



Thailand arrested 70 immigrants, including 30 children, who were suspected of being Rohingya in the country illegally from Myanmar, a Thai official said. “From initial questioning them, they said they were from Myanmar heading to Malaysia or Indonesia,” said Somkane Phothisri, commander of Phang Nga provincial police. The group was seen on a beach on an island in southern Thailand. — **Reuters**

XI, BIDEN TO MEET AS TRUMP RETURN LOOMS

LIMA: US President Joe Biden and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping will meet for the last time, a day after both leaders warned of turbulent times ahead for the world as Donald Trump returns to the White House.

Their final encounter, taking place on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific summit in Peru, has been overshadowed by the prospect of fresh trade wars and diplomatic upheaval when Trump starts his

second term. Trump’s comeback has cast a cloud of uncertainty over efforts by Washington and Beijing to ease their tense relationship, launched in a historic meeting between Xi and Biden in California a year ago. The White House said Saturday’s Xi-Biden meeting at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit would “mark the progress” in the relationship between the United States and an

increasingly assertive Beijing. But it was also aimed at getting through a “delicate period of transition” and ensuring that competition with China “doesn’t veer into conflict”, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said. Trump’s crushing election win over Kamala Harris has caused shock waves around the globe and dominated the two-day meeting of heads of state of the 21-member APEC group. — **AFP**

Israel strikes south Beirut amid Lebanon truce talks

ISRAEL LAUNCHED a wave of air strikes on Hezbollah bastions in Beirut and south Lebanon on Saturday, a day after Lebanese government officials said they were studying a US truce proposal. An Israeli strike on neighbouring Syria earlier this week killed two leaders from a Palestinian group which has fought alongside Hamas in Gaza, a source said.

Hamas, Hezbollah and IJ which on Friday said it backed a swift end to the nearly two-month war in Lebanon.

Since September 23, Israel has escalated its bombing of targets in Lebanon, later sending in ground troops after almost a year of limited, cross-border exchanges of fire begun by Hezbollah over the Gaza war.

AFPTV footage showed fresh strikes on the southern suburbs of Beirut on Saturday, following calls from the Israeli army for residents to evacuate.

Lebanon’s state-run National News Agency said ‘the enemy’ carried out three air raids in the morning, later reporting another attack in the neighbourhood of Chiyah.

The Israeli military said its aircraft had targeted “a weapons storage facility” and a Hezbollah “command centre” in south Beirut. NNA also reported a strike on the southern city of Tyre, in a neighbourhood near Unesco-listed ancient ruins.

Elsewhere in south Lebanon, the health ministry said Israeli strikes killed two rescuers affiliated with Hezbollah and its ally Amal.

Hezbollah claimed several rocket attacks on northern Israel, targeting military sites including a naval base in the



People ride on a scooter past a damaged apartment building in the aftermath of an Israeli strike in Tayouneh, Beirut. — **Reuters**

Haifa area. Lebanese authorities say that more than 3,440 people have been killed since October last year, when Hezbollah and Israel began trading fire.

In Hamas-run Gaza, the Israeli military said its forces continued ‘operational activity’ in the northern areas of Jabalia and Beit Lahia, the targets of an intense offensive since early October.

Troops also operated in the southern district of Rafah, the army said. Israel says its renewed operations in the ravaged north were meant to stop Hamas militants

from regrouping. A UN-backed assessment at the weekend warned famine was imminent in northern Gaza, and UN figures showed the Israeli operation had forced at least 100,000 people to flee.

Israel has pushed back against a Human Rights Watch report this week that said its displacement of Gazans amounts to a “crime against humanity”, as well as findings from a UN Special Committee that pointed to warfare practices that “are consistent with the characteristics of genocide”. — **AFP**



People react as large waves break along a seawall ahead of the expected landfall of Super Typhoon Man-yi in Legaspi City, Albay province. — **AFP**

SUPER TYPHOON MAKES LANDFALL IN PHILIPPINES

Super Typhoon Man-yi made landfall in the Philippines, with the national weather forecaster warning of a ‘potentially catastrophic and life-threatening’ impact, as waves up to 14 metres high pounded the coastline.

Man-yi was packing sustained wind speeds of 195 kilometres per hour when it slammed into Pangasinan municipality on Catanduanes island at 9:40 pm, the forecaster said.

More than 650,000 people have fled their homes ahead of Super Typhoon Man-yi, which is expected to make landfall later on Saturday or early on Sunday,

becoming the sixth major storm to pummel the archipelago nation in the past month.

With wind gusts of up to 240 kilometres per hour, Man-yi was on track to slam into the sparsely populated island province of Catanduanes as a super typhoon or “near peak intensity”, the weather service said. “Potentially catastrophic and life-threatening situation looms for northeastern Bicol region as Super Typhoon ‘Pepito’ further intensifies,” the forecaster said, using the local name for the storm and referring to the southern part of the main island of Luzon. — **AFP**

ATTACKS BY SEPARATISTS

Fighters kill paramilitary troops



Fighters stormed a paramilitary checkpoint in southwestern Pakistan, killing seven troops, the latest in a string of attacks by separatist insurgents. The early-morning attack in the mountainous Kalat district, some 150 km south of Quetta, capital of the southwestern Balochistan province, continued for several hours, said police officer Habib-ur-Rehman. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack. — **Reuters**

FAULTY OXYGEN MACHINE

10 newborns killed in India hospital fire



A fire at the neonatal unit of an Indian hospital killed 10 newborns, with another 39 rescued from a blaze blamed on a faulty oxygen machine. The fire broke out at about 10:30 pm on Friday at the Maharani Lakshmibai Medical College in Jhansi, around 450 kilometres south of the capital New Delhi. Footage from the scene showed charred beds and walls inside the ward as a crowd of anguished families waited outside. Babies rescued from the fire, all only days old. — **AFP**

OPINION

54 years of unity, progress and tradition on National Day



DR MUSALLAM AL MAANI

The writer is Dean of Al Zahra College for Women

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN celebrates its National Day on November 18 of every year. The National Day carries with it celebrations and a programme of events and entertainment with a specified and special focus. Omanis honour this occasion with solemn ceremonies, festive activities, and convivial gatherings. It is now 54 years of National Day celebrations, during which Omanis pledge allegiance to their country and commit devotion and loyalty to their leader, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The loyalty of Omanis to their wise government is unquestionable.

Every year, Omanis celebrate the desired ends and goals the country has been able to achieve through efforts made by different departments and units. This year, in particular, marks the progress made by the government, under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan, to reduce the public debt, enhance the social protection umbrella, attract investments, and diversify economic revenues. Omanis are also proud to celebrate their intrinsic values, which they

have maintained and supported in the face of social changes taking place rapidly over the last few decades. The indisputable proof of this is that Omanis are of a forbearing nature, along with a society that is free from harshness, sternness, or violence.

Without any question, the words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) about them are manifested or assumed when he said that if you arrive in Oman and come into the presence of its people for the first time, they would neither treat you with insolence, indignity, or contempt, nor do they harm you or allow any injury to come upon you.

Tolerance is the greatest blessing of every Omani. The people of Oman are known for their kindness, further marked by refined cultural interests and pursuits. Omanis treat everyone, including strangers, with courtesy, respect, and hospitality and refrain from any form of insult or hostility.

What is so important about Omanis is that they do not seek material values but always place emphasis on human values. The unique cultural values Omanis possess are exceptional. The Omani society is often

Omanis are also proud to celebrate their intrinsic values, which they have been able to maintain and support in the face of social changes taking place rapidly over the last decades

associated with politeness, warmth and acceptance. With such values and traits, there is no wonder that the country lives in perfect peace and contentment.

The state of enjoying concord with other nations and peoples is a trait and a fundamental characteristic of society and its attributes, which distinguish and identify the Omanis from the rest of the world.

In addition to its internal calmness, Oman, with its unique foreign policy, strives to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity, a matter that has become a core part of its identity. As an essential and inherent quality, Oman's foreign policy reflects the values, norms, and attributes of Oman. Such values do not occur merely by chance or without intention and calculation; they are deeply rooted in the fabric of Oman's behaviour, culture and structure.

There is no doubt that Oman in the coming years shall thrive and witness more success and prosperity. The country, under the reign of His Majesty the Sultan, will become stronger and flourish in all aspects.

ARAB DESIGNERS OFFER HOME-GROWN INNOVATIONS

SAHAR AL ATTAR

As winter descends on Gaza's tent cities, emergency housing made from mushrooms could keep out the cold — just one of several sustainable, home-grown innovations put forward by Arab designers at an expo in Dubai.

Lightweight, warm, and versatile, mushroom-based structures are an appealing alternative to the flimsy shelters now housing many thousands of Gazans displaced by more than a year of war, according to Dima Al Sroui, a member of the ReRoot initiative.

“Right now, there is a huge problem with the shelters that they’re receiving from NGOs,” she said at Dubai Design Week, which featured a range of environment-friendly innovations. “When the winter comes, when it rains, when it’s too cold, they’re not working really.”

Mycelium, the root-like part of a fungus, can be grown in combination with organic matter to fit different-shaped moulds, producing a strong building material that can be cultivated anywhere.

“It’s a healthy material because it’s fully natural,” urban planning expert Sroui, who is Palestinian, said next to a prototype shelter — a roomy, enclosed structure with windows and a sloping roof. “It’s something that can provide the solution to extreme weather conditions to protect them from the extreme cold.”

ReRoot’s emergency housing was not the only example of sustainable Arab design at the annual exhibition in Dubai, which closed on Sunday.

Contrasting with the towering high-rises that dominate the city’s skyline, Emirati architect and designer Abdalla Almulla is championing a very different approach: low-rise buildings made from recycled construction waste.

Almulla has teamed up with the Swiss company Oxara, which makes a low-carbon cement replacement, to create structures built with discarded concrete from demolished buildings and roofing made from palm fronds — a nod to the Gulf’s ancient construction techniques.

“When I look back, especially in the region where I’m living, a lot of the architecture and designs were based on finding what’s surrounding you, finding material around you, and then being innovative and creating out of it,” Almulla said.

The model is intended as a riposte to the “world of abundance” that has come to characterise modern design, he added.

“Whenever you want something, you need to ship it from halfway around the world.”

As well as the large-scale installations, smaller objects were on display, including furniture made from recycled materials and a 3D-printed electric motorcycle.

Faheem Khan, a Qatar-based designer, developed a bottle that minimises water consumption during Wudu, the ritual washing performed by Muslims before prayer. — AFP

A progressive social contract for the GCC

AS THE Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) faces rapidly evolving geopolitical challenges, recent legislative amendments signal a bold shift towards a governance model that aligns with regional visions, economic goals, and cultural values.

In light of the impending US administration led by 45th and 47th President Donald Trump—likely to emphasise a deal-making, pragmatic, and interest-driven foreign policy—the GCC is revisiting its internal governance framework to ensure resilience, self-sufficiency, and unity. Additionally, the ongoing Israeli genocidal expansion against Arabs brings the region's need for a cohesive and responsive governance model into sharper focus, one that unites citizens, reinforces identity, and strengthens socio-economic progress.

The recent amendments across the GCC are not merely internal recalibrations but part of a broader realignment to address both internal and external pressures. This 'New Contract' emphasises three main pillars: socio-political cohesion, sustainable economic advancement, and independent foreign policy resilience.

The GCC's New Contract is less about adopting Western democratic norms and more about creating a stable, consultative framework that reflects the unique values and needs of its people. By enhancing the role of advisory councils and fostering constructive citizen engagement, GCC nations are building a form of representation that is consultative rather than divisive. This model responds to Ibn Khaldun's (1332–1406) theory of social cohesion, which emphasises that societal strength and stability are achieved through unity and a collective sense of purpose.

This governance model is particularly relevant as foreign pressures, like the Trump administration's anticipated financial, strategic, and military demands on the GCC, could test regional unity. By fostering internal



The New Contract enables the GCC to navigate complexities by fostering strong, collaborative ties within the region.

cohesion, GCC nations can maintain a unified stance on regional security and foreign policy, better able to negotiate from a position of strength in matters impacting the Arab world.

The GCC's wealth has historically relied on hydrocarbons, but national visions, such as Saudi Vision 2030 and Oman Vision 2040, are directing the region toward diversification. With the rise of the digital and AI economy and the orderly energy transition being discussed at COP29, the GCC is uniquely positioned to redefine its economic identity. By advancing sectors like renewable energy, tech innovation, and AI, the New Contract aligns the GCC's economy with global trends, lessening its vulnerability to foreign energy market volatility.

The pursuit of sustainable economic policies also reflects a commitment to future generations. Regional investment in clean energy, digital transformation, and green technology not only fosters a robust economy but also positions the GCC as a leader in the global transition away from fossil fuels. This alignment with COP29's goals



KHALID ALSAFI AL HURAIBI khalidalharibi@gmail.com

The 80/20 rule... 100% excellent



RAY PETERSEN
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

The writer is a media consultant

I'VE LONG been an advocate of the '80/20 rule.' Have you never heard of it? It refers to the concept that most things in life, can be attributed to any cause, complaint, or event, by way of an 80/20, or 20/80 proportion. It may be somewhat cynical, but it certainly does offer some balance, and has proven an addictive philosophy to embrace.

Historically also referred to as the 'Pareto principle,' the 'law of the vital few,' the 'power-law differential,' and less often as the 'principle of factor sparsity,' they have for ages referred to 80% of the consequences of any outcome, strangely, being caused by only 20% of the concerned population. It stems from the 1906 declaration by Italian Vilfredo Pareto, who, in his Political Economics Course at the University of Lausanne, identified that 80% of the land in Italy was owned by 20% of the population.

Anyway, not that 80/20 is genuinely provable in any way, it does appear to be a fairly accepted pair of glasses through which to view life, warts and all, as we who do not have all the answers seek a philosophical starting point for discussion or argument.

As a researcher, I can take comfort in the knowledge that 80/20 is an acceptable heuristic measure, a 'rule-of-thumb,' if you like, and is academically recognised as 'a pragmatic method not fully optimised,

perfected, or rationalised,' according to Gigerenzer and Gassmeier (2011), while it ignores conveniently some of the information, still allows one to "make decisions more quickly, frugally, and/or accurately than more complex methods."

Of course, the 80/20 'thing', is 'loose', but not random, and refers to a general distribution of responsibility, so it could in fact be as diverse as 90/10, or 70/30 or any other apportioning of that distribution as a unique phenomenon, of which there are many common practices in finance, business and the stock market. That in itself is ironic, because it suggests that many of the 80/20 evaluations are made to offer an entirely believable 'holding position,' to satisfy initial enquiries... until you come up with something better...

Well, I did say that it was somewhat cynical.

More legitimately though, Richard Koch is a successful UK-based entrepreneur, management consultant, author and venture capitalist, who says, "the 80/20 rule is behind any innovation, or extra value. It is an entrepreneurial principle, a formula for value creation utilised not only by entrepreneurs, but by most managers and organisations." Koch, being as innovative and successful as he has proven to be, is adamant that the 80/20 rule applies almost universally and he finds it, "like the truth, sets you free, you can work

Anyway, not that 80/20 is genuinely provable in any way, it does appear to be a fairly accepted pair of glasses through which to view life, warts and all, as we who do not have all the answers seek a philosophical starting point for discussion or argument

less, earn more and enjoy more."

Global consumer giant 'Amazon', offers these examples: 20% of your effort will contribute 80% of your results; 20% of your customers will provide 80% of your turnover; 20% of your customers will give you 80% of your complaints; 20% of your marketing leads to 80% of your results; and 20% of your online content delivers 80% of your custom. Now, whether real or imagined, they offer sufficient 'believability,' to be acceptable and motivational... don't they? And if you needed something real to lead you towards, rather than away from, the 80/20 perspective, a 1992 United Nations report found that the richest 20% of the world's population received 82% of the world's wealth...

Don't say I didn't tell you!

I may not be the most erudite of columnists, but if there is one positive thing I can always read into the 80/20 rule it is this. Why would you not want to embrace it if you could see 20% of your work bringing you 80% of your benefits, why on earth would you not want to embrace it, and then make it work for all of the other things you do?

Challenging? Maybe. Enjoyable? Yes. Fun? Well, if not always fun in the same way that a party, or a day at the beach may be, it's certainly going to put a smile on your face as you face the diversity that every day invariably throws your way... One hundred per cent!

COP TALKS STRUGGLE IN A YEAR OF CLIMATE STRESS

VALERIE VOLCOVICI AND WILLIAM JAMES

This year's UN climate summit is struggling to focus minds on the health of the planet, with turbulent geopolitics, a confrontational host and the re-election of US climate skeptic Donald Trump stealing the limelight. The annual conference, that aims to produce global agreements to limit the warming which is tipping the world towards climate catastrophe, is becoming a forum of frustration for negotiators seeking a finance deal in the Caspian Sea city of Baku.

"The UN climate and environmental negotiations are increasingly becoming a tragic spectacle," said Juan Carlos Monterrey, Special Representative for Climate of the Ministry of Environment of Panama.

Oil producer Azerbaijan, the host of this year's 29th Conference of the Parties, is tasked with the limited goal of rallying countries around a target for annual financial aid for developing nations facing the rising costs of climate change. It is a mandate that pales in comparison with the agenda for next year's confab in Brazil's Amazon rainforest, where governments will chart a course for the next decade.

The annual conference, that aims to produce global agreements to limit the warming which is tipping the world towards climate catastrophe, is becoming a forum of frustration for negotiators seeking a finance deal in Baku

But it is considered all-important for many countries ahead of Brazil's COP30 and achieving it requires diplomatic skill.

Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev berated the United States and the European Union as climate hypocrites at the summit's opening, souring the mood for countries central to the finance goal.

He later branded France guilty of colonial "crimes", after which France's climate minister cancelled her trip to the venue. Last Friday, midway through the two-week summit, a group of former leaders, climate experts and scientists published an open letter calling for the COP process to be reformed, saying it "cannot deliver the change at exponential speed and scale, which is essential to ensure a safe climate landing for humanity."

The COP29 presidency's lead negotiator acknowledged that the multilateral process was under pressure in Baku.

"We consider COP29 as a litmus test for the global climate architecture," Azerbaijan's Yalchin Rafiyev told reporters. The summit began on Monday with a dispute about the agenda, but the host nation did manage to get a deal done to endorse a global carbon market framework. Former US vice-president Al Gore implored delegates not to be discouraged in a speech on Friday to the summit, invoking US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.: "He said 'keep going. If you can't fly, run. If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl - but keep going forward.'" — Reuters

The world's babies need antibiotics, not just vaccines

OVER THE last half-century, the number of children who die before reaching the age of five has fallen dramatically, from around 20 million in 1960 to 4.9 million in 2022, largely owing to the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI). Established by the World Health Organization in 1974, the EPI has been extraordinarily successful in providing the youngest people with access to vaccines, saving more than 150 million lives. But while such progress is worthy of celebration, there is still much work to do, because newborns comprise half of all deaths in children under five each year, many of which are caused by infection.

Progress on reducing neonatal mortality has historically been much slower than for children under five, and has begun to stall in recent decades, despite significant reductions in mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis. That is because many of these deaths are caused by treatable – but untreated – bacterial infections. To reverse this trend, the international community must ensure that all children – especially in the African countries where most of these deaths occur – can access antibiotics, much like the EPI has done for vaccines.

Infants are particularly susceptible to infections in the first 28 days of life. As a paediatrician, I saw this firsthand when I was younger, working in the neonatal ICU at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto. It is possible to ward off some kinds through infection prevention and control; access to water, sanitation, and hygiene; and vaccines. But for those that cannot be prevented, antibiotics are needed to avert further complications such as sepsis, which affects up to three million newborns per year.

Unfortunately, most African countries lack access to existing and new antibiotics, putting already-vulnerable babies at a much higher risk of dying from treatable infections. Shortages of generic versions can be largely attributed



Most African countries lack access to existing and new antibiotics.

to the steady exit of pharmaceutical companies from the antibiotic market in recent decades, owing to low returns. Similarly, new antibiotics are often sold in only the wealthiest countries or priced out of reach for most African governments and citizens.

For example, less than half of the new antibiotics approved between 1999 and 2014 were registered in more than ten countries. Worse, only four of the 40 new antibiotics approved since 2000 are labelled for paediatric use. When drug development is driven primarily by profitability, rather than public-health needs, infants in poorer countries – one of the world's most vulnerable populations – get the short end of the stick.

If clinicians cannot access the right first-line antibiotics or use them because of a drug-resistant infection, they often turn to those that are specialised or kept in reserve as a last resort. These substitutes can be less effective, and reliance on them increases the risk of drug resistance developing, making infections more difficult to treat in the long term (although African countries are often priced



GLENDA GRAY

The writer is Board Chair of the Global Antibiotic Research & Development Partnership

out of these last-resort antibiotics, too).

As a result, children under five account for one in five deaths caused by drug-resistant infections, with 99.7 per cent of them living in low- and middle-income countries. At the same time, the failure to treat these infections in newborns is fuelling the rise and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which is already associated with 4.7 million deaths annually.

No country can tackle this problem alone. To ensure that all infants are protected from infection requires an EPI-scale global initiative to help developing countries build their capacity and surveillance, identify the necessary antibiotics and bolster their health systems. Equally important, we must dramatically increase the availability of existing antibiotics and spur the development of new ones that are safe and effective for children. Both imperatives require prioritising public health over profit.

The United Nations High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance recently produced a political declaration committing countries to reduce global AMR-associated deaths by 10 per cent per year until 2030. Donor governments can begin doing this – and saving the lives of newborns – by supporting organisations like mine, the Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership, which are working to improve access to and encourage the development of antibiotics.

The WHO's Paediatric Drug Optimisation exercises have made a shortlist of antibiotics that should be prioritised above all others for paediatric use. But stakeholders, including the WHO, regulatory agencies, the pharmaceutical industry, non-profit developers and paediatric experts, must collaborate to shepherd such treatments through development and approval. Preventing infant deaths from treatable infections would go a long way towards stopping the spread of AMR and safeguarding our future.

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Ronaldo celebrates after scoring a goal. — Reuters

RONALDO DOUBLE HELPS PORTUGAL TO REACH QUARTERS

PORTO, PORTUGAL: Portugal sealed a Nations League quarterfinal berth after a Cristiano Ronaldo double with a penalty and an overhead kick helped them hammer visiting Poland 5-1 in Group A1 on Friday.

Rafael Leao broke the deadlock just before the hour with a header before Ronaldo doubled the lead from the spot in the 72nd minute with a confident strike down the middle of the goal.

The hosts then scored three goals in eight minutes through Bruno Fernandes, Pedro Neto and Ronaldo's clever strike before Dominik Marczuk got a consolation for Poland in the 88th.

"The first half was very bad for what we wanted to do, we lost focus and got frustrated. But the second half was the best I've seen," said Portugal coach Roberto Martinez.

Unbeaten Portugal top the group with 13 points, six ahead of Croatia, who lost 1-0 away to a Scotland side who are still bottom but now level on four points with third-placed Poland.

Poland host Scotland on the final matchday on Monday when Portugal travel to Croatia.

Portugal, who snapped Poland's two-year unbeaten home run when they won the reverse fixture in Warsaw 3-1 last month, had trouble taming the visitors in the first half.

Poland were without their all-time top scorer Robert Lewandowski, who is sidelined with a back injury, but were quick to create danger and had three attempts on target before the break compared to none by the hosts.

Bartosz Bereszynski was close to opening the scoring in the 12th minute but Portugal goalkeeper Diogo Costa was in the right spot to catch his header before he had to stretch to deny Krzysztof Zalewski's powerful shot from the edge of the box.

Both Leao and Ronaldo sent good chances above the bar just before the break before the tables turned for Portugal after the restart.

Clearly fired up, the hosts dominated possession and Leao recovered the ball inside their own box before he raced through the pitch to find Nuno Mendes on the left flank who then set the forward up with a perfect lofted pass. — **Reuters**

IOC explores tent pegging for Olympic inclusion

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 16

THE PRESIDENT of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, highlighted the multifaceted criteria for including new sports in the Olympic Games. Addressing an inquiry from the Oman Observer during a virtual meeting organised by AIPS, Bach discussed the challenges and considerations involved in adding a new Olympic sport or programme.

Key factors include the number of athletes — particularly significant for team sports — the availability of venues and the overall complexity of organisation. Bach emphasised the importance of maintaining a balance, stating: "We cannot let the Games grow endlessly, as this would limit hosting opportunities to only G20 or G7 nations, which is not our goal. Respecting the athlete limit of 10,500-11,000 is crucial, as is achieving gender parity for any sport to be included in the Olympic programme."

The inquiry, part of the AIPS Centennial project "100 Olympic Stories told by 100 Young Reporters from 100 Nations," specifically addressed the status of tent pegging — a traditional equestrian sport. Bach acknowledged the application submitted by the International Tent Pegging Federation, headquartered in Muscat, Oman, noting that the IOC Sports Department is reviewing it.

He explained the revised decision-making process for new sports, allowing the IOC to establish core sports while giving host countries the flexibility to propose additional disciplines for individual editions of the Games.

"We evaluate international participation, organisational complexity and gender parity before any sport can be considered," he added.

The International Tent Pegging Federation, established on October 27, 2013, has been actively working towards recognition of the sport on a global stage.

Earlier in the meeting, Bach praised AIPS President Gianni Merlo and the young reporters for their innovative project, expressing gratitude for their contribution to Olympic storytelling.

Bach also delivered a powerful message of peace, reflecting on the unifying mission of the Olympics:



"Despite wars, conflicts and aggression, athletes from 206 National Olympic Committees and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team sent a resounding message of peace through their participation. This bond of humanity was witnessed

by more than half of the world's population."

Tent pegging enthusiasts and global supporters will await the IOC's decision on this historic sport's potential inclusion in the Olympic Games.

Ugarte strikes late to hand thrilling 3-2 win over Colombia

MONTEVIDEO: Manuel Ugarte scored a last-gasp winner to give Uruguay a dramatic 3-2 home victory over Colombia at the Centenario Stadium in the South American World Cup qualifiers on Friday.

The Manchester United midfielder grabbed the winner from close range 11 minutes into stoppage time to settle a thrilling contest and end Uruguay's four-game winless streak in their campaign to qualify for the 2026 World Cup.

"Triumphs like today's are healing in the sense that they bring all the parties that are around such a strong feeling, as in Uruguay it is the national team," Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa told a news conference.

"It was essential to win again. Regardless of the way it happened, which was very exciting, it was a necessary victory. We are heading in the right direction."

Colombia opened the scoring just past the half-hour mark when attacking midfielder Juan



Ugarte celebrates scoring third goal with Darwin. — Reuters

Quintero sailed a stunning free-kick past the wall and into the net at the near post.

Uruguay hit back with two goals after the break, a cross coming off Colombia defender Davinson Sanchez and flying into his own net in the 57th minute before Rodrigo Aguirre edged the home side ahead with a smooth finish.

"I am very happy. I still can't get over what the match was like and what it was like to score a goal," an emotional 30-year-old Aguirre said after his international debut. "I'm very happy. I can't believe it."

In a pulsating finish, Colombia levelled the scores again six minutes into stoppage time with a goal from substitute winger Andres Gomez, which was upheld after a lengthy VAR review.

Ugarte, however, found the net for the first time in international football to secure a victory that puts Uruguay second in the standings on 19 points.

"It was an even, hard-fought

match. We played well and we were able to dominate, but in some cases we had a few turnovers that cost us a lot," Colombia boss Nestor Lorenzo said.

"The way the goals came, you feel frustration and guilt, but then the team recovered and we got the equaliser and what happened at the end was frustrating, to be beaten like that."

Colombia also have 19 points but are third on goal difference, while Argentina remain leaders with 22 points, despite a 2-1 loss at Paraguay on Thursday.

Uruguay next play at third-placed Brazil on Tuesday, while Colombia host Ecuador.

Elsewhere, Peru and Chile played out a goalless draw in Lima, as both sides slipped further away from qualification spots.

Peru remain ninth with seven points, just one ahead of Chile.

The top six teams will qualify automatically for the 2026 World Cup hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada. — **Reuters**

SHORT TAKES



Croatia's Gvardiol (L) and Scotland's midfielder Stuart head the ball. — AFP

SCOTLAND STAY IN HUNT WITH 1-0 WIN OVER CROATIA

GLASGOW, SCOTLAND: Scotland forward John McGinn came off the bench to snatch a 1-0 home victory over 10-man Croatia for his country's first Nations League win of the campaign in their penultimate Group A1 game on Friday, keeping them in contention for the quarter-finals.

Croatia remain on seven points, behind Portugal, who clinched top spot and a place in the last eight with a 5-1 home win over Poland to reach 13 points. Croatia can guarantee a place in the quarters with a point at home to the Portuguese on Monday.

Scotland are still bottom but are now level on four points with third-placed Poland, who they visit on Monday, needing a win to have any hope of making the last eight. It was Steve Clarke's side's first victory in all competitions for 11 games.

Croatia dominated the first half and will rue their missed chances before midfielder Petar Susic was dismissed for a second yellow card in the 44th minute after barging into John Souttar.

McGinn had the Tartan Army roaring with his 86th-minute goal — his 19th for Scotland — after Ben Doak, who was terrific in the second half, beat his man before launching a cross that Kotarski punched away, only for McGinn to fire home.

Scotland's victory at Hampden Park ended their all-time worst run of 10 competitive fixtures without a win.

"I think it was a strange match overall," Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Kotarski said. "We played well, but the red card changed everything. Despite that, everything is still in our hands."

"We have a game coming up at Poljud (stadium) in front of our fans and I'm confident we'll secure a spot in the quarter-finals."

Clarke's Scotland team had endured a Nations League campaign to forget with three straight losses before holding visiting Portugal to a 0-0 draw and then beating Croatia.

The first half showed no signs of Scotland heading for a victory as Croatia dominated, but it ended with the visitors a man down and failing to score, including from Andrej Kramaric's shot that goalkeeper Craig Gordon stuck out a leg to stop.

Scotland almost gifted Croatia a goal early on when Kenny McLean sent a pass back to the feet of Kramaric, who shot wide.

The home side pressed Kotarski into action midway through the first half when 19-year-old Doak laid the ball off to Scott McTominay, whose shot from the edge of the 18-yard-box was saved.

Clarke's men showed patience in the second half and a breakthrough felt inevitable as they peppered the visitors' goal with shots, as Doak enjoyed a breakout night by running circles around Croatia defender Josko Gvardiol. — Reuters

Australia beat Pakistan to seal T20 series



Australia's Spencer Johnson celebrates with teammates. — AFP

SPEEDSTER SPENCER Johnson took 5-26 to propel Australia to a tense 13-run victory over Pakistan in Sydney on Saturday and seal their three-match T20 series with a game to go. Set just 148 to win after Haris Rauf claimed 4-22 to keep the hosts in check, Pakistan were all out for 134 in the final over despite a lively 52 from Usman Khan. Australia won a rain-hit first match in Brisbane by 29 runs with the final game at Hobart on Monday.

"We thought we were there or thereabouts and I thought the way the bowlers went about it was brilliant," said Australian captain Josh Inglis. "There's so many options in this team I can go to. Every time I turned to Johnson tonight, he got a wicket. The way they played tonight was really good."

Australia secured a vital breakthrough by removing Babar Azam (3) off Xavier Bartlett in the second over and Pakistan's

woes deepened when Johnson accounted for Sahibzada Farhan (5). Runs were hard to come by and after facing 26 balls for 16, skipper Mohammad Rizwan knew he had to up the tempo. But it cost him with Tim David taking a fine diving catch in the deep off Johnson, who then bagged Salman Agha next ball, caught behind by Inglis to leave Pakistan on 44-4 after 10 overs.

Khan played himself in and brought up his first T20 half-century. But Johnson struck again with Abbas Afridi (4) following soon after to earn the 28-year-old a maiden five-wicket haul in his seventh T20. Two wickets in an over by spin king Adam Zampa piled the pressure on Pakistan who were unable to rise to the challenge

Earlier, Australia was restricted to 147-9 after a rip-roaring start, but a slew of dropped catches cost Pakistan. "If you take the positives, the boys bowled very well. We know Australia is not an easy team," said Rizwan. "But if you drop crucial

catches, it will cost you the game. We all know the pitch wasn't easy to bat," he added.

Jake Fraser-McGurk and Matthew Short stitched together a highly entertaining 52-run opening stand off just 22 balls before Rauf struck twice in three deliveries. After tempting Fraser-McGurk (20) into another slog that was taken in the deep by Agha, he enticed a leading edge from Inglis (0). Pakistan had their tails up and Short quickly followed for 32, bowled by Afridi, with three wickets falling for four runs.

Marcus Stoinis survived two dropped catches but finally fell on 14, reverse-sweeping to Sufiyan Muqeem, who was brought into the side for Haseebullah Khan. Muqeem's wrist-spin then took care of dangerman Glenn Maxwell (21) as the runs dried up. David was removed by Rauf for 18 and he collected his fourth by bowling Bartlett (5). Aaron Hardie made a handy 28 before Afridi removed him and Johnson in successive balls in the final over. — AFP

Davis, James spark Lakers over Spurs while Cavs stay perfect

NEW YORK: Anthony Davis scored 40 points and LeBron James made more history to spark the Los Angeles Lakers over San Antonio 120-115 on Friday, launching their bid to defend the NBA Cup.

James managed a triple double in a fourth consecutive game for the first time in his 22 NBA seasons, the 39-year-old legend delivering 15 points, 15 rebounds and 12 assists over a game-high 38 minutes.

"I love the game and I'm happy I'm still able to come out here and make some plays to help our ball club win," James said.

James tied a Lakers triple-double record streak and became the oldest player in NBA history with four triple doubles in a row, all in winning efforts, although

his seven turnovers stung.

"I'm just putting the work in. My teammates trust me with the ball," James said.

"I guess they trusted me a little too much tonight with the seven turnovers. I've got to be a lot better than that if I'm going to have the ball in my hands. I'll clean that up."

Davis, who also grabbed 12 rebounds, won a battle of the big men with last season's NBA Rookie of the Year, Frenchman Victor Wembanyama, who had 28 points and 14 rebounds to lead the Spurs in the West Group B clash.

"Another magnificent game by AD," James said. "We lean on AD every night. The ball goes to him not only the first option but also the second option... He has definitely been a beast this year."



Anthony Davis (3) drives to the basket past Julian Champagnie (30). — Reuters

After Stephon Castle's basket gave the Spurs a 115-114 lead, Davis made a slam dunk with 91 seconds to play and James sank a layup, his first basket in more than 20 minutes.

Castle missed a tying 3-point attempt and James made two free throws to seal San Antonio's fate.

Davis drove to the hoop and banged his right knee into the left knee of Wembanyama late in the game but both were playing at the finish.

The Cleveland Cavaliers remained undefeated, downing Chicago 144-126 as games were played in all six NBA Cup groups with results also counting in the NBA regular-season standings.

FOX SCORES 60 IN LOSS Cleveland improved to 14-0 as

Donovan Mitchell scored 37 points to lead the East Group C rout.

"It's just so much fun. The vibes are right," Cleveland's Jarrett Allen said. "It just seems like everything is clicking right now."

The Cavaliers are only the sixth team in NBA history to start 14-0, matching the fourth-best start in league history.

In West Group A, Sacramento's De'Aaron Fox scored 60 points but the host Kings lost to Minnesota 130-126 in overtime as Anthony Edwards led the Timberwolves with 36 points.

In the same group, James Harden matched Ray Allen for second behind Stephen Curry on the NBA's all-time 3-pointers list on 2,973, scoring 21 points for the Los Angeles Clippers in a 125-104 loss at Houston. — AFP

SPORTS

QUARTERFINALS



SWIATEK TAKES POLAND INTO BJK CUP QUARTERS

MALAGA, SPAIN: Poland’s world number two Iga Swiatek beat Paula Badosa 6-3, 6-7(5), 6-1 to knock out hosts Spain 2-0 and book her country a spot in the Billie Jean King Cup quarterfinals on Friday.

Poland will face Czech Republic on Saturday following a gutsy performance by Swiatek after Magda Linette had won a tight contest 7-6(6), 2-6, 6-4 against Sara Sorribes Tormo.

Later on Friday, Britain also reached the last eight by beating Germany 2-0 with wins for Emma Raducanu and Katie Boulter. They will next face defending champions Canada on Sunday.

At three hours and 51 minutes, Linette’s triumph for Poland was nine minutes shy of the longest game ever in the competition, and she was forced to come from 3-0 down in the deciding set.

With Poland leading the tie, Swiatek stepped onto court with the chance to send her nation through to their first Billie Jean King Cup quarterfinal since 2015.

Swiatek returned to competition earlier in November at the WTA Finals, two months after deciding to step aside from the WTA tour due to fatigue following her US Open quarterfinal exit.

The 23-year-old, who lost the top ranking to Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka, started well against world number 12 Badosa on Friday by taking the first set and moving 3-0 ahead in the second.

Roared on by the home fans, Badosa managed to recover and took the game to a third set by winning a tight tiebreak, but Swiatek came back relentlessly to break Badosa’s serve four times and send Poland through to the last eight.

“I’m happy that we finally won a tie at the BJK Cup Finals. It’s a big step for us,” Swiatek said.

“My match was super intense. At the beginning, I felt like it was my best match since the US Open. Later on, she pushed me, and there was a lot of pressure.” Britain’s Raducanu made a triumphant return to court after a two-month injury layoff by securing a 6-4, 6-4 win over Germany’s Jule Niemeier before world number 24 Boulter wrapped up the tie with a comfortable 6-1, 6-2 victory against Laura Siegemund.

“I think I played some really good tennis today,” former US Open champion Raducanu said.

“I haven’t obviously played a match in a long time, so these are small sharpness things that come the more matches I play. I’m very happy.”

The quarterfinal action on Saturday also sees Japan facing last year’s runners-up Italy. Australia meet Slovakia, who knocked out the United States, on Sunday. — Reuters



Poland’s Iga Swiatek celebrates after the winning.

Zverev eliminates Alcaraz from ATP Finals, Ruud reaches semis



Germany’s Alexander Zverev celebrates after the winning. — Reuters

ALEXANDER ZVEREV surged into the semi-finals of the ATP Finals after eliminating French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz with a 7-6(5), 6-4 victory, while Casper Ruud also advanced with a 6-4, 5-7, 6-2 win over Andrey Rublev on Friday.

German Zverev entered the contest as the group leader with two victories from two matches—against Rublev and Ruud—but needed to win at least one set against Alcaraz to secure his place in the semi-finals.

In a tight opening set, momentum swung back and forth before the German second seed emerged victorious in the tiebreak. He then built a 3-1 lead in the second set before surviving a late fightback from Alcaraz.

The result handed Zverev a 6-5 lead in his meetings with Alcaraz. It was the world number two’s 69th win of the season, marking the most victories in a single season since three-time major winner Andy Murray achieved 78 wins in 2016.

“He (Alcaraz) beat me too many times this year in important matches, so I’m happy that I got this one,” Zverev said.

“Obviously, I feel like we have a pretty good rivalry with a great friendship as well, so it’s always nice to play against him... Just sharing the court with him. He’s a great guy, and I’m looking forward to the next matches with him as well.

“It’s been three fantastic matches. I’m happy with being 3-0 in the group for sure, but I think now the semi-final is going to be very difficult. (Taylor) beat me the past few times at the slams, so I’m looking forward to that match.”

The victory was even sweeter for Zverev as he had finished second best in the French Open final against Alcaraz in June.

Second seed Zverev topped the John Newcombe Group and will next face US Open

finalist Taylor Fritz.

Since reaching his first semi-final at the ATP Finals in 2018, only record 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic (five) has made it to the semi-finals of the tournament more often than the 27-year-old German, who has now qualified four times.

Alcaraz, who picked up his first win at this year’s ATP Finals with a straight-sets victory over Rublev on Wednesday, again wore pink nasal tape, having suffered from respiratory issues in recent days.

World number seven Ruud, runner-up in 2022, withstood some big hitting from Rublev’s ferocious forehand and sealed the win with an ace.

“I knew coming into this match that a set was enough to qualify, so I was a bit nervous at the start. When I got that first set, I could breathe out a little,” Ruud said.

He will face world number one Jannik Sinner for a place in the final. — Reuters



OMRAN Group is honoured to congratulate
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik
and the people of Oman on the occasion of the glorious

54th National Day

We renew our commitment to diligently continue
our contributions to achieving sustainable tourism development





MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
4,643.51

BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$71.42
BRENT \$71.83
LIGHT \$67.95



Terms & conditions apply



Create a brighter future for your Children

Visit your nearest BankDhofar branch





bankdhofar

 2479 1111

 www.bankdhofar.com



EXCEEDDEMAND

These opportunities, valued at RO 83.480 million, come with detailed feasibility studies and are open to both local and foreign investors.

26 NEW INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN AL BATINAH NORTH

SUHAR: Al Batinah North Governorate is emerging as a hub for investment and economic activity, with 26 new investment opportunities announced across sectors including industry, food security, petrochemicals and minerals.

The Directorate-General of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion revealed that these opportunities, valued at RO 83.480 million, come with detailed feasibility studies and are open to both local and foreign investors.

The governorate’s investment appeal is reflected in a 183-per cent surge in foreign commercial registrations during the first half of 2024, reaching 1,254 compared to 442 in the same period last year. Total commercial registrations also rose 25 per cent to 2,624.

“The governorate offers an environment conducive to investment, supported by robust infrastructure and government incentives,” said Ali bin Khalfan al Ghaithi, Director-General of the Directorate.

Al Batinah North also processed over 112,000 commercial and industrial transactions in the first half of 2024, with 92,025 completed via the Oman Business Platform. Industrial licence applications soared by 85.2 per cent, reflecting a total invested capital of RO 1.7 billion.

With its strategic location and industrial zones, Al Batinah North Governorate continues to attract domestic and international investors, solidifying its position as a key player in Oman’s economic diversification. — **ONA**

OIA completes five major projects worth RO 322m

THE OMAN Investment Authority (OIA) has announced the completion of five national projects with a combined investment value of RO 322.7 million. These projects, distributed across four governorates, span various sectors, reflecting the Authority’s commitment to advancing Oman’s economy in alignment with the Oman Vision 2040 objectives.

The projects include the Manah Solar Power Plant (Phases I and II), the Central Market for Vegetables and Fruits in Khazaen Economic City, the Barka Desalination Plant (Phase Five), the Fish Canning and Value-Added Complex in Duqm, and the implementation of a sewage network in the Sahalnout area (Phase One).

Hisham bin Ahmed al Shaidi, Head of Economic Diversification Investments at OIA, highlighted the significance of the Manah Solar Power Plant, developed by Nama Power and Water Procurement Company in partnership with Ashraq Sembcorp Jinko. With a total investment of RO 150 million, the plant represents a major step towards Oman’s renewable energy goals. The project aims to contribute 10% of the country’s electricity production through renewable energy sources by 2025, helping diversify Oman’s energy mix.

The Central Market for Vegetables and Fruits, developed by Silal, involves an investment of RO 50 million. This facility is set to transform the agricultural and trade sectors by providing advanced infrastructure and integrated logistics solutions, enhancing food security and supporting local

Oil sector earnings climbed 12% to RO 5.436 billion during the first 10 months of this year

The Barka Desalination Plant (Phase Five), constructed by Nama Water Services Company in partnership with GS Inima Barka 5 Desalination Company, involved an investment of RO 50 million. During the construction phase, RO 21 million was allocated to Omani local content, benefiting small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

products. The market is expected to generate 375 direct and indirect jobs while facilitating private sector companies’ expansion in wholesale import and export activities.

The Barka Desalination Plant (Phase Five), constructed by Nama Water Services Company in partnership with GS Inima Barka 5 Desalination Company, involved an investment of RO 50 million. During the construction phase, RO 21 million was allocated to Omani local content, benefiting small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Once operational, the project will bolster water storage, transportation and distribution capacity, while creating job opportunities for citizens.

In Duqm, the Fisheries Development Oman and International Marine Products Company have established the Fish

Canning and Value-Added Complex at a cost of RO 27.7 million. Designed to enhance the value of Omani fish products, the complex will provide 640 direct jobs and aims to generate a 14% annual return on investment for shareholders, contributing significantly to the local economy.

In the service sector, Nama Services Dhofar Company completed the first phase of a sewage network in Sahalnout with an investment of RO 45 million. This project enhances sewage infrastructure, improving the quality of life for residents and supporting the region’s modern urban plans.

These five initiatives form part of OIA’s National Development Portfolio, which focuses on managing local assets and driving Oman’s economic growth while supporting the state budget. — **ONA**

Oman Flour Mills firms up mergers and acquisitions

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 16

Oman Flour Mills (OFM), one of the largest integrated food companies in the Sultanate of Oman, has lined up mergers and acquisitions with a number food related businesses in Oman and the wider Gulf region. The transactions, when completed by around the middle of next year, will vault majority state-owned OFM into the ranks of the biggest food sector players in the Middle East.

The planned mergers and acquisitions, according to OFM, are part of a strategy designed to support the group’s integration across the value chain, as well as its diversification into new ventures. Besides its mainstay flour milling, bakery and feed mill operations, the parent group also has interests spanning the dairy, poultry, grain storage and trading, pasta products, and food diagnostics sectors.

The most significant of the big ac-

The valuation process for acquiring a large industrial bakery has been completed. Atiyab Investment is moving forward with a non-binding offer, while Financial Due Diligence (FDD) and Legal Due Diligence (LDD) are underway

AHMED BIN ALI AL BALUSHI
Chairman, Board of Directors – OFM

quisitions planned by OFM centres on a yet unnamed industrial bakery, with a final investment decision anticipated before the end of this year.

“The valuation process for acquiring a large industrial bakery has been completed. Atiyab Investment is moving forward with a non-binding offer, while Financial Due Diligence (FDD) and Legal Due Diligence (LDD) are underway,” said Ahmed bin Ali al Balushi, Chairman, Board of Directors – OFM, in the latest financial report for the nine months ended on September 30, 2024.

At the same time, plans are afoot for the establishment of an industrial bakery in Saudi Arabia. To this end, a market assessment study has already been finalised by a consultant, while potential shareholders are being lined up to invest in the venture, according to OFM.

Further underscoring its appetite for growth, OFM is weighing a merger with an upcoming industrial bakery

OFM’s Sohar Flour Mill subsidiary.

specialising in frozen bakery products. “A consulting firm has been engaged to evaluate the potential merger with a major emerging frozen industrial bakery. The firm has completed the strategic fit assessment and is now working on the valuation,” said Al Balushi.

Likewise, in a bid to bolster its already considerable presence in the

domestic feed mill sector, OFM subsidiary Atiyab Investments has completed the valuation of a major feed mill in the country that has been targeted for acquisition. “Upon agreement of the terms and conditions, Atiyab will initiate legal due diligence to proceed with finalisation,” said the chairman.

Another notable target of its acquisition strategy is Oman Bio-Products, a specialised animal feed mill currently under construction at Khazaen Economic City in Barka. OFM, which presently owns a 33-per cent stake in Oman Bio-Products through its subsidiary Atiyab Investments, recently announced that it is eyeing a 100-per cent acquisition of the company.

OFM Group, part of Oman Food Investment Holding Company (Nitaj) – an affiliate of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) - recorded total revenues of RO 96.14 million during the nine months ended on September 30, 2024, up from RO 92.63 million for the same period last year.

SHORTTAKES



Al Dakhiliyah Boulevard is expected to attract over 944,000 visitors annually.

Al Dakhiliyah Boulevard: A visionary development in Nizwa

NIZWA: The Tender Board’s approval of Al Dakhiliyah Square, branded as “Al Dakhiliyah Boulevard”, marks a milestone in comprehensive development in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. The project is set to redefine urban and economic landscapes in Nizwa, covering an area of 145,000 square metres.

This multifaceted project combines investment, tourism, culture, health and environmental initiatives, reflecting Oman’s focus on sustainable and inclusive growth. The development includes 10 diverse investment sites and 50 usufruct contracts across various sectors, with a two-year implementation timeline.

Al Dakhiliyah Boulevard is expected to attract over 944,000 visitors annually, generating 340 permanent and temporary jobs and engaging 60 productive families in its activities. “This project embodies our vision for sustainable development, offering an environment that meets the community’s diverse needs,” said Shaikh Hilal bin Said al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah.

Facilities will include open theatres, exhibition spaces, laser shows, and a 3,985-metre-long walkway surrounded by greenery. Dedicated cycling paths, water fountains and open areas covering 80,000 square metres are integral to its design. Visitors will also enjoy restaurants, kiosks, children’s play areas and a market supporting small businesses.

Aligned with national strategies, the project supports initiatives such as the Greater Nizwa Plan, the Healthy Patterns initiative by the Ministry of Health, and Oman’s tree-planting drive, which aims to plant 10 million trees. Furthermore, clean energy integration is ensured through a financing agreement with Petroleum Development Oman.

Investment returns are projected to reach RO 500,000 annually, with an estimated 5 per cent growth rate. The Boulevard also aims to become a cornerstone of tourism in the governorate, enhancing its appeal as a tourist destination.

Al Dakhiliyah Boulevard is more than a development project; it’s a transformative initiative that integrates cultural heritage, modern infrastructure and sustainable practices, promising long-term benefits for Oman’s economy and society. — **ONA**

STRONG FORECASTS FOR OLIVE HARVEST IN SPAIN, GREECE



MADRID: The olive harvest in Spain, the world’s largest olive oil producer, is expected to grow by 48 per cent this season after last year’s slump and reach 1.26 million tonnes. The forecast by the Ministry of Agriculture gives cause for cautious optimism after extreme weather produced the poorest results in years.

Greece is also expecting an increase after the last harvest season from 150,000 to 230,000 tonnes of oil. While Spain and Greece are confident in the sector’s recovery, the crisis continues in Italy, where olive oil production is likely to be even lower than last year.

According to initial estimates by the Italian agricultural institute ISMEA, this year’s harvest could only yield around 220,000 tonnes of oil - down 32 per cent on last year’s 330,000 tonnes. The positive signals from Spain and Greece appear to have already reached supermarkets in Europe. In Germany, for example, discounter ALDI reduced its own-brand olive oil from \$9.5 and its organic olive oil from €29.99 to €6.95 in late October. As a result, all major retailers in Germany followed suit with price reductions. — **dpa**

RO 20.1 bn in investments in economic and free zones

OMAN’S SPECIAL economic zones, free zones and industrial cities are drawing significant investor interest, driven by strategic infrastructure projects, streamlined regulations and robust investment incentives. By the end of June 2024, cumulative investments across these zones, overseen by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), reached an impressive RO 20.1 billion, marking a 20% increase from RO 16.7 billion in June 2023.

This remarkable growth underscores Oman’s appeal as an investment destination and highlights the efforts of OPAZ and its subsidiaries in attracting local and international investments. During the first half of 2024 alone, these zones secured over RO 1.05 billion in new investments, with Sohar Free Zone leading the way, contributing RO 711.4 million. The industrial cities added RO 175.2 million, followed by the Salalah Free Zone with RO 131.8 million.

Oman’s 15 economic and industrial zones offer a range of benefits, including tax exemptions, 100% foreign ownership, and user-friendly electronic services like land selection. Among the standout performers: Duqm Special Economic Zone: RO 6 billion in investments, hosting major projects like the Duqm Refinery (RO 3.5 billion), green hydrogen initiatives, and iron factories by Vulcan Green Iron and Japanese



This remarkable growth underscores Oman’s appeal as an investment destination and highlights the efforts of OPAZ and its subsidiaries in attracting local and international investments.

firms.

Salalah Free Zone: RO 4.7 billion in investments, with new factories such as Al Namariq Mining (RO 10 million) and Integrated Food Factory (RO 9.6 million).

Sohar Free Zone: RO 1.3 billion in investments, including a polysilicon factory worth RO 600 million and advancements in ferroalloy, chemical and solar energy sectors.

Khazaen Economic City: RO 459.5 million in investments, recently opening a central vegetable and fruit market to boost wholesale trade and agricultural exports.

In addition to ongoing investments, Oman is developing eight new zones, including Al Dhahirah Integrated Economic

Zone in partnership with Saudi Arabia and the Muscat International Airport Free Zone managed by ASYAD Group.

Key openings in the first half of 2024 include Duqm’s multi-purpose fishing port, protection dams and shipping facilities. In Al Mazunah Free Zone, strategically located near the Omani-Yemeni border, investments have focused on import-export facilities and cold storage for fish.

Meanwhile, Madayn’s industrial cities recorded a 30% growth in investment applications, reaching 184 by June, with cumulative investments totalling RO 7.6 billion across over 2,300 contracts.

Oman’s zones are at the forefront of green energy initiatives. In Duqm, Acme Group achieved a global milestone by producing the first certified commercial green hydrogen and ammonia. Other projects include Duqm Hyport, a collaboration between OQ Group and Belgium’s DEME Concessions, and Vale’s green iron industrial complex.

Economic and free zones play a crucial role in job creation, employing over 25,550 Omanis, with an Omanisation rate of 35%. Total employment in these zones has reached 71,684 workers.

OPAZ’s continued efforts to enhance infrastructure, attract high-value project, and support renewable energy initiatives position the economic zones as vital contributors to Oman Vision 2040, fostering sustainable development and global investment appeal. — **ONA**

IBRI INDUSTRIAL CITY ATTRACTS RO 19.6 MILLION IN INVESTMENTS

IBRI: The Ibri Industrial City, part of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has emerged as a key hub for industrial and logistics activities in Al Dhahirah Governorate. Strategically located 150 km from Rub Al Khali port on the Saudi border and 180 km from Hafeet port on the UAE border, the city offers an ideal environment for businesses to leverage natural resources such as gold, gypsum, marble, petroleum and agricultural wealth.



The city offers an ideal environment for businesses to leverage natural resources such as gold, gypsum, marble, petroleum and agricultural wealth.

Eng Hamoud al Khalili, Director of Operations at Ibri Industrial City, stated that RO 9 million was invested to develop the infrastructure of the first phase, spanning 3 million sqm, which was inaugurated in February 2024. This phase provides essential services, including roads, electricity, water and sewage systems, creating a fully-equipped investment zone within the city’s total area of 10 million sqm. — **ONA**

Oman’s longest expressway to drive economic growth

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) is advancing efforts to enhance Oman’s transport sector, recognising its vital role in driving economic and tourism development. Among its key projects is the dualisation of the Adam-Thamrait Road, the longest expressway being implemented in Oman.

The Tender Board has awarded the contracts for the third, fourth and fifth parts of the Adam-Thamrait Road, along with the Jabal Shams Road, at a combined value of RO 278.452 million. According to Eng Yousef bin Abdullah al Mujaini, Director-General of Roads and Land Transport at the MoTCIT, work on the dualisation will commence in early 2025 following the completion of contractual procedures, with an expected implementation period of 36 months plus a 90-day preparation phase.

Stretching across multiple governorates, the dualised Adam-Thamrait Road is set to become a critical logistical artery. “This project will open up new economic, tourism and social opportunities,” said Al Mujaini.

The third part of the road extends 132.5 km from Haima to Maqshan. The scope includes constructing safe entrances and exits, 16 turning lanes, a bridge, service roads, truck weight stations, four rest areas and advanced water drainage systems, ensuring resilience against floods. The section also includes rebuilding certain valley road sections to enhance safety and durability.

The fourth section, covering 135 km from Maqshan to Duka, integrates 14 turning



The Tender Board has awarded the contracts for the third, fourth and fifth parts of the Adam-Thamrait Road, along with the Jabal Shams Road, at a combined value of RO 278.452 million.

lanes, 25 parking lots and 3 rest areas. With over 240 reinforced concrete culverts and 95 drainage channels, the design focuses on flood management and road sustainability.

The fifth section, spanning 132 km from Duka to Thamrait, features 20 turning lanes, 16 parking lots, truck weighing stations and advanced drainage systems. Additionally, it incorporates dam protection structures to mitigate flood risks.

Simultaneously, the Jabal Shams Road project aims to boost tourism by connecting Jabal Shams and surrounding residential areas with key governorates. This 26-

km road, complemented by a 6-km link road, will feature 3.5-metre-wide lanes and enhanced access to tourism resorts. The project aligns with Oman’s vision for sustainable development and is expected to be completed within 24 months starting early next year.

The Adam-Thamrait Road and Jabal Shams projects symbolise Oman’s commitment to infrastructure that not only connects, but also catalyses growth. These initiatives are pivotal in positioning Oman as a regional leader in logistics, tourism and sustainable development. — **ONA**

OPINION

Bitcoin surges past \$90,000 as digital market reaches \$3.18 tn



STEFANO VIRGILLI
stefano@virgilli.com

The author is a member of the International Press Association

DIGITAL ASSETS reached unprecedented heights this week as Bitcoin surged past \$90,000, briefly touching \$93,000 before settling around \$89,500. This remarkable rally pushed the total cryptocurrency market capitalisation beyond its previous peak of \$3.07 trillion, reaching \$3.18 trillion — a historic milestone signalling growing mainstream acceptance of digital assets. Having spent the past week at various blockchain conferences in Bangkok, I’ve observed a fascinating divide within the industry. While traders celebrate the remarkable price action, particularly in Bitcoin and various newer tokens, many technology builders express frustration at the market’s current focus on speculative assets rather than fundamental innovation. Institutional adoption continues to accelerate, with Ethereum exchange-traded funds (ETFs) recording their highest weekly trading volume since launch. Over \$1.63 billion in ETF trading volume was registered this week, marking a 44 per cent increase from the previous week. This pattern mirrors the early days of Bitcoin ETFs, which saw initial enthusiasm, followed by a quiet period, before experiencing sustained growth in trading volumes. Major financial institutions are expanding their digital asset offerings. BlackRock’s Ethereum Trust ETF has reversed its early

outflows, with cumulative net inflows now reaching \$238 million. During their first three weeks of trading, ETH ETFs averaged about \$566 million per day in volume. While this initially declined to \$168 million daily through October, recent activity has surged to over \$326 million per day, suggesting growing institutional comfort with digital assets beyond Bitcoin. At Bangkok’s Devcon conference, Ethereum’s technical future took centre stage. A significant proposal to reduce the network’s staking requirement from 32 ETH to just 1 ETH aims to increase participation and decentralisation. The introduction of “Beam Chain,” a potential overhaul of the network’s consensus layer, promises four-second slot times and quantum resistance, marking a major leap forward in blockchain infrastructure. The regulatory landscape shows signs of maturation globally. Several jurisdictions are implementing more structured frameworks for digital asset oversight, while banking authorities in Singapore and France have completed groundbreaking experiments with post-quantum computing security for financial networks. These developments suggest a growing recognition of blockchain technology’s role in future financial infrastructure. For Gulf economies, these developments present significant opportunities. The region’s

Major financial institutions are expanding their digital asset offerings. BlackRock’s Ethereum Trust ETF has reversed its early outflows, with cumulative net inflows now reaching \$238 million. During their first three weeks of trading, ETH ETFs averaged about \$566 million per day in volume.

financial centres continue to attract digital asset activity, with the UAE and Saudi Arabia’s regulatory frameworks serving as models for balanced oversight. Market indicators suggest this rally has strong foundations. Unlike previous cycles, current price appreciation appears driven by genuine institutional demand rather than excessive leverage. Funding rates for perpetual swaps remain near neutral levels, indicating a more mature market structure. This is particularly evident in the Ethereum market, where ETF trading patterns suggest sustainable, long-term institutional interest. However, challenges remain. The technical development community appears divided on priorities, with some focusing on immediate scalability solutions while others advocate for longer-term infrastructure improvements. This tension, which I witnessed firsthand in Bangkok, reflects the industry’s growing pains as it balances rapid growth with sustainable development. The evolution of layer-2 solutions presents both opportunities and challenges. Major platforms are working to improve interoperability and user experience, though their native tokens have faced significant pressure, with several declining by 50-80 per cent this year despite the broader market rally. This divergence highlights the complex dynamics between market speculation and technological development.

UK MISTAKES CITY LIBERALISATION FOR A GROWTH PLAN

Rachel Reeves’ speech on Thursday evening must have been music to the ears of the assembled financial grandees at London’s Mansion House dinner. The UK finance minister said that post-2008 reforms had created a regulatory system that “sought to eliminate risk-taking” and pledged to unshackle the sector to boost growth. Yet, thus far, her reforms look vague – and risk ending up as either marginal or reckless.

The former Bank of England economist’s words echoed those of many a frustrated CEO over the past decade or so: the UK has been “regulating for risk, but not regulating for growth”; it’s time to “build a true partnership between government and the financial services sector and unlock its potential.” It is not clear how the measures announced overnight will change much, though. Reeves said the government will introduce a new share-trading venue for private companies, called PISCES. It looks like a formalised version of the secondary market for startups that is already thriving in the United States. If anything, the new service may allow UK startups to stay private for longer, hurting London’s struggling new-issues market. Other measures will cut compliance costs. These include potentially reducing the trade-reporting requirements for capital-markets businesses and replacing the certification regime for relatively junior City employees with something less burdensome. The sector will welcome less bureaucracy, but the initiatives are hardly transformative.

More could come next year. Reeves will unveil a new financial-services growth strategy. She has also written to the Bank of England and the Financial Conduct Authority to remind them that the government expects their support in helping the economy. The problem is that anything meaningful for the industry, like easing bank-capital rules or other supervisory measures, could raise the risk of a financial crisis. Former Labour finance minister Gordon Brown found as much in 2008, when years of light-touch supervision prompted a wave of bailouts and a subsequent recession. Deregulation arguably brings tax benefits for the government, but the numbers are not huge: banks contribute less than 5 per cent of total receipts, according to research by PwC for the UK Finance lobby group. The missing piece in Reeves’ agenda, meanwhile, is strong evidence that a freer financial sector leads to faster economic growth over the long term.

The FCA looked into the question in a research note last month, but a key takeaway from the report was that academic literature is patchy. Bank of England boss Andrew Bailey, in his own Mansion House speech, noted that investment by real-economy businesses is more central to growth than whatever asset managers decide to do. The risk is that Reeves ends up making Mansion House diners feel cheerier without doing much to supercharge the wider UK economy. — Reuters

NCO’s role in driving Oman’s global competitiveness



QASIM AL MAASHANI

The author is the head of Oman Observer’s Business section

IN RECENT years, Oman has achieved significant advances in global competitiveness rankings, marking impressive progress across economic, environmental, and technological fronts. These achievements are far more than mere figures; they are a testament to Oman’s commitment to sustainable, forward-looking development. At the heart of this transformation lies the National Competitiveness Office (NCO), an entity whose strategic efforts to enhance Oman’s performance domestically and internationally have positioned the Sultanate of Oman as a regional leader. Through a blend of targeted reform and robust international collaboration, Oman has emerged as a nation dedicated to responsible growth and resilience.

In an increasingly interconnected world, global indicators have become essential for measuring a country’s standing and guiding its developmental trajectory. These indicators assess various domains, from governance and economic freedom to innovation and environmental performance. For Oman, competitiveness is not merely a ranking; it is a mission to maximise productivity and optimise resources within strong institutional frameworks. International benchmarks offer clear direction, helping Oman identify strengths and areas for improvement. They provide Oman with a strategic path for sustainable growth and bolster its reputation as a responsible player on the global stage. Oman’s engagement with international indicators is not about recognition alone — it is a strategic tool with profound implications for the nation’s growth. Firstly, global rankings align national objectives with international standards, driving Oman toward impactful achievements. Secondly, strong rankings enhance Oman’s appeal as an investment and tourism destination, strengthening its global reputation. Indicators also provide critical data to inform policy, allowing Oman to craft effective, evidence-based decisions. Additionally, through benchmarking, Oman can adopt successful practices from other nations, tailoring them to local needs. Lastly, these rankings support continuous improvement by highlighting areas that need attention, enabling regular assessment and sustained progress. The credibility of international indicators lies in their diverse sources, which combine objective data with perception-based insights.



Through a blend of targeted reform and robust international collaboration, Oman has emerged as a nation dedicated to responsible growth and resilience.

Factual data, such as statistical records and legal frameworks, provide a reliable view of national performance. Meanwhile, perception-based insights from surveys, interviews, and expert evaluations add valuable context, offering a comprehensive picture of Oman’s achievements and challenges. The proactive efforts of the NCO have propelled Oman’s rise across several key international rankings. Oman’s Economic Freedom Index, for instance, improved from 95th to 56th place. Its Environmental Performance Index leapt from 149th to 54th, while its E-Government Development Index climbed from 41st to 50th. These advancements reflect Oman’s commitment to fostering a stable economic environment that supports investment, promotes innovation, and values environmental sustainability — all pillars essential to the future Oman envisions. The NCO has played a central role in driving Oman’s competitiveness. Through targeted strategies, the NCO has catalysed significant improvements. Its work includes modernising legislative frameworks to align with international standards, enhancing Oman’s competitive edge. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of Oman’s global standing, the NCO collaborates with local and international bodies to validate and update national data. Through training workshops and consultancy, the NCO empowers public and private institutions to adopt best practices, strengthening efficiency across sectors. Additionally, by fostering partnerships with global organisations, the NCO amplifies Oman’s influence on the world stage. Oman’s progress is well-documented across multiple international reports, highlighting advancements in areas crucial to the nation’s sustainability and resilience. Key indicators include the Environmental Performance Index, Governance Indicators, Global Innovation Index, Economic Freedom Index, Network

Readiness Index, Future Growth Report, and Corruption Perception Index. These rankings illustrate Oman’s comprehensive approach to development, underscoring its commitment to building a resilient future that is sustainable across all sectors. The NCO has implemented numerous initiatives to strengthen Oman’s position in these rankings. These efforts focus on data accuracy, public education, and international cooperation. The NCO actively monitors 14 core indicators, addressing challenges to ensure sustainable growth. Regular data updates and participation in international surveys guarantee that Oman’s data is both current and credible. Through more than 20 workshops held in collaboration with international organisations, the NCO raises public awareness of global competitiveness and fosters a sense of shared responsibility. Additionally, Oman’s membership in four major international organisations strengthens partnerships with over 80 global entities, expanding the Sultanate of Oman’s influence and reinforcing its presence on the global stage. A closer look at Oman’s competitiveness reveals the impact of the NCO’s work. Currently, the NCO tracks 14 primary indicators and manages over 100 ongoing initiatives focused on growth and development. Through frequent data updates and validation efforts, Oman maintains data accuracy, which is vital for global credibility. With a comprehensive media strategy and a series of public workshops, the NCO builds a national understanding of the importance of competitiveness, engaging both public and private sectors in the process. Internationally, Oman’s partnerships span over 200 local and global entities, with memberships that further cement its role as an influential global player. Oman’s achievements in global competitiveness are not just a point of national pride; they reflect a strategic commitment to a sustainable and prosperous future. The work of the National Competitiveness Office has been instrumental in this journey, positioning Oman as a nation with a clear vision backed by solid planning and action. As Oman continues to embrace best practices and strengthen its international alliances, it is well-poised to deepen its role as a leader in regional and global competitiveness. Oman’s journey serves as a model of what strategic planning, bolstered by thoughtful policy and international collaboration, can achieve. With a firm commitment to continuous improvement and a long-term vision for the future, Oman is paving the way for a competitive, resilient, and sustainable future — one that promises opportunity and prosperity for generations to come.

WJ Towell Group Company

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

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

أوربيت
Car Rental & Lease

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

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

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

■ FOR RENT

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

Driving School

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

Contact No: 99074072

■ SIT. VACANT

Looking for a Local Sponsor cum Investor to start a new profitable industrial business in Oman. Email- pradeepdivakar69@gmail.com

■ SIT. WANTED

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

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

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

B. COM. 35 years of experience in accounts, sales coordinator, admin, HR, personal assistant, document controller with Oman D/L, looking for a job. Contact: 92558734

Indian male (Mechanical Engineering) with 3 years experience in Diesel engine works (Gensets / Engines) 2 years in Machine Maintenance seeks job.

Contact: 78022420

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

Indian Female, M-Tech in Environmental Engineering, B-Tech in Civil Engineering. 7 years of Teaching experience as Asst. Professor, 2 years of professional experience in civil construction and soil investigation. Seeking suitable job, now in Muscat. Contact: 95136664, 79620397 Email: mayakrish.1804@gmail.com

Sri Lankan Male- (CGMA ACMA+ CPA+BBA) Asst. Finance Manager / Chief Accountant, 12+ Experience in Oman & GCC, Expert in Finan. Reporting (MIS), VAT, Audit, Cashflow, Budget, AR AP Recon, IFRS, Payroll, Banking. Contact: 78773250. Email: ali.mohamedown@gmail.com

I am a Business Analyst seeking part-time / contract work. Expertise in:

- Business Planning.
- Market Research.
- Financial Projections.
- Technical Writing.
- SOPs, Manuals.
- Workflows.
- Templates, Presentations.
- Event Planning.
- Digital Marketing Contact: vincyth8@gmail.com, 79823038

Indian female, B tech, Electronics and Communication graduate 2 years experience, looking for suitable job, now in Muscat. Call: 94061884, whatsapp: +919946440893 email: anjugp62@gmail.com

■ FOR RENT

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

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

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

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

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

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

Our Products:

ELECTRICAL, BUILDING MATERIAL, HARDWARE, OILFIELD INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT & TOOLS

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

OMAN OBSERVER
www.omanobserver.om

OMAN **Observer** DAILY

For Advertisements

Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
malrahdhi86@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suhar Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadiameeh@yahoo.com

OMAN **Observer** DAILY

FREE* CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

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

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

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

ART/LIFE



Raneen Festival to highlight local and global talents >20

AUCTION

Diamond necklace linked to Marie Antoinette sells for \$4.8 million



A DIAMOND-STUDDED necklace thought to be linked to a scandal that hastened the downfall of the doomed 18th century queen of France, Marie Antoinette, sold at auction in Geneva last week for 4.26 million Swiss francs (\$4.81 million).

Put up for sale by an Asian private collector, the Georgian-era piece containing 300 carats of diamonds fetched more than expected after a lengthy bidding battle, having been valued beforehand at up to 2 million francs, according to Sotheby's.

"It was an electric night," said Andres White Correal, a Sotheby's jewellery specialist, after the evening sale of the necklace to an undisclosed female buyer.

"There is obviously a niche in the market for historical jewels with fabulous provenances. People are not only buying the object, they are buying all the history that is attached to it."

Sotheby's said this month that some of the diamonds in the piece may have come from a necklace that helped precipitate the fall of Marie Antoinette, a member of the Austrian royal family who became the wife of French King Louis XVI.

Both were guillotined in 1793 during the French Revolution.

The jewels in question were at the centre of a 1785 scandal known as the Diamond Necklace Affair in which a hard-up noblewoman named Jeanne de la Motte pretended to be the French queen and acquired the necklace in her name without payment.

A subsequent trial found the queen blameless, but did little to diminish her growing notoriety for extravagance, which helped fuel the revolution and the overthrow of the French monarchy.

The diamonds of the original necklace, crafted in the 1770s, were later sold piecemeal on the black market and so are almost impossible to trace. However, some experts say the quality and age of the diamonds point to a match.

The necklace, which resembles a neck scarf, can be worn open or knotted at the front. One previous owner was Britain's Marquess of Anglesey, and a family member wore it on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, Sotheby's said. —Reuters

QUICK FEATURES



FESTIVAL

Women release lanterns on the opening day of the week-long Tazaungdaing Lighting Festival in Taunggyi, Myanmar's northeastern Shan State. —AFP



ENTERTAINMENT

Egyptian film director Inas El Degheidy poses on the red carpet during the opening ceremony of the 45th Cairo International Film Festival in Cairo. —AFP



LIFESTYLE

Beril Gur Tanyeli, the head of the Zeyrek Cinili Hammam Museum manager, poses in Istanbul. For centuries, hammams were central to Ottoman society, and although they fell out of use with the advent of running water, many are being restored to revive this ancient ritual bathing tradition. —AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Getting Some Sun



Surrounded By Greenery

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. To be selected, follow us on Instagram and every time you upload or share your photos, make sure to tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

British Vogue editor concerned about skinny models



THE EDITORIAL director of British Vogue magazine on Wednesday said she was worried about the return of thin models, linking the trend to the widespread use of anti-obesity drugs.

“We’re in this moment where we’re seeing the pendulum sort of swing back to skinny being ‘in’ and often these things are treated like a trend and we don’t want them to be,” Chioma Nnadi told the BBC in an interview.

“We should all be concerned, I am very concerned and I know many of my colleagues are,” added Nnadi, who took over as editor of the fashion magazine in October 2023.

Ozempic, a popular diabetes treatment that also works against obesity, “has something to do with it because we’re seeing a lot of celebrities who are using it”, she said.

“I think there’s this shift in the culture around how we think about our bodies and how we address our bodies.”

Nnadi, who succeeded Edward Enniful at the head of the fashion bible, said her magazine was trying to show models of all sizes.

The use of ultra-thin models was widespread in the 1990s and early 2000s, with the so-called “heroin chic” trend embodied by supermodel Kate Moss.

Some brands have made an effort to have models of all sizes on the catwalk but Nnadi, 44, said there was still not enough diversity of size and some models were “especially thin”.

“I think it’s not something that we, as a magazine, can change on our own, because obviously the designers are making clothes that are sample size,” she added. —AFP



MAKE FOOD NOT WAR...

Ukrainian chefs train in France

ALEXANDRE PEYRILLE

VITALII AHEYEV from Ukraine was discharged from the army after being shot in the stomach and the leg in the war with Russia and spending 10 months in captivity.

Following six years in the military, the 24-year-old needed to train for a new job. Learning how to cook seemed a good choice, and if he could train under a Michelin-starred celebrity in France, so much the better.

Ahejev has just completed two months of training at a school in Toulouse, southwestern France, run by star chef Thierry Marx. He is one among a delegation of novice and experienced chefs originally from Mariupol, the Ukrainian port city now under Russian control.

Marx, an author, TV celebrity and specialist in molecular cooking -- which puts the emphasis on the chemical reactions of ingredients -- has a history of using his skills for social engagement, local sourcing of food and an ecological approach.

A former soldier himself, Marx has two Michelin stars to his name.

“Cooking is really the only way to rekindle trusting relationships,” Marx said. “The power of social ties is important, especially in a country at war”.

Marx runs a network of cooking schools dedicated to give training to people he calls “casualties of life”.

Ahejev, tattooed and with a ready smile, has a reputation as the mischief maker of the group, which is known here as “the Marik brigade” after the city’s nickname.

But even while he teases his co-trainees relentlessly, his attention is always firmly on the food he prepares, in this instance beef tataki, a Japanese fusion dish.

“These two months in Toulouse did me a lot of good, it was almost like a holiday, even though we’re working,” Ahejev said.

“We’ve discovered a different culture. The association of ingredients in French cooking is strange, but the



Trainee chef Vitalii Ahejev from Mariupol, Ukraine, prepares food at an event marking the culmination of cookery training program in Toulouse, southwestern France. — AFP

result is very good,” he said.

Blanquette de veau, boeuf bourguignon and magret de canard are staple recipes on the menu for the trainees, as are the classics of French dessert art, such as the Paris-Brest, a baked ring of pastry featuring almonds and lots of cream.

“These recipes require practising fundamental skills,” said Claude Resimont, one of the school’s instructors. “The idea is to teach them the 80 basic techniques of French cooking.”

Trainee Juliya Kurnalyeyeva, 38 -- who has been working in a restaurant in Ivano-Frankivsk in Ukraine’s east after fleeing Russian bombs in Mariupol -- said is happy to acquire such skills.

She also discovered a real passion for French pastry, such as eclairs and croissants.

“Cooking is important, it brings joy,” said the mother of two.

But when the conversation turned to the war, her expression darkened. “I dream of the war being over so I can open a restaurant in a country at peace.”

Most of the trainees will be able to employ their new skills in Dnipro in eastern Ukraine, where they are now based after leaving their home town.

A renovated student housing complex sheltering 1,400 displaced people there features a restaurant dubbed “the Mariupol canteen”.

Edward Mayor, president of the Stand with Ukraine NGO -- which is behind the restaurant and the Toulouse training programme -- said his organisation had wanted to do “something useful and reassuring” with the initiatives.

“Those staying in Ukraine need safety, but also a home and a job,” he said. “Cooking is a way to rebuild after trauma.”

Once back in the “Mariupol canteen” the freshly trained chefs will cook “for their community” and “teach other Ukrainians”, said Marx, who is planning to give a masterclass there.

“They’re ready to run the Mariupol canteen,” said instructor Resimont.

“I was impressed by how motivated and diligent they are, despite everything they’ve been through,” she said. “I’m going to miss them.” — AFP

Curator David Drake, who has been conceptualising the exhibition for nearly a year, aims to transform the historic homes, streets, and pathways of Muttrah into a creative hub



Raneen Festival to open in Muttrah highlighting local and global talents



BY LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

MUTTRAH is preparing to host Raneen, a spectacular art festival organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY). The festival promises a unique experience as art enthusiasts will have the opportunity to explore the works of various artists on foot. “Raneen,” which translates to “resonance,” captures the emotional connection to a particular place or idea.

On November 21st, Muttrah will celebrate its vibrant character, known for its distinct landmarks such as the Souq, museums, and rich heritage, as both Omani and international artists showcase their creations.

Curator David Drake, who has been conceptualising the exhibition for nearly a year, aims to transform the historic homes, streets, and pathways of Muttrah into a creative hub.

“Everything about Muttrah will be celebrated — its history, stories, ambiance, colours, and textures. I invited local artists to submit proposals, and we have selected around 16 emerging talents who will respond creatively to the local architecture and environment,” shared Drake.

Many of the selected artists have local ties to Muttrah, offering a deeply personal connection to their work.

“I’ve also invited 10 international artists to participate, including light production artists, sound composers, photographers, and a giant moon sculpture that has toured the globe, which will be displayed in the courtyard of Bait Al Khonji,” he added.

As some international artists arrive, Clive, an artist based in Oman, eagerly anticipates showcasing his work in Muttrah. “When I arrived in Oman 35 years ago, it felt like home because I’m from a rural area in Ireland. The old, beautiful houses, often abandoned, echo the past inhabitants through their remnants. My passion for photographing old homes continued when I arrived in Oman,” Clive shared. His exhibition, titled “Yesterday’s Rooms,” will feature photographs of these historic, uninhabited homes. “The photographs depict interiors that still hold the essence of their past residents, captured through clothing and personal belongings. These scenes are disappearing, making my project not only personal but also documenting an important piece of history for future generations,” Clive emphasised. David has extensive experience working across the GCC, with this visit to Oman marking his 11th. “Oman has an authentic culture with a blend of influences from its historical connections through trade and sea routes,



observable in its architecture, music and clothing. This rich context makes it a perfect backdrop for such events. My hope is to increase awareness of Oman as an incredible destination for art and cultural experiences,” he stated. The festival aims to evoke emotions and memories, with the giant moon serving as a focal point. “The moon resonates with everyone, symbolising cycles and connections. Composer John Ray has been recording people’s voices around Oman—from boat builders in Sur to locals in Nizwa—collecting these sounds to weave into the event,” noted David. Attendees can expect an array of artworks that share stories, including Clive’s poignant photography. “We will incorporate two historic homes into the exhibition: Bait Al Khori and Bait Al Khonji,” said David. The public is invited to join after the grand opening. From November 22nd to November 30th, admission is free, starting at the archway near the Muttrah Police Station for those walking.

