

INDUSTRIAL CLUSTERS TO BOOST PHARMA MANUFACTURING

H M p r e s i d e s o v e r C o u n c i l o f M i n i s t e r s m e e t i n g i n S a l a l a h



UNDERSCORE
NEED TO
STRENGTHEN
FISCAL POLICIES

ENHANCE
CAPACITY
TO ADAPT TO
EXTERNAL
FLUCTUATIONS

LONG-TERM PLAN
TO ENHANCE
GROWTH OF
NON-OIL SECTOR

INCREASE
DOMESTIC
OUTPUT,
HARNESS OMAN'S
STRATEGIC
LOCATION

NEW PROJECTS TO
BOOST NATION'S
HEALTHCARE
SYSTEM

NATIONAL
PROGRAMME
TO ENHANCE
INVESTMENT
CLIMATE

EFFECTIVE
PARTICIPATION
IN MUNICIPAL
COUNCILS
ELECTIONS

NEED TO KEEP
PACE WITH
TOURISM GROWTH
IN DHOFAR

CALL FOR
CONSTRUCTIVE
NEUTRALITY
IN REGIONAL
SITUATION

PRIORITY TO
DIALOGUE FOR
FINDING POLITICAL
SOLUTIONS

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIQ presided over the Council of Ministers meeting at Al Hosn Palace in Salalah on Tuesday.

At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the plentiful riches, supplicating Him to perpetuate the blessings of peace and security on our dear homeland. His Majesty also prayed to the Almighty Allah to protect our beloved country, Oman, its people and residents, grant them lasting security and stability, and bless all sincere efforts aimed at achieving accomplishments and aspirations.

His Majesty then reviewed domestic affairs. In light of the

His Majesty directed the preparation of a long-term plan to enhance the growth of the non-oil trade balance. The plan encompasses several tracks that draw on local raw materials, increase domestic production and harness Oman's location

briefing heard by the Council concerning the preliminary projected outcomes of the 2026 budget, the Council underscored the importance of strengthening fiscal policies and enhancing their capacity to adapt to emerging developments and external fluctuations, so as to ensure that the country's economic and financial standing remains unaffected by any unwelcome variables or developments and to support the sustainability of economic and financial stability.

Within the framework of the Council of Ministers' keenness to boost the growth of the non-oil trade balance, His Majesty directed the preparation of a long-term plan to enhance the growth of the

non-oil trade balance. The plan encompasses several tracks that draw on local raw materials, increase domestic production and harness the Sultanate of Oman's location, its ports and advanced infrastructure, as well as the agreements signed with numerous countries, with implementation of this plan to commence at the beginning of 2027.

In light of the keen interest His Majesty accords the health sector, the Council reviewed a report on the most significant health projects completed in the past period and those slated for completion in the coming period, in a manner that strengthens the healthcare system at large, in addition to the foremost existing and under-way projects in

the medical industries sector.

After His Majesty commended the achievements realised in this sector, he extended his thanks to all those working in the health sector for their dedicated efforts, unceasing giving and effective contribution to elevating the healthcare system.

INDUSTRIAL CLUSTERS
His Majesty also blessed the proposal to establish specialised industrial clusters for pharmaceutical industries and medical devices in the economic zones and free zones, with the aim of reinforcing national pharmaceutical security and localising pharmaceutical and biomedical industries. **TURN TO P2**

CLUSTERS FOR PHARMA, MEDICAL



ROYAL DIRECTIVES TO BOOST COMPETITIVENESS AND DRAW FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

STRENGTHEN FISCAL POLICIES TO WITHSTAND GLOBAL ECONOMIC FLUCTUATIONS AND ENSURE FINANCIAL STABILITY.

PREPARE A LONG-TERM PLAN TO BOOST THE NON-OIL TRADE BALANCE STARTING IN EARLY 2027.

ESTABLISH SPECIALISED INDUSTRIAL CLUSTERS FOR PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES AND MEDICAL DEVICES.

REVIEW COMPLETED AND ONGOING HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ENHANCING AN INVESTMENT-ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT TO BE LAUNCHED IN 2027.

HM CALLED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE COUNCILS' POWERS AND ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO SELECT QUALIFIED REPRESENTATIVES.

IMPROVE TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES THROUGH JOINT EFFORTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND THE COMMUNITY.

OMAN COMMITTED TO NEUTRALITY, NON-INTERFERENCE, RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY, AND DIALOGUE TO MAINTAIN SECURITY AND STABILITY.

HM DIRECTED GOVERNMENT BODIES TO MAXIMISE THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS SIGNED TO BOOST EXPORTS AND GDP.

HM calls for active participation, wise voting in Municipal polls

FROM PAGE 1
Based on the findings of the performance assessment of government institutions for the first half of 2026, issued by the Government Institutional Performance Measurement Unit, and the results of the evaluation of the annual follow-up reports submitted by government entities, which revealed an improvement in performance levels reflecting continued positive progress in meeting targets and enhancing the effectiveness of performance, His Majesty commended the efforts of the civil units in the State's administrative apparatus that recorded high performance and those civil units that raised the quality of their planning, coordination and follow-up, with the aim of achieving their objectives and elevating their performance.

INVESTMENTS
The Council listened to a briefing on the performance and assessment of a set of national programmes. It commended the results they achieved, which contributed to the development of several sectors. Out of keenness to strengthen institutional integration and stimulate the business environment and its competitiveness, the Council approved the establishment of the "National Programme for Enhancing an Investment-Attractive Business Environment." The programme will be launched at the beginning of 2027, as an enabling national initiative to contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of the business environment, attracting local and foreign investments and pursuing the improvement of services provided to citizens, residents and investors over the coming phase.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
Municipal Councils play a pivotal role in local development by following up on service projects across the governorates and raising recommendations and proposals. Accordingly, His Majesty directed that a comprehensive assessment be conducted of the competences granted to the Municipal Councils, the roles they undertake and the integration of their work with that of the governors. His Majesty also affirmed the necessity of effective participation by all segments of society and of sound choice in the elections. This, His Majesty stressed, is important in furnishing the Councils with the competent talents whose expertise is relied upon to elevate the work of the Municipal Councils in the coming phase.

Within the framework of reviewing the wide turnout of visitors witnessed by this year's Khareef Dhofar Season, which reflected the governorate's standing as a distinguished tourism destination, and the positive resonance of community engagement with the level of organisation, His Majesty expressed his satisfaction with the efforts and roles undertaken by Dhofar Governorate and the relevant authorities in advancing economic development in the governorate. His Majesty affirmed the necessity of keeping pace with the growing tourism movement. He also stressed the importance of continuing to enhance and develop services and the needs of tourists in an integrated manner, through cooperation between government entities, the private sector and the local community. This, His Majesty noted, contributes to supporting the local economy and reinforcing its sustainability.

REGIONAL SITUATION
In the wake of the persistent challenges witnessed in the regional situation, the Council affirmed the Sultanate of Oman's steadfast position, characterised by constructive neutrality, the containment of conflicts, and the call to give precedence to the language of dialogue and political solutions, to respect the sovereignty of all states and good neighbourliness, in a manner that contributes to entrenching regional security and stability. His Majesty has renewed his commendation of the military and security apparatuses and the civil entities, and of the efforts and measures they exert to protect the country, secure the continuity of the supply of goods, and facilitate transport procedures and the movement of individuals and trucks.

In light of the recent Royal visits to a number of sisterly and friendly countries, His Majesty acquainted the Council with the outcomes of those visits, which were crowned with success. These visits aimed to develop bilateral relations with those countries, enhance communication between peoples, and facilitate the paths of commercial, economic and investment exchange. His Majesty accordingly directed the relevant authorities to maximise the benefit of the agreements and understandings signed with those countries, and to exert diligent efforts to achieve their objectives. This, His Majesty noted, serves the common interests and contributes to realising national goals, particularly the growth of the national economy, the development of exports and the increase of gross domestic product.

His Majesty the Sultan then offered supplication to the Almighty Allah to grant all continued success in all that brings goodness and prosperity to this beloved homeland and its loyal people. — ONA

DEVICES BOOST DRUG SECURITY



Royal blessing to support local pharma, biomedical firms

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's blessing of the proposal to establish specialised industrial clusters for pharmaceutical industries and medical devices in the economic zones and free zones aims to enhance national drug security and localise pharmaceutical and biomedical industries.

This took place when His Majesty the Sultan presided over the meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), explained that the proposal to establish specialised industrial clusters for pharmaceutical industries and medical devices in economic zones and free zones comes through cooperation between the Authority, the Ministry of Health, relevant government entities, and operators in the Salalah Free Zone, Raysut Industrial City affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates "Madayn", and Khazaen Economic City.

He said the proposal aims to enhance national drug security, localise pharmaceutical and biomedical industries, and support national efforts aimed at localising pharmaceutical and medical industries while attracting qualitative investments to this vital sector.

Al Yousef added that this direction comes within the framework of building an integrated ecosystem for pharmaceutical industries, medical devices, and medical supplies in special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities, and making use of their capabilities in terms of advanced infrastructure and a stimulating investment environment,



QAIS BIN MOHAMMED AL YOUSEF
Chairman of OPAZ

thereby contributing to enhancing the competitiveness of the Sultanate of Oman as a destination for specialised investments in pharmaceutical and medical industries.

He clarified that the first phase includes launching Salalah City for Pharmaceutical and Medical Industries, which represents cooperation and integration between Salalah Free Zone and Raysut Industrial City, with a total area exceeding one million square metres. Salalah Free Zone is allocating an area of approximately 500,000 square metres for medical and pharmaceutical investments, while Raysut Industrial City is allocating an area exceeding 500,000 square metres for the same sector, providing an integrated industrial domain that benefits from the industrial and logistical capabilities of Dhofar Governorate and contributes to building interconnected value chains serving manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers associated with the sector.

The first phase also includes establishing a zone for pharmaceutical and medical industries in Khazaen Economic City over an area exceeding 500,000 square metres. Its selection comes based on its strategic location, logistical integration, and proximity to markets and consumption centres, alongside the growth it is witnessing in industrial and pharmaceutical investments.

Al Yousef emphasised that OPAZ is working with relevant entities, developers, and operators to prepare these clusters to attract specialised local and international companies, and to develop an integrated investment ecosystem supporting manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and export operations. — ONA

ROYAL DIRECTIVES ENHANCE DIVERSIFICATION

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Economy pointed out that the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, when he presided over the meeting of the Council of Ministers on Tuesday, emphasise the importance of continuing to build an economy capable of handling changes, expanding the productive base, and sustaining financial and economic stability.

Dr Khamis bin Saif al Jabri, Minister of Economy, stated that the Royal Directive to prepare a long-term plan for the growth of the non-oil trade balance represents an important path to maximising benefit from local resources, strategic location, infrastructure, and agreements signed with many countries.

He added that establishing specialised industrial clusters for pharmaceutical industries and medical devices, alongside approving the National Programme for Enhancing the Investment-Attractive Business Environment, supports localising vital industries and elevates the attractiveness of the business environment for local and foreign investments.

Al Jabri pointed out that these paths collectively support achieving the targets of Oman Vision 2040 linked to its economic priorities and moving towards more sustainable and diversified development based on expanding the productive base and increasing benefit from the comparative and competitive advantages of the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA



DR KHAMIS BIN SAIIF AL JABRI
Minister of Economy

HEALTH INITIATIVES REFLECT KEENNESS ON PEOPLES SAFETY



MUSCAT: Several health sector personnel emphasised that the interest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, and the attention His Majesty accords to the health sector in the Sultanate of Oman, along with the continuous support accorded to the healthcare system, reflect His Majesty's keenness on the health and safety of the people of Oman and its residents.

They pointed to the Royal

blessing of His Majesty the Sultan for the establishment of specialised industrial clusters for pharmaceutical industries and medical devices in economic and free zones, explaining that it represents a noble gesture that enhances national drug security, supports the process of industrial localisation in this vital field, and consolidates the position of the Sultanate of Oman in this strategic sector. — ONA

OMAN

SHORTTAKES

HIS MAJESTY GREETSA
SAUDI KING AND
CROWN PRINCE

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent two cables of greetings to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, on the occasion of Saudi Arabia’s National Day. In his cables, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments on this auspicious occasion, praying to Allah the Almighty to perpetuate goodness, prosperity, and stability upon the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

WORKSHOP SEEKS
TO PROMOTE MEDIA
LITERACY CONCEPTS



The event targets teachers, students and civil society institutions. — ONA

SHALEEM & AL HALLANIYAT: The second edition of a workshop on promoting concepts of media literacy, themed “Empowering Minds in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)”, kicked off in the Wilayat of Shaleem and Al Hallaniyat Islands, Dhofar Governorate. The two-day workshop is organised by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).
The event targets teachers, students and representatives of different government, private and civil society institutions across the wilayats of Dhofar Governorate. It is in pursuance of efforts made by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science as part of the Media Literacy Week organised by Unesco.
The first edition of the initiative was launched last March 2026 in the Wilayat of Bahla, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. The event aims to develop critical thinking skills and promote the ability to verify media content, with the prime objective of raising public awareness about the safe, responsible and ethical use of AI applications. — ONA

WHO RENEWS
QUALITY CENTRE’S
DESIGNATION



The QAC’s affiliation to the international organisation has been renewed for the third 4-year term, from 2026 to 2030. — ONA

Muscat: The Ministry of Health in the Sultanate of Oman recently achieved a milestone by through the renewal of the Quality Assurance Centre (QAC)’s designation as a “World Health Organization’s Collaborating Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Training in the Eastern Mediterranean Region”. The QAC’s affiliation to the international organisation has been renewed for the third 4-year term, from 2026 to 2030.
The renewal of the Quality Assurance Centre’s partnership with the WHO has been the outcome of the Centre’s fulfilment of all technical and administrative standards approved by the WHO.
The Quality Assurance Centre in Oman is deemed the first institution of kind to be awarded the designation of “WHO Collaborating Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Training in the Eastern Mediterranean Region”.
This renewal affirms international confidence in Omani national personnel and underlines the Oman-WHO strategic partnership aimed at enhancing healthcare systems in line with the Region’s plans and priorities vis-à-vis capacity building and transfer of WHO’s expertise to member states. — ONA

169 MILLION PROJECTS
LIFT AL SHARQIYAH SOUTH



Al Sharqiyah South offers investment opportunities across industry, fisheries, tourism and logistics, as well as emerging areas such as food security, renewable energy.

DEVELOPMENT, infrastructure and investment projects worth more than RO 169 million are advancing across three wilayats in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, supporting economic growth, food security, tourism and public services.
The projects in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan and Al Kamil Wal Wafi cover roads, schools, healthcare facilities, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and environmental conservation.
Jaalan Bani Bu Ali accounts for road and waterfront projects valued at about RO 12.69 million. These include the second phase of the commercial and coastal road in Asilah, which is 45 per cent complete and valued at RO 799,998.
Internal roads in the coastal areas have reached 60 per cent completion at a cost of RO 2.26 million, while roads in the central part of the wilayat are 90 per cent complete and valued at RO 2.43 million.
Work on the Al Ashkharah waterfront, a RO 5 million project, has reached 64 per cent. Road upgrades in the industrial area are 85 per cent complete, with a project value of RO 500,000.
Consultancy studies for water drainage in Sayh Sanda are 95 per cent complete, while repairs to roads damaged by the monsoon depression have reached 98 per cent. The road-repair project is valued at RO 697,338.
Education projects in the wilayat include the renovation of Hisham bin Al Aas Basic Education School, Al Makarim Basic Education School, Asilah Basic Education School and Sayh Sanda School, in addition to partial maintenance at Al Ruwais Boys’ School.
Construction of a 40-classroom mixed school for Grades 1–4 has reached 79 per cent, while a separate 40-classroom girls’ school for Grades 5–8 is 13 per cent complete.
In the health sector, construction of Al Falah Hospital has reached 60 per cent, while a new health centre in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali is 77 per cent complete.
Agriculture and fisheries projects include the RO 2.99 million Wadi Sal project, which has been completed. Consultancy work for the design and supervision of the rehabilitation of fish landing sites at Al Daffa, Al Ruwais and Al Suwaih has also been completed at a cost of RO 447,985.
A project to reduce sand accumulation at Al Ashkharah fishing port is 10 per cent complete. The design-and-build contract is valued at nearly RO 3 million.
Maintenance work covering several aflaj, including Falaj Jabiyat Muslim, Falaj Jabiyat Al Buwayliyah and the Al Zuwayd–Al Raham–Al



Al Sharqiyah South offers investment opportunities across industry, fisheries, tourism and logistics, as well as emerging areas such as food security, renewable energy and manufacturing.

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Ziyad–Al Jadiran and Al Qitar–Jabiyat Awlad Kasib–Al Qutaytira–Al Lahaymiyah systems, is valued at a combined RO 6.92 million.
A RO 17 million white-leg shrimp farming project has also been completed in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali. Environmental initiatives include a natural ghaf-tree reserve covering 130 square kilometres.
In Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan, the construction of internal roads has reached 95 per cent, with an investment of RO 1.64 million. Repairs to roads damaged by the monsoon depression are also 95 per cent complete and valued at RO 399,989.
Construction of the Qahwan road, estimated to cost RO 1.88 million, has reached 5 per cent.
Education projects include a 34-classroom mixed school for Grades 1–12 and partial maintenance of Al Asalah School for Grades 1–7.
A white-leg shrimp farming project valued at RO 21.5 million has been completed in the wilayat. Maintenance projects covering several aflaj, including Al Faghri, Safha, Al Buwayrid, Al Uqayriyah–Al Suqiyah–Al Faliy Al Sharqi, Al Mashayikh and Al Tall, are valued at a combined RO 22.15 million.
The Al Ghaf Park project has also been implemented in the Falaj Al Mashayikh area.
Projects in Al Kamil Wal Wafi include the development of tourism facilities in Siq and Al Hayrah, the construction of internal roads, repairs to roads damaged by the monsoon depression and a concrete road in Hawar. The projects have a combined value of RO 2.58 million.
The RO 71.62 million project to complete the dualisation of Sultan Turki bin Said Road between Al Kamil Wal Wafi and Sur has reached 90 per cent.

Agricultural investments include a RO 6.5 million smart-farming project for vegetable production and a RO 282,000 fig cultivation expansion project. Both have been completed.
The wilayat is also home to Al Saleel Nature Reserve, which covers 220 square kilometres.
Separately, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources has signed a RO 1.637 million consultancy agreement for the design and supervision of the planned Fish Industries City in Al Sharqiyah South.
The consultancy firm will undertake technical studies, engineering designs and assessments needed to implement the project in line with quality and operational-efficiency standards.
The development is intended to strengthen fisheries infrastructure, support downstream industries and increase the sector’s value-added contribution in line with Oman Vision 2040.
Dr Yahya bin Badr al Maawali, Governor of Al Sharqiyah South, said the governorate’s economic, tourism, logistics and environmental assets provided a strong foundation for comprehensive and sustainable development.
He said the next phase would require closer coordination among government institutions, the private sector and local communities, with a focus on projects that generate lasting economic benefits and make better use of the governorate’s competitive advantages.
Anwar bin Hamad al Sinani, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry branch in Al Sharqiyah South, said the branch was working to increase the private sector’s contribution to the governorate’s development.
Al Sharqiyah South offers investment opportunities across industry, fisheries, tourism and logistics, as well as emerging areas such as food security, renewable energy and manufacturing, he said.
Al Sinani said the branch sought to attract investments that generate added value, create employment and strengthen local content. Its programmes are developed through direct engagement with business owners, specialised committees, government institutions, investors and trade delegations.
He said sustainable economic growth would depend on stronger integration between the public and private sectors, adding that the branch would continue supporting businesses, improving competitiveness and facilitating communication between companies and relevant authorities. — ONA

SHURA
OFFICE
REVIEWS
REPORTS BY
STANDING
COMMITTEES

MUSCAT: The Office of the Majlis Ash'shura reviewed, during its meeting on Tuesday, a number of reports by the Council's standing committees regarding several expressed desires submitted by the members, alongside reviewing a series of ministerial responses to a number of follow-up tools presented by the members of the Council. This came within the work of the Office's 19th regular



meeting for the third regular session of the tenth term (2023-2027), which was held under the chairmanship of Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of Majlis Ash'shura, and in the presence of the members of

the Office and Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed al Nadabi, Secretary-General of Majlis Ash'shura. The Council Office also reviewed the report of the Economic and Financial Committee regarding the annual report of the Ministry of Economy for the year 2025, as the report included the committee's views on the Ministry of Economy's report referred to the Council. — ONA

UTAS outlines plans for Oman Vision 2040



BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

THE UNIVERSITY of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) has outlined its achievements and future directions in academic education, research, innovation and digital transformation as it seeks to strengthen its contribution to Oman Vision 2040. At a media briefing on Monday, the university highlighted its efforts to develop technical and applied education, enhance academic programmes, strengthen scientific research and innovation, develop national talent and expand partnerships with government and private sector institutions. Dr Ahmed bin Juma al Riyami, Assistant Vice-Rector for Administrative and Financial Affairs and official spokesperson of UTAS, said the briefing provided an opportunity to highlight the university's achievements and present its strategic directions for the coming phase. He said the university is focusing on developing academic programmes and specialisations, strengthening research and innovation, enhancing the capabilities of academic and

administrative staff, supporting students and talent, and expanding partnerships with the labour market. The university is also working on initiatives related to employment, workforce replacement and national competency development, alongside institutional and digital transformation projects and improvements to services and infrastructure across its branches. Al Riyami said the briefing was not limited to reviewing achievements but also served as a platform to present the university's strategic initiatives for the next phase. He noted that UTAS's future priorities include supporting a knowledge- and innovation-based economy and preparing graduates with the skills needed to contribute to Oman's development. UTAS continues to review its academic programmes and learning environments to ensure they respond to technological developments and changing labour market requirements. The university is also expanding postgraduate education to provide greater opportunities for advanced study and specialised research. Research and innovation remain key areas of focus, with the university seeking to encourage projects addressing national priorities and providing practical solutions to

challenges facing society and various economic sectors. The university is also increasing the use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies in education, research and institutional development as part of its broader digital transformation programme. Entrepreneurship is another area receiving attention, with UTAS seeking to encourage students to develop innovative ideas into projects that can contribute to economic and social development. The university is also strengthening cooperation with government and private sector institutions in areas including training, research, innovation and knowledge transfer. Such partnerships are intended to strengthen links between academic programmes and labour market requirements. Developing national talent remains a key priority, with UTAS continuing to support professional development, academic qualifications and succession programmes aimed at building a sustainable pool of national expertise. Looking ahead, the university plans to further develop academic and postgraduate programmes, expand research and innovation activities, accelerate digital transformation and increase the use of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies. It also aims to broaden local and international partnerships with academic, research and professional institutions to facilitate knowledge exchange, joint research and innovation initiatives, and greater exposure to international practices. The university said its future plans are closely aligned with changing labour market needs and Oman's broader drive towards a knowledge-based economy.

RAO PARTICIPATES IN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE IN PAKISTAN



ISLAMABAD: Units from the Southern Oman Regiment of the Royal Army of Oman are participating, alongside military units from the Pakistani Army, in the joint military exercise "Mountain Lynx / 2", held in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The execution of the exercise, which runs until October 1, comes within the framework of annual training plans and programmes conducted by the Royal Army of Oman. — ONA



وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية
Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtaining of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)
466/2026	Supply and installation of surveillance cameras for the buildings of Al-Wafa Center for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities at Rustaq	Companies specialized in the field of Security, alarm and safety systems installation services registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with excellent or first or second or third or fourth degree	Monday 12-10-2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 01-11-2026 10:00 AM	10 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 **Wednesday 23/09/2026**.
❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

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

www.mosd.gov.om



وزارة الزراعة والسمكية وموارد المياه
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

TENDER NOTICE

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tender: -

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are Eligible to Participate	Tender Document Fee (R.O)
640/2026/MAFWR/HQ-47	Aerial Spraying Operation using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to Control Dubas Bug on Date Palms and other Pest of Palms and Agricultural Crops	Wednesday 16/9/2026	Tuesday 6/10/2026	Monday 26/10/2026	Specialized companies registered with, Excellent, First, Second, Third, and Fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.

The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies.

All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.

All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402244 or etenderhd@pttc.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

Oman at Radio, Television festival

TUNIS: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Information, participated in the 26th edition of the Arab Radio and Television Festival, which opened at the ancient Carthage Theatre in the Tunisian capital and runs until September 24. During this edition, held under the slogan "The Pulse of the Image and the Echo of the Future," Omani artist Samira al Wahaibi was honoured alongside a group of male and female artists from across the Arab world. The festival features panel discussions, an "ASBU" exhibition for technology and equipment, and a programme production market. — ONA



محافظة مسقط
Muscat Governorate
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY
Advertisement No. (35/2026)

In reference to Advertisement No (29/2026), Muscat Municipality informs you of the modification of the dates related to the tenders as follows:

Sr.	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Document Fee LO/ RE	SMEs	Deadline for Obtaining Bidding Docs.	Deadline for Inquires Submission	Deadline for Submission
1	10/2026	Design, Construction, and Management of a Multi-Storey Parking in Al Ghuraifah, Wilayat Muttrah	150/- OMR	100/- OMR	27/09/2026	01/10/2026	11/10/2026
2	11/2026	Investment of Plot No. (1711), Block (M/4), Wilayat of Al Seeb	50/- OMR	10/- OMR	27/09/2026	01/10/2026	11/10/2026
3	12/2026	Investment of Plot No. (1176), Block (M/4), Wilayat of Al Amerat	40/- OMR	10/- OMR	27/09/2026	01/10/2026	11/10/2026
4	13/2026	Investment of Plot No. (209), Block (M/4), Wilayat of Al Seeb	25/- OMR	10/- OMR	27/09/2026	01/10/2026	11/10/2026

Registered companies with Muscat Municipality which are Specialized in above bids are invited to participate as per the following procedures:

- Company registration with Muscat Municipality must be valid to obtain the bid document.
- Pay the specified document fee by the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality's Bank account as follows:

Bank Muscat	0423010702710024
IBAN	OM960270423010702710024
- A copy of the transaction's receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (BID.QS@mm.gov.om), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name,office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commercial registration number of the company).
- The tender document will be provided to the company via email.
- 2:00 PM** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents.
- Documents must be enclosed in a plain closed envelope (without any company information) and place in the box located in building (A) in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait.

NOTES:

- Companies which are not registered in Muscat Municipality or their registration has been expired shall register through the municipality's website (www.mm.gov.om).
- For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality through this email (crm_support@mm.gov.om). If the bidders have any inquiries regarding the scope of the work, they have to sent their inquiries through the following e-mail (Nashwa.h.alsinani@mm.gov.om)
- 10:00 AM** on the above submission mentioned dates, is the last timing for receiving bids. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason.
- Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



This year’s celebration was held under the theme ‘Safe Lifelong Care for Non-Communicable Diseases’. — **ONA**

MEDICAL CITY FOR MILITARY MARKS PATIENT SAFETY DAY

MUSCAT: The Medical City for Military and Security Services on Tuesday celebrated the World Patient Safety Day, which falls on 17 September of every year.

This year’s celebration was held under the theme ‘Safe Lifelong Care for Non-Communicable Diseases’. The event was held under the auspices of Eng Odai bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of the Medical City for Military and Security Services.

The celebration, held at the Medical City for Military and Security Services Hospital - Muscat, included a speech delivered by the Director of Internal Audit and Quality Control, in which he emphasised that the responsibilities of healthcare work consist of preserving human life and making the treatment journey safer at every stage, and that patient safety must be an inherent focus.

A number of specialists delivered lectures addressing patient safety, prevention of medication and surgical errors and healthcare-associated infections, early detection of non-communicable diseases and risk factor management, medication safety, and safe transitions between stages of care, alongside enhancing health awareness and effective communication.

The event concluded with an accompanying exhibition featuring a collection of research and studies in this field. — **ONA**

WORKSHOP SEEKS ELECTRONIC INTEGRATION



The workshop also recommended enhancing the utilisation of the unified support contract for Microsoft and Oracle products. — **ONA**

SALALAH: The awareness workshop on “Shared Government Services and Electronic Integration,” organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology over two days in Salalah, recommended strengthening the utilisation of shared government services, emphasising the adoption of the Government Integration Platform for data exchange between entities, and designating clear technical points of contact, alongside leveraging the national infrastructure in the areas of electronic integration and cloud computing.

At the conclusion of its deliberations on Tuesday, the workshop also recommended enhancing the utilisation of the unified support contract for Microsoft and Oracle products, organising mechanisms for requesting technical support, conducting periodic inventories of needs and the actual use of licences and rationalising them, while planning early for future needs and complying with licensing requirements. It further recommended monitoring utilisation and cost indicators to achieve the best value from unified government agreements.

Nuzha Mohammed al Muharbi, Director of Shared Infrastructure at the ministry, noted that “Oman Government Network” is one of the fundamental pillars of government digital infrastructure, as it provides a unified, secure, and reliable connectivity environment linking government entities and enabling them to access shared government services and systems and exchange data efficiently, thereby enhancing security and reliability and supporting the continuity of digital services and integration among government entities. — **ONA**

AUTUMNAL EQUINOX TO BRING IN COOLER TEMPERATURES

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

The Autumnal Equinox that the Sultanate of Oman witnessing on Wednesday will let the heat subside while bringing in cooler temperatures in the coming days, according to stargazers and astrophysicists at the Astronomical Affairs Department.

The autumnal equinox which is scheduled to occur at 04.05 am in Muscat, marks the official beginning of Astronomical autumn in the Northern Hemisphere when the sun appears to cross the celestial equator moving southward.

Abdulwahab al Busaidi, board

member of the Oman Astronomical Society (OAS) and a passionate stargazer, opines that this celestial event signals the start of autumn for countries north of the equator while simultaneously marking the arrival of astronomical spring in the Southern Hemisphere.

“September 23 marks the official start of astronomical autumn in the Northern Hemisphere and it is known for three of its practical reasons,” he said, adding that the equinox also represents for gardeners, farmers, and foragers in some countries, the completion of the second harvest. The agricultural communities have historically been fond of the date to celebrate the

earth’s bounty before the arrival of winter.”

The day and night become almost equal as the Sun crosses the equator and its rays fall perpendicular to it. The Sun will also rise exactly due east and set exactly due west — a natural compass.

Secondly, because the sun’s angle decreases, the intensity of solar energy received in the northern hemisphere starts to gradually decline and the heat will finally starts to drop. For Oman, this is the start of a 90-day cooling trend toward the Winter Solstice on December 21. After this, nights will get longer every day until December.

OHC EXPLORES MEDICAL TOURISM POTENTIAL

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

LOOKING TOWARDS the future of health, the Oman Health Conference 2026, held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, looked at medical tourism, while the accompanying exhibition brought together the expertise and innovations that are to shape the future of healthcare and free health consultations.

Organised by Connect, about 120 national, regional and international and 10 country pavilions have brought together their services and products for visitors to explore treatment options and access. Free. Health screenings, discovering new medical technologies, and the latest from pharmaceuticals as well as alternative and wellness therapies to support better health care.

The Ministry of Health is represented by the Directorate-General of Private Health Establishments. The three-day exhibition showcases the world-class health services available in the Sultanate of Oman. On the sidelines of the exhibition, a discussion was held on medical tourism.

Majid Zangooei, Secretary-General of HTD Centre, while speaking to Observer, said, “Oman has good opportunities when it

The three-day exhibition showcases the world-class health services available in the Sultanate of Oman. On the sidelines of the exhibition, a discussion was held on medical tourism.



The Ministry of Health is represented by the Directorate-General of Private Health Establishments.

comes to medical tourism, and it will be ideal to have cooperation between all the stakeholders in the field of health and wellness tourism. Wellness is a big part of medical tourism. One or two medical specialisations can be focused on. What has to change is the mindset that one has to go abroad for treatment.” Redha bin Juma al Saleh, board director, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and vice-chairman of Lama Polyclinic, noted that Oman can be a distinct destination for health tourism.

“We should emphasise not only bringing in the patients but also considering the other aspects and growing the health tourism industry by bringing in the exploration of the

country, culture, and business and providing the best health treatment. We need to specialise in certain areas.”

Sharing the experience of Abu Dhabi, UAE, Dr Wesal Freih, Head, Medical Tourism Sector, said, “It has been our strategic plan to look after the patient’s journey from the booking, the referral, medical treatment, security and quality.” Adding further, Hassah bint Saif al Mazrouei, Executive Head, Medical Tourism and Executive Services, Shaikh Shakhbout Medical City, said that they consider the patient and the family as a unit.

The Oman Health Exhibition will conclude on Wednesday, September 23rd.

‘Siraj Oman’ cultural initiative unveiled

MOHAMED AL BATTASHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, represented by the Omani Encyclopaedia Department at the Literary Forum, has launched the “Siraj Oman” initiative at a ceremony held at Intercity Hotel in Al Khuwair, under the auspices of Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture.

The ceremony saw the official unveiling of the initiative’s visual identity and the launch of a competition bearing the same name, alongside a number of linked programmes and projects, marking the start of activities aimed at expanding the reach of encyclopaedic content across educational, cultural and community fields.

Fatma bint Khalifa al Hosni, Director of the Omani Encyclopaedia Department, said the initiative stems from the Cultural Strategy and Oman Vision 2040, describing it as the fruit of sustained planning that included introductory sessions and workshops across



The ceremony saw the official unveiling of the initiative’s visual identity.

Oman’s governorates, alongside participation in local and international exhibitions. She said the team had produced more than fifty videos, ranging from motion graphics and 3D animation to artificial intelligence techniques and live-action films, alongside a range of related publications.

Dr Rashid bin Hamad al Hussein, Associate Professor of Arabic Language and compiler

of “The Omani Heritage Dictionary” alongside Professor Dr Mohammed bin Mahmoud al Darubi, spoke about the two-year project completed under the Ministry’s supervision.

The dictionary documents printed Omani heritage in a scientific and methodical manner, tracing books printed by Omanis from the beginning of Omani printing in Zanzibar, Syria, Libya and beyond

Oman’s borders through to 2025, recording every edition, including reprints of up to six times. He said the dictionary would remain a legacy for researchers and academics across generations.

“Siraj Oman” is the ministry’s first knowledge and cultural initiative, drawing on the “Omani Encyclopaedia” and the “Omani Encyclopaedia for Youth”, and targets all segments of society, starting with the school community, through to tourists and residents.

Its content includes short motion graphic videos on historical stories and prominent Omani figures, interactive school workshops, and cultural and technical competitions, including an electronic game in which a young player in traditional Omani attire progresses through Jabreen Castle by answering questions drawn from the encyclopaedias.

The initiative takes its name from “siraj”, meaning lamp, a word traditionally used for the lamps that lit Omani homes before electricity arrived, carrying a figurative meaning of knowledge dispelling ignorance.

SHORT TAKES



US President Donald Trump, Denmark's PM Mette Frederiksen and Greenland's PM Jens-Frederik Nielsen sign a trilateral security deal on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly. — AFP

TRUMP SIGNS SECURITY DEAL WITH GREENLAND, DENMARK AT UN

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed a security deal with the leaders of Greenland and Denmark, in a ceremony taking place on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. “It’s going to be a long-term, fantastic relationship,” Trump said at the event in New York.

Trump previously said that the arrangement would give America “permanent control” over security for Greenland, an autonomous Danish territory in the Arctic that he has long coveted. “Mr. President, you have been very clear. You don’t want adversaries to come too close,” said Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen ahead of the signing. “I fully agree, and with this deal, they are not,” she added, noting that adversaries will not be allowed to get control or significant influence in the territory.

Greenland’s Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen added that Greenland matters for North American security and for transatlantic security. “This agreement reflects that we understand our responsibility and act accordingly,” he added. Since returning to the presidency in January 2025, Trump has repeatedly insisted that the United States needs to control Greenland for strategic reasons. — AFP

ISRAEL MINISTER VOWS TO FORCE OUT ALL OF GAZA CITY



Displaced Palestinian stands next to drying laundry at a tent camp in Khan Younis. — Reuters

GAZA: Israel’s defence minister vowed on Tuesday to force out all of Gaza City’s residents and displace a million people in the war-ravaged territory if any Israeli is abducted in the future. Katz also threatened the destruction of infrastructure, which, like the forced displacement of civilians, constitutes a war crime under the Geneva Conventions.

Gaza City is home to around 1.1 million people, according to the municipality. The entire Gaza Strip has some two million people, who after nearly three years of war have been packed into the 30 per cent of the territory not controlled by Israel. Israel launched a massive retaliatory offensive that has displaced virtually the entire population at least once and has killed 73,919 people, according to the Gaza health ministry, which operates under Hamas and whose figures are generally considered reliable.

Katz, known for his outspoken remarks, recently said that Israel agreed to an October 2025 US-brokered ceasefire declaration only to free the remaining hostages and that he expected Israel, which has kept up strikes at a lower pace, to return to full-scale war in Gaza. — AFP

UN WARNS SUPER EL NINO A ‘SIGNIFICANT’ THREAT TO WORLD HEALTH

GENEVA: El Nino represents a “significant” threat to global health, the United Nations warned on Tuesday, as the world braces for a cycle of the climate phenomenon predicted to be the most intense on record. Tied to warming surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, the natural weather pattern is linked to higher temperatures alongside periods of both extreme drought and widespread flooding, with its influence already being felt from central America to Indonesia.

According to the World Health Organization, periods of heavy rain could create favourable conditions for both cholera and disease-carrying insects, notably mosquitos, which would then lead to an uptick in illnesses such as malaria, chikungunya and dengue fever. “The most severe impacts will be experienced while climate shocks intersect with weak health systems, limited access to healthcare, food insecurity, displacement and humanitarian crisis,” warned

Teresa Zakaria, the WHO’s Unit Head for Risk Reduction, Humanitarian Operations and Climate Change.

Branding El Nino “a significant public health threat” and a “risk multiplier”, Zakaria urged countries to act immediately to “mitigate these impacts and therefore avoid loss of lives and suffering”. “We have a window of opportunity to act now, before these risks become a crisis,” the doctor told reporters in Geneva. — AFP

Iran and US hint at revival of new war negotiations

IRAN AND the United States hinted on Tuesday at the prospect of reviving negotiations to end their conflict, with the presidents of both countries due at the UN General Assembly in New York. The event would be the first attended by Donald Trump and Masoud Pezeshkian since Trump launched “Operation Epic Fury” against Iran in February, alongside Israel. Trump had said on Sunday he would be open to a meeting with the Iranian president.

A senior Iranian official said there were no plans for the two leaders to meet directly, but that Iran’s delegation had full authority to revive talks. Iran could reopen the Strait of Hormuz to Gulf shipping within seven days if the US fulfilled Tehran’s demands to ease military pressure and lift an American blockade on Iranian ports, the Iranian official said, adding that Iran had conveyed its latest proposal to Washington via mediators last week. “The US needs to announce that it wants to resolve the issue diplomatically, make that official, and then agree on a timeline for how the process will move forward,” the official said. “The UN General Assembly is a golden opportunity for the US to return to diplomacy.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio told NBC’s “Today” show the US was



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian waves before departing for New York, at Mehrabad Airport in Tehran. — Reuters

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open to speaking with the Iranians, “especially if it has the prospects of leading to something positive and ultimately achieving the goal of what this is all about”. No face-to-face meetings between Iran and the United States are known to have taken place since July, when an agreement on an interim deal to end the war collapsed just weeks after it was signed by Trump and Pezeshkian. Asked by Fox and Friends about the prospect of a meeting between the presidents, Rubio said of Trump: “He’s a businessman who comes from the world of practicality and common sense. And common sense tells you there’s no harm in engaging and talking to someone.”

But Rubio also noted that Pezeshkian is subordinate under Iran’s ruling system to Supreme

Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, “and the supreme leader is a radical Shia cleric and we need to remember that when we talk”. “The central issue here is Iran is run by lunatic clerics,” Rubio told Fox. “These people can never have nuclear weapons.”

In a reminder of Iran’s firm position so far, Parliament Speaker Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf, who headed Iran’s negotiating team at previous talks, said on Tuesday that Iran would never surrender: “Trump must understand that he cannot impose his power on the Iranian people and its armed forces.” Trump is due to meet on Tuesday with leaders of the six Gulf Arab states. All are keen to restore shipping through the Strait of Hormuz but wary of giving their longstanding rival Iran too much power.

Saudi Arabia has been drawn deeper into the war this month, with Ansar Allah fighters aligned to Iran advancing in Yemen, routing forces of a Saudi-backed government there and threatening Saudi oil exports through the Red Sea. There was some relief on oil markets on Tuesday, after sources said that Saudi Arabia had restarted operations at its East-West Pipeline and could resume exports within hours, albeit at reduced volume, from the Red Sea port of Yanbu. The pipeline was shut down after attacks that Riyadh blamed on Iranian allies in Iraq. — Reuters



TEEN OPENS FIRE OUTSIDE TÜRKİYE SCHOOL

TURGUTLU: A teenager opened fire outside a high school in western Türkiye on Tuesday, wounding 11 people before being detained by police, a minister said. The incident happened around 8:00 am in Turgutlu in Manisa province, near the western resort city of Izmir, the regional governor’s office said. Although such shootings are rare in Türkiye, there were two separate attacks by teenagers on consecutive days in April that shocked the nation, sparking deep concern about school security.

“Eleven students were injured, two of them seriously... The minor who carried out the attack was quickly apprehended and taken into custody,” Justice Minister Akin Gurlek wrote on X. He said the suspect’s parents and grandfather had also been detained by investigators probing the attack, which saw police and rescuers rushing to the scene alongside panicked parents.

Footage from outside the school showed police wrestling a man in a white shirt to the ground before leading him away, as a woman screamed, with onlookers pressed against the school fence, filming with their mobile phones.

Authorities have opened an investigation into the incident, Gurlek said. — AFP

LIFE-THREATENING FLOODING

Hurricane Polo to top category 5 off Mexico



Hurricane Polo reached maximum category 5 strength off the Pacific coast of Mexico but is expected to stay at sea, the US National Hurricane Center said. The storm intensified from category 4 as it swirled off southwest Mexico with maximum sustained winds of 160 mph (260 kph), the NHC said. Mexico’s meteorological service has issued alerts for several states along its Pacific coast including Guerrero, where popular beach resort town Acapulco is located. — AFP

GUILTY ON CHARGES

Sri Lanka convicts 14 over Easter bombings



Sri Lanka’s High Court convicted 14 of the 24 men accused of being directly involved in the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings, which killed 279 people. The three-judge bench found that 14 of the accused were guilty on all charges, which included murder, conspiracy to commit terrorism and possessing firearms and explosives under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. A 15th defendant was found guilty of only some of the charges, while nine others were acquitted. — AFP

HIGHEST TEMPERATURE

Tunisia says 2026 summer hottest on record



Tunisia’s summer this year was its hottest on record, the country’s weather authority said, following multiple heatwaves, water shortages and power cuts. “The summer of 2026 was ranked the hottest in Tunisia since 1950,” the year temperature records began, the National Meteorological Institute said. Although accustomed to scorching heat, Tunisia experienced a particularly gruelling summer this year, with July and August marked by “intense and prolonged heatwaves”. — AFP

OPINION

When silence is mistaken for peace



HYESHA BARRETT
The writer is a Master Life Coach and Positive Parent Specialist

EVERY YEAR on September 21, the International Day of Peace invites the world to imagine life without violence and conflict. Yet, peace is often spoken about as though it belongs only in government buildings and negotiations between nations.

In reality, it is also shaped in homes, classrooms, relationships and meeting rooms, through how people respond when they feel challenged or misunderstood.

Peace is not simply the absence of shouting. A home can be quiet because a child has learned that honesty leads to punishment. A relationship can appear calm because one person doesn't speak up about their needs.

A workplace can seem harmonious because employees are afraid to question a decision. Silence may look like peace while resentment and fear grow underneath it.

When tension arises, people respond differently. Some fight by becoming louder, critical, or controlling. Some withdraw, shut down or leave the room. Others freeze, unable to find their words.

Many agree, apologise or make themselves smaller to keep everyone else comfortable. These are often protective patterns learned when disagreement once felt unsafe.

The same patterns follow us everywhere.

A parent may interpret a child's resistance as disrespect and respond with more force than the moment requires.

A partner may say, "It's fine," while storing another hurt. An employee may accept an unrealistic deadline, then have disrupted sleep worrying about achieving it. Different setting, same message: it does not feel safe to be honest here.

Real peace asks more of us than keeping everything pleasant. It requires the capacity to remain respectful when somebody disagrees. It means allowing another person to be disappointed without changing our boundary, and hearing feedback without turning it into a personal attack. It also means expressing our needs before resentment expresses them for us.

With children, this may sound like, "You are allowed to be angry, but you are not allowed to hurt me." In a relationship, it might be, "I care about us, which is why I cannot keep pretending this is okay."

At work, it might sound like, "I can take this on, but we will need to reassess the other priorities at stake." These responses do not remove discomfort. They stop them from becoming disrespectful.

Peace also depends on repair. Humans will lose patience, misunderstand one another and react from old wounds. The goal cannot be to eliminate every difficult moment.

Leaders who welcome questions build workplaces where problems are addressed before they become crises. Peace grows when power creates safety, rather than silence

The deeper work is learning how to return after one. A sincere apology, accountability and a willingness to listen can teach a child, partner, or colleague that conflict does not have to end connection.

This matters because people carry what they experience. Children allowed to express themselves are more likely to respect the voice of others. Adults who set boundaries without punishment create relationships with less resentment.

Leaders who welcome questions build workplaces where problems are addressed before they become crises. Peace grows when power creates safety, rather than silence.

Oman's commitment to dialogue reminds us that strength does not always need to arrive loudly. Sometimes it looks like restraint, curiosity and the courage to remain at the table when walking away would be easier. Those same qualities matter in our personal spaces.

On Peace Day, perhaps the most meaningful question is not whether there is conflict in our lives, but what happens when it arrives. Do people feel safe enough to speak?

Can boundaries exist without humiliation? Can two truths sit in the same room without one person being made powerless? Peace is not something we wait for the world to create. It is something we teach, practise and protect in every space our presence touches.

LONG-SUFFERING YEMENI FAMILIES FLEE FIGHTING

MOHAMMED HAKIM

As fighting escalates once again in Yemen's long-running war, thousands of families have been forced from their homes, many of them for a second or third time.

In the Al Farsi camp in Aden, Arwa said that she, her husband and their four children left Mocha on Yemen's western coast as it was seized by Ansar Allah fighters. They shared a single motorcycle to travel 200 kilometres, first to Al Arah in the Lahj governorate and then on to Aden, temporary seat of Yemen's Saudi-backed government. "We couldn't find any means of transport... We stayed out in the cold and didn't have clothes to keep us warm," Arwa said at the camp, where sat on the ground by a tent.

The camp currently hosts 128 families living under canvas along dirt paths where barefoot children run. Their tents are sparsely equipped — some bedding, cooking pots, and a few clothes and belongings that the families managed to bring with them when they ran.

It is not the first time Arwa has been forced to flee her home.

Nine years ago, she left Maqbanah in Taiz governorate to head to Mocha, also because of the war. "I hope I can find a house to live in with my children. We're exhausted by the heat, the dust and the humiliation," she said. "I hope the situation improves and we can return to our home and our families." Armin Yedgarian, a representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said the camp was "in dire need of more support", adding that its 8,800 inhabitants included many elderly people and women with children.

International organisations, including the World Food Programme, distribute meals to the displaced. Arwa received a portion of rice to feed her children. But she regrets that her seven-year-old daughter, her only school-aged child, has not been attending class since the family was forced to head to Aden. At Aden's Al Firdaws camp, which currently shelters about 110 families who arrived over the past two weeks, the acting representative of Unicef's office in Yemen, Obiya Atchieng, said that families' needs were not limited to food and basic supplies.

Last week, Unicef said 57,000 children had been displaced inside Yemen in just two weeks and 243 schools had been closed or suspended, affecting more than 137,000 students.

Even before the latest escalation, 3.2 million school-age children were not enrolled. — **AFP**

Why Africa, why now?

FOR THE first time, an Omani Sovereign has undertaken state visits to two Sub-Saharan African nations. His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's visits to Botswana and Angola in mid-September 2026 therefore raise two important questions: Why Africa? And why now?

The answer is that Africa is not merely a continent of future potential. It is already rising. Botswana and Angola are living proof of how the continent's 54 nations are increasingly determined to shape their own destinies, just as other parts of the world appear to be playing with fire and flirting with a possible World War III.

History offers a sobering starting point. In November 1884, European powers gathered at the Berlin Conference to divide Africa among themselves. No African ruler was invited. Borders were drawn across maps, communities were separated, and enormous resources were allocated to foreign empires with little regard for the people who lived there.

The consequences did not disappear with independence. They survived in extractive economies, artificial borders, institutional weaknesses and conflicts over resources. However, the more important African story today is not simply what was done to the continent, but what African nations are now determined to do for themselves.

Botswana provides one of the continent's most compelling stories. When it gained independence in 1966, Botswana was among the world's poorest countries. It had limited infrastructure, very few secondary schools and only a handful of university graduates. Shortly afterwards, diamonds were discovered.

In many countries, such as dBotswana now faces another historic test. Diamonds still provide roughly one-third of government revenue,



KHALID ALSAFI AL HURAIBI
The writer is an innovator and an insights storyteller

while natural stones face weaker global demand and increasing competition from laboratory-grown alternatives. Its next chapter must therefore be built on diversification.

This is where Oman's partnership becomes practical. Cooperation already covers mineral exploration, copper and gold development, petroleum storage and renewable energy. A 500-megawatt solar project near Maun is among the first major investments under this emerging partnership. Botswana aims to raise renewables from around 8 per cent of its electricity supply to 50 per cent by 2030.

Angola tells a different but equally powerful story. After nearly five centuries of Portuguese rule, Angola achieved independence in 1975, only to descend into a devastating civil war. When peace finally arrived in 2002, the country faced the enormous challenge of rebuilding its infrastructure, economy and national trust.Today, Angola is one of Sub-Saharan Africa's leading oil producers and one of the world's major diamond producers by value. Yet, like Oman, it understands that natural-resource wealth must become a platform for diversification rather than a permanent dependency.

The complementarities are clear. Oman brings experience in energy, ports, logistics, fisheries, mining, finance and special economic zones. Angola offers resources, Atlantic access, agricultural potential and entry into major African markets. The two countries signed ten legal instruments and three memoranda between public companies, covering petroleum, minerals, finance, tourism, agriculture, transport, logistics and housing.

Yet there is a deeper dimension to these visits: Oman is not discovering Africa. We are reconnecting with it.

For centuries, Omani sailors crossed the Indian Ocean using the monsoon winds, linking Muscat, Sur and Dhofar with the ports of East Africa. Zanzibar later became a major

political and commercial centre within the Omani sphere. That shared history contains remarkable stories of navigation, trade and cultural exchange, as well as painful chapters that must be acknowledged honestly. Mature nations do not romanticise their history; they learn from it.

The opportunity today is to build a new relationship with Africa—not through domination or extraction, but through dignity, co-investment and shared value.

Africa has the world's youngest population, expanding cities and increasingly connected markets. It holds many of the critical minerals required for the global energy transition, while its land, sunlight and human talent offer enormous potential in food security, renewable energy, technology and digital services.

Meanwhile, many established powers are spending their resources on escalating conflicts, expanding military alliances and preparing for confrontations that could push humanity towards World War III. Africa's 54 nations face real challenges, but many are choosing a different battlefield: the struggle for development, diversification, dignity and a stronger voice in the world.

Oman is a natural partner in that journey. It stands between Asia, Africa and the Arabian Gulf. Its ports face the Indian Ocean, its diplomacy commands trust, and its investors increasingly seek meaningful opportunities beyond traditional markets.

The Royal visits were therefore more than diplomatic milestones. They signalled that Oman's diversification must not be limited to new sectors; it must also embrace new geographies.The Berlin Conference divided Africa without Africans. The new African chapter must be written by Africans—with trusted partners who understand that prosperity is strongest when it is shared. That is why Africa. And that is why now.

Is Arab media entering its golden age?



BADER AL KIYUMI

The writer is head of media relational & branding at Nama Water Services

SOME questions arrive with an answer. Others follow you for a while. One of them followed me through the corridors of the Arab Media Summit in Dubai. In one room, artificial intelligence was rewriting the future of media. In another, the conversation was about content, platforms and audiences. Between them moved hundreds of young people — phones in their hands, ideas in their heads — trying to find their place in an industry changing faster than its job titles.

And somewhere between one session and the next, I found myself wondering: Is Arab media entering its golden age? The question stayed with me when I stepped outside and looked at my phone. Google, Meta, TikTok and Netflix.

Four names. Four different businesses, we are told. Yet all four wanted something from me. A minute. A click. A little curiosity. My attention.

Suddenly, the economics of modern media seemed wonderfully simple: everyone was competing for a small piece of my day.

And those small pieces are worth a fortune. Global advertising passed the \$1 trillion mark in 2025. PwC expects it to reach

\$1.4 trillion by 2030, while the wider entertainment and media industry moves towards \$4.2 trillion.

There are trillions hiding behind our scrolling fingers.

Then another number appeared in Dubai: \$520 million. That is how much media companies in the Middle East and North Africa are expected to spend on AI in 2026, according to a report by the Dubai Press Club and Deloitte.

Numbers are usually accused of being boring.

Sometimes, however, they whisper where the future is going.

And these numbers made me wonder whether I had seen this story before.

Fifteen years ago, small digital companies in America were becoming giants. Advertising was leaving paper for screens. New professions appeared with names our parents would have struggled to understand.

Then the future arrived. But history, when it returns, rarely wears the same clothes. This time, the tools are in everyone's hands.

They are no longer locked inside studios in New York, London or Silicon Valley. A

Suddenly, the economics of modern media seemed wonderfully simple: everyone was competing for a small piece of my day. And those small pieces are worth a fortune

young person sitting in Muscat, Riyadh, Dubai or Cairo now carries in one hand what once required cameras, editors, designers, translators and a distribution network.

That changes more than media.

It changes who gets to enter the room.

And perhaps this is where the Arab story becomes interesting.

The region has capital, technology, young audiences — and something no algorithm can manufacture for us: stories that have not yet travelled.

But abundance has a cruel little joke.

The easier it becomes to speak, the harder it becomes to be heard.

AI will make millions of images, videos and words cheaper and faster to produce. Content will become abundant. Meaning will not. Trust will not. A story worth remembering will not. Perhaps that is the paradox at the heart of the coming media economy: the more machines can create, the more valuable the unmistakably human may become.

So, is Arab media entering its golden age? Perhaps we are only in its opening chapters.

Platforms will change. Algorithms will change. AI will become smarter.

But the story will always be searching for a good storyteller.

INDIA’S UPI FEE SHIFT TO ENTRENCH DOMINANT INCUMBENTS

JASPREET KALRA AND ASHWIN MANIKANDAN

Walmart-backed PhonePe and Google Pay could earn hundreds of millions of dollars a year in extra revenue from India's move to allow merchant fees on its widely used Unified Payments Interface (UPI) digital payment network, entrenching the dominant apps' lead over smaller rivals.

The end of UPI's six-year reign as a free network will give PhonePe and Google Pay, which together accounted for 80 per cent of UPI payment values last month, the firepower to expand to rural areas, while prompting rivals to chase higher-value transactions to draw users and fees.

But the boost for the dominant incumbents could also renew focus on the level of market concentration regulators may be comfortable with.

UPI, used by over 500 million people in India to pay for everything from roadside cups of tea to iPhones, will cease to be free from October 15 after regulators last week permitted a 0.4 per cent fee to be charged to merchants on transactions exceeding Rs 2,000 (\$21).

The new fee, called the merchant discount rate (MDR), is expected to generate annual revenue of up to \$1.1 billion for payment apps by March 2028, according to estimates by brokerage Bernstein. That would mean PhonePe and Google Pay would get about \$900 million of that sum, based on their market share.

"The introduction of MDR is a positive step towards offsetting substantial operational costs and liabilities," said Rahul Chari, co-founder at PhonePe.

The change marks a shift for an ecosystem built around free payments, whose rapid adoption was driven by factors including India's 2016 demonetisation, which withdrew a large chunk of high-denomination currency from circulation, the Covid-19 pandemic and heavy customer incentives.

It also brings UPI closer to the models of global retail payment systems such as China's Alipay, Singapore's PayNow and Pix in Brazil, where fees range from 0.6 per cent to 1.5 per cent.

But the UPI fee has also drawn political criticism and prompted concerns that merchants could pass the cost on to consumers, potentially encouraging a shift back to cash in Asia's third-largest economy.

The new revenue pool could give PhonePe and Google Pay greater incentive to expand beyond large urban centres into rural India, an expansion that was previously less commercially viable, according to two industry sources familiar with internal discussions at the firms.

Payments outside large urban areas may be smaller, but transaction data can help companies offer tailored loans and other financial products to bring in revenue, one of the sources said.

Google Pay did not respond to an email seeking comment, while PhonePe did not share specifics about its plans. The sources spoke on the condition of anonymity as they are not authorised to speak to the media. — Reuters

What 15 minutes of reading can do...

IN A WORLD where reaching for a phone has become almost automatic, Singapore is asking people to replace just 15 minutes of scrolling with something increasingly neglected: reading a book.

The country's National Library Board launched ReadSG this month, a multi-year national campaign aimed at making reading a lifelong habit. Its message is deliberately simple: read for at least 15 minutes a day. Participants can record their reading sessions and collect virtual rewards, turning an activity associated with patience and concentration into something that borrows some of the motivational techniques used by apps and games.

Fifteen minutes is hardly intimidating. It can fit into a commute, a lunch break or the time someone would otherwise spend scrolling through TikTok, Instagram or X. Singapore's campaign even points out that 15 minutes can be roughly the length of three MRT stops or the time spent waiting for a bus.

That matters in an era of endless scrolling. Social media platforms offer an almost unlimited stream of short videos, headlines, notifications and recommendations. It is remarkably easy to intend to check your phone for five minutes and emerge half an hour later having consumed dozens of pieces of content without remembering much of them.

Reading demands something different. A book asks us to remain with one argument, story or idea rather than constantly searching for the next piece of stimulation. Research has long established the importance of vocabulary to reading comprehension, while studies have found associations between reading and vocabulary development, language skills and wider knowledge. Reading also requires readers to interpret information, make connections and follow complex ideas, abilities closely connected to deeper comprehension and critical analysis. These skills are particularly important for children.

There is evidence of declining reading performance in the United States. The 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress found that average reading scores for American fourth graders were five points lower than in 2019. Eighth-grade



OMAN AL YAHYAI

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

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Singapore's National Library Board launched ReadSG this month, a multi-year national campaign aimed at making reading a lifelong habit.

performance was also five points below 2019, with results among lower-performing eighth graders reaching their lowest levels since the assessment began in 1992. Those figures should not just be blamed on TikTok or smartphones. The pandemic, educational disruption, socioeconomic differences and numerous other factors affect literacy.

But the broader problem deserves attention, teachers cannot develop strong readers if children rarely read outside the classroom. Nor can we expect young people to develop rich vocabularies and sustained concentration if much of their free time consists of rapidly moving between short pieces of digital content.

Singapore's approach is interesting because it does not demand that people abandon technology. Instead, it attempts to compete with it.

The programme uses gamification, allowing participants to earn virtual coins for completing reading sessions. Critics could reasonably question whether people should need rewards to pick up a book. Ideally, reading should eventually become enjoyable enough to provide its own motivation. But habits have to begin somewhere. If a digital reward persuades someone to read

for 15 minutes instead of spending those minutes doomscrolling, it is difficult to see much harm in trying.

Singaporean education researchers have similarly described the short target as an accessible starting point while emphasising that the ultimate objective should be genuine curiosity and sustained reading.

There is also an important irony here: Singapore is hardly responding to educational collapse. Its students remain internationally strong readers.

The campaign is instead attempting to protect a reading culture before digital distraction erodes it further. Other countries should pay attention.

Fifteen minutes will not transform someone's vocabulary, attention span or critical-thinking skills overnight. 15 minutes every day becomes more than 90 hours of reading in a year. In an age when technology companies compete relentlessly for every available minute of our attention, encouraging people to reclaim even a small part of that time for a book seems less like an old-fashioned idea and more like a surprisingly modern one. Public policy does not always need to involve restrictions, sometimes a modest nudge towards a better habit can be worthwhile.



BROADCASTRIGHTS



The channel will telecast five television and digital shows alongside live match coverage.

OMAN SPORTS CHANNEL UNVEILS EXTENSIVE KHALEEJI 27 COVERAGE

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 22



SAID BIN TAMAN AL AMRI
Director-General of Sultanate of Oman Television

Oman Sports Channel is set to deliver extensive coverage of the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup in Jeddah after securing the rights to broadcast the regional football showpiece, which kicks off on Wednesday.

The channel has also unveiled a dedicated programming line-up for the tournament, featuring five television

and digital shows alongside live match coverage, analysis and on-site reporting from Saudi Arabia.

Details of the coverage plan were presented during a media briefing in Muscat, where Sultanate of Oman Television officials outlined the channel’s preparations for the championship, which runs from September 23 to October 6 and features eight Gulf national teams.

The Ministry of Information, represented by the Directorate General of Radio and Television, had earlier announced that Oman Sports Channel had obtained the broadcast rights for the tournament through the channel’s official Instagram account.

Speaking during the briefing, Said bin Taman al Amri, Director-General of Sultanate of Oman Television, highlighted the special place the Gulf Cup holds in the region, noting that the tournament has grown beyond competition on the pitch to become closely associated with the sporting memories and history of Gulf citizens.

He said the championship has contributed over the years to the development of sporting infrastructure in participating countries while also offering host nations an opportunity to showcase their cultural, historical, tourism and economic attractions.

PROMINENT STARS

Al Amri also pointed to the Gulf Cup’s role in producing prominent players, coaches and media professionals who later went on to achieve success at regional and international levels.

Turning to Oman’s participation, Al Amri stressed the importance of the national media’s role in supporting the national football team and called for balanced coverage throughout the tournament.

He urged media professionals not to judge the team solely on its opening match, recalling Oman’s campaign at Gulf Cup 23, when the national side recovered from defeat against the UAE in their first game before going on to win the title.

Al Amri said the media maintained its support for the team throughout that campaign, while stressing that such backing did not mean avoiding criticism. Instead, he called for constructive and objective criticism that serves the interests of the team. He added that continued media and public support would be particularly important as the national team faces further major assignments after the Gulf Cup, including preparations for the AFC Asian Cup 2027.

Red Warriors ready for a new chapter: Sektioui

WALEED AL JAHWARI
JEDDAH, SEPT 22

OMAN head coach Tarik Sektioui said the Red Warriors are ready for Gulf Cup 27, stressing that the team have entered a new phase with high ambitions and a clear vision for the future.

“Previous results must be taken into consideration. Oman have had strong campaigns in previous tournaments, but this is a different era,” Sektioui said during the pre-match press conference ahead of Wednesday’s clash with Iraq.

“We have a strong desire to make our fans happy and make them proud of their national team. We want them to come and support us in all the upcoming tournaments,” he said.

Sektioui added that Oman have reached a high level of readiness ahead of the competition, with the team prepared mentally, physically and in terms of team spirit.

IRAQ, A DEVELOPING SIDE

Speaking about Iraq, Sektioui described them as a developing team that have made several changes to the squad that featured at the last World Cup.

“Iraq are a developing team and have made several changes to the squad that played at the World Cup. We will be playing in the strongest group in the tournament,” he said.

Sektioui stressed that Oman respect all their opponents but will enter Wednesday’s match with a clear objective of securing victory and delivering a performance worthy of the national team and its supporters.

He also said that all Gulf teams have strong chances in this edition, given the competitive nature of the tournament and the closely matched levels among the participating teams.

ARNOLD CONFIDENT

Iraq’s Australian coach Graham Arnold said his team have the quality and ability to compete for the Gulf Cup 27 title, highlighting the balance of experience and



Oman coach Tarik Sektioui and player Ahmed al Rawahi attend the pre-match press conference in Jeddah ahead of the Gulf Cup 27 match against Iraq. Pictures by Abdulwahid al Hamadani



Iraq coach Graham Arnold and player Aymen Hussein during the press conference.

youth in the squad.

Several changes have been made to the coaching staff and playing squad, with a number of players set to make their Gulf Cup debut. Arnold said the team are focused on the future and see the tournament as an important competition for Iraqi football.

On the opening match against Oman, Arnold said Iraq had two days to prepare in Jeddah, with the focus on physical fitness and proper preparation.

He expressed confidence in his players’

ability to perform well against Oman and throughout the tournament.

Iraq striker Aymen Hussein thanked Saudi Arabia for hosting Gulf Cup 27 and congratulated the country on its National Day. Hussein said Iraqi fans in Jeddah would provide strong support for the team, adding that they consider Saudi Arabia their second home.

He described Oman as a respected opponent and said Iraq are determined to produce a performance worthy of the national team.

Oman aim for positive start against Iraq

WALEED AL JAHWARI
JEDDAH, SEPT 22

Oman national football team enters Gulf Cup 27 with renewed ambitions and a clear target of making a strong impact in the tournament, which is being held in Jeddah from September 23 to October 6. The Red Warriors will look to produce positive results and go as far as possible as they seek to add another chapter to their proud Gulf Cup history.

Oman will face Iraq at 6:30 pm (Oman time) at Prince Abdullah al Faisal Stadium on Wednesday, while the second Group A match will see hosts Saudi Arabia take on Kuwait at 10 pm at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium. Oman have been drawn in Group A alongside hosts Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. Oman’s second match will be against hosts Saudi Arabia on September 26 and third group match against Kuwait on September 29.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

Oman will look to make a positive start against Iraq and build momentum for a strong



Oman players during training at the 27th Gulf Cup in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

run in the tournament.

Oman enter Gulf Cup 27 with a proud record in the competition, having lifted the trophy twice — in 2009 on home soil and again in Kuwait in 2017, both titles secured through penalty shoot-outs.

Oman also hold the record for reaching the Gulf Cup final six times since the two-group format was introduced in 2004. Alongside their two titles, the Red Warriors have finished runners-up four times, most recently in Gulf Cup 26 in Kuwait.

On another note, Iraq will look to bounce back from their group-stage exit in the previous edition, despite missing several key players through injury.

Iraq have dominated their Gulf Cup meetings with Oman, winning six of 10 encounters, with the other four ending in draws.

Oman are still seeking their first Gulf Cup victory over Iraq, who most recently beat the Red Warriors 3-2 in the 2023 final after a 0-0 group-stage draw.

MEDIA CENTRE

Hilton Jeddah Corniche is hosting the tournament’s main media centre and press conferences, serving accredited media throughout Gulf Cup 27. On Tuesday, the opening day, four press conferences were held for Oman, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The media centre also hosted a press conference by the tournament’s Organising Committee, which outlined the final preparations for Gulf Cup 27 and highlighted key organisational, logistical and operational arrangements.

The committee also briefed the media on the facilities provided for the participating teams, match venues and media services, while responding to questions from journalists ahead of the tournament’s opening.

The centre provides media information, transport coordination, hospitality, internet-enabled workspaces and technical support to facilitate coverage by journalists and broadcasters.

ASIAN GAMES



Musab al Hadi and Walid al Kindi had won silver in the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China.

OMAN SAILORS
READY TO TAKE ON
CHALLENGE IN JAPAN

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

Oman's national sailing team is ready to begin its campaign at the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya after completing an intensive eight-day training camp on Japanese waters.

The four-member squad, led by Team Lead Hashim bin Hamad al Rashdi and coach Fabrice Jauret, will compete at Kaiyoh Yacht Harbor in Gamagori from September 26 to October 3, with 12 fleet races scheduled across the regatta.

The team brings together experience and youth, with Ahmed bin Ghareeb al Hasani and Waleed bin Issa al Kindi representing Oman in the 49er class, while Feras bin Haitham al Nabhani and Tamim bin Sulieiman al Balushi will compete in the 29er class.

The preparation camp provided the sailors with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with local conditions and sharpen key elements of their racing strategy. Particular attention was given to starting procedures, skiff handling, boat tuning and reading wind patterns, all of which will be important as the Omani sailors face strong competition from across the continent.

Abdulaziz bin Salim al Shidi, Acting Sailing Director at Oman Sail, said the Asian Games represented an important stage in the development of the national sailing programme and its wider Olympic pathway.

"Our participation in the 2026 Asian Games is a proud showcase of Oman Sail's structured pathway in action. Seeing emerging athletes such as Feras and Tamim compete alongside experienced sailors such as Ahmed and Waleed demonstrates that our youth development programmes are creating opportunities for Omani sailors to progress to the highest levels," he said.

Al Shidi added that competing under the Oman Olympic Committee would give the young sailors valuable experience ahead of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games. "Every race at this regatta provides invaluable high-pressure experience that brings us closer to our Olympic ambitions. We are confident that the team will represent Oman with pride, discipline and competitive spirit," he said.

The team's participation is supported by Gold Partner ELB&T Ltd. Group Chairman Dr John (Young III) Kim said the company was proud to support the national team on the Asian stage and praised the commitment shown by the sailors and coaching staff during their preparations.

Waleed al Kindi returns to the Asian Games after winning a historic silver medal in the 49er class with Musab bin Mohammed al Hadi at the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. His experience will provide an important reference point for the current squad as it seeks another strong continental performance.

Oman fencers impress as
mixed shooting team out

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

OMANI national teams continue their participation in the 20th Asian Games at Aichi-Nagoya in Japan, being held from September 19 to October 4. The fencing team has begun its campaign in the individual foil and épée events, while the hockey team suffered its second consecutive loss — this time against Malaysia — and the shooting team was eliminated from the mixed 10m event qualifiers.

On Wednesday, the Oman Beach Volleyball Team B — comprising Ahmed al Hosni and Khalfan al Maamari — plays their second match against Iran, aiming to bounce back following a loss to Thailand in the opening match.

FENCERS REACH ROUND OF 16
On Tuesday, the national fencing team made its historic debut at the 2026 Asian Games. Ahmed Kaskas and Saeed al Shueibi competed in the foil event, while Jana al Sharji and Salma al Dughaishi competed in the épée category.

In the group stage, Al Shueibi was eliminated after losing all his matches: 5-1 to Hong Kong's Cheung Ka-long; 5-1 to the Philippines' Samuel Tranquilan; 5-3 to Singapore's Jwan Kang; and consecutive 5-1 losses to Japan's Kazuki Iimura and India's Himash Singh.

Meanwhile, Ahmed Kaskas qualified for the Round of 16 after defeating Pakistan's Muhammad Yaseen Khan, despite subsequent losses to China's Zaran Zheng, Qatar's Abdulrahman Bourgharib, Kazakhstan's Semyonov, and South Korea's Lee Kwang-hyun; he was ultimately eliminated in the Round of 16 by China's Ji Xu.

In the women's events, Salma al Dughaishi lost 5-2 to Singapore's Tikana Kiria, and by the same score to Japan's Miho Yoshimura and Kuwait's Fawziya al Refaei; she also lost 5-1 to Kaylin Yan (Hong Kong) before defeating Thailand's Thiankul, resulting in her elimination in the group stage. Jana al Sharji defeated opponents from Uzbekistan and Indonesia but lost to Thai Tran (Vietnam), Sera Song (South Korea), Ash Chan (Hong Kong), and Amarazia (Mongolia); she qualified for the Round of 16 but was defeated by the South Korean fencer Lim Taihe.

HIGH LEVEL OF COMPETITION
Oman fencer Jana al Sharji said she had anticipated the high level of competition witnessed during the fencing events, noting that the Games features an elite group of the world's best female fencers. "I expected this intense competition among the athletes, given that the tournament brings together some of the world's most prominent fencers. On a personal level, I had great confidence in my abilities; I expected to reach this stage and even aspired to go further," Jana said.

Jana also discussed the group stage matches in the épée event, stating: "I faced top-tier opponents, including South Korea's Sera Song — a former world champion. I



Oman's Jana al Sharji progressed to the Round of 16 but was defeated by the South Korean fencer Lim Taihe.



Ahmed Kaskas qualified for the Round of 16 after defeating Pakistan's Muhammad Yaseen Khan.

managed to hold my own against her during the bout before her experience ultimately decided the outcome in her favour."

Another Omani fencer Ahmed Kaskas, affirmed that the team's debut in this championship was a significant and challenging experience, noting that the level of competition exceeded the players' expectations.

"As this was our first time participating, we did not anticipate such a high level of competition," Kaskas said. "The group stage was extremely tough, with every athlete striving to prove themselves through their strength, skill, and technical ability."

Oman fencing coach Hicham Ben Ali Karchoud, described the results achieved on the opening day as confirmation that the sport is moving in the right direction in Oman. Karchoud said: "On the opening day, our athletes delivered a performance that was both honourable and promising — especially considering their youth and the fact that this is one of their first experiences in a major senior-level tournament, set against the backdrop of this massive continental event and significant media attention."

He added: "In the men's foil event, Ahmed



HICHAM BEN ALI
KARCHOUD

Oman fencing coach

Anwar Kaskas successfully advanced from the group stage before facing a Chinese fencer ranked seventh in the world. Despite the difficulty of the match, Ahmed displayed a fighting spirit and a high level of performance — a foundation upon which we can build for future success. In the women's épée, 15-year-old Jana al Sharji also performed well; she secured two victories in the group stage and advanced to the next round before facing the world number three; despite the loss, her performance was positive, confirming she has a promising future."

SHOOTING TEAM OUT FROM MIXED EVENT
The Omani mixed 10m shooting team, comprising Al Anoud al Khalili and Khalid al Kalbani, finished sixth out of 17 participating teams with a score of 628.3 points. They were eliminated in the qualifying round, from which four teams — China, India, Japan, and South Korea — advanced to compete for the mixed 10m medals. Oman finished sixth.

HEAVY DEFEAT FOR HOCKEY TEAM
Oman hockey team lost its second match, against Malaysia, falling 7-0 in a game held at Gifu Stadium. Malaysia's goals were scored by Faizal Saari, Aiman Rozmi (twice), Shilo Silvaris, Abu Kamal Azrai, and Anwar Khemallah.

Malaysia dominated the match, scoring once in the first quarter and three times in the second. They maintained their control in the third quarter with another goal, then added two more in the fourth, resulting in a 7-0 victory. Oman are set to play their third match against Uzbekistan on Thursday at 10 am (Oman time).

Saham hold Al Nahda as Al Nasr stop Bahla's winning run

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

Abdulmaeen al Marzouqi struck a late equaliser to earn Saham a 1-1 draw with Al Nahda, while Al Nasr twice came from behind to hold Bahla 2-2 in the third round of the Sohar International Cup. Al Shabab secured a 1-0 victory over Al Musannah in the other fixture.

At Al Buraimi Sports Complex, Al Nahda appeared on course for victory before Al Marzouqi's well-placed free kick in the 82nd minute secured Saham's first point of the campaign. The match began evenly, with Saham seeking openings through the middle and playing long balls behind the defence. Al Nahda responded with an effective offside trap, while using

short passes and attacks down the flanks to establish control.

Marwan Taib gave the hosts the lead in the first half and almost doubled his tally before the interval. Breaking clear of the defence, he attempted to lift the ball over the advancing goalkeeper, who reacted well to deny him.

Al Nahda missed another opportunity immediately after the restart before Saham threatened twice at the other end. Both coaches made changes as the contest opened up, with the visitors gradually gaining the initiative and forcing Al Nahda deeper. Saham's pressure eventually brought its reward when Al Marzouqi curled his free kick into the far corner. Al Nahda pushed forward in search of a winner, but



Al Shabab beat Al Musannah 1-0 in Round 3 of the Sohar International Cup.

Saham's defence held firm to secure a share of the points.

AL NASR FIGHT BACK
At Al Saada Sports Complex, Bahla's perfect start ended as Al Nasr fought back twice in an entertaining Group One encounter.

Hosni al Hinai put Bahla ahead after just three minutes, finishing a counterattack with a shot past goalkeeper Rashad Abdulhamid. Al Nasr responded four minutes later when Tiemori Keita converted a penalty. Bahla then suffered an injury setback as goalkeeper Ibrahim al Kindi was forced off and replaced by Al Muhtadi al Abri. However, they regained the lead in the 20th minute through Yazid al Rawahi.

Osama Magdi went close to

equalising before the break, driving into the penalty area before shooting narrowly wide, but Bahla retained their 2-1 advantage at the half-time.

Al Nasr resumed with greater urgency, and Al Baraa al Maawali fired wide in the 48th minute. Al Hinai threatened at the other end shortly afterwards, also sending his effort off target. The equaliser arrived in the 65th minute when Luis Paulo met a cross with a header that beat Al Abri. Neither side could find a decisive finish during the closing stages, leaving Bahla on seven points after their opening victories over Sur and Dhofar.

Meanwhile, Al Shabab edged Al Musannah 1-0 to register their first victory following draws against Seeb and Al Nahda.



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SHORTTAKES



The MoU provides Desert Sands Oil & Gas (DSOG) with a platform to explore opportunities in one of Africa's established hydrocarbon markets.

OMANI OILFIELD SERVICES FIRM EYES AFRICA EXPANSION WITH SONANGOL PACT

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

Omani oilfield services provider Desert Sand Oil & Gas (DSOG) has taken a significant step towards expanding into Africa through a cooperation pact with Angola's national oil company Sonangol. The memorandum of understanding was signed by Khalid bin Sultan al Junaibi, Group CEO of DSOG parent Al Daham Holding Group, during the recent state visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to Angola.

Covering potential cooperation in oilfield services and technologies, the MoU provides DSOG with a platform to explore opportunities in one of Africa's established hydrocarbon markets.

For Sonangol, the agreement potentially opens access to specialised capabilities developed by an Omani company across drilling and workover support, wellheads, completion technologies, artificial lift, mud logging and oilfield equipment services.

"A proud moment and an important step towards expanding Omani business presence and building strategic partnerships in Africa's energy sector", Al Junaibi said, describing the agreement as a milestone for the company.

Established in 2011, DSOG is a wholly Omani-owned oilfield services provider and a subsidiary of Al Daham Holding Group. The company employs more than 500 people and operates across Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait, making the prospective entry into Angola a notable extension beyond its established Gulf footprint.

Sonangol (Sociedade Nacional de Combustíveis de Angola) is Angola's state-owned oil and gas company and one of the country's most important energy enterprises. Established in 1976, Sonangol operates across the hydrocarbon value chain, with interests spanning oil and gas exploration and production, refining, distribution, trading, shipping and related services.

Significantly, the DSOG agreement also forms part of a broader expansion in Oman-Angola energy ties.

Oman launches national fintech strategy

THE Sultanate of Oman has launched a national fintech strategy and a centralised digital portal as it seeks to attract investment, support entrepreneurs and accelerate innovation across its financial sector.

The National Fintech Strategy sets out a unified roadmap for developing Oman's financial technology ecosystem, expanding access to financial services and strengthening the country's position as a competitive and trusted fintech hub.

The initiative is being led by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) in partnership with the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and the Ministry of Finance's National Programme for Fiscal Sustainability and Financial Sector Development, known as Estidamah.

Other partners include the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Invest in Oman.

The strategy aims to coordinate national fintech initiatives, improve digital infrastructure, build specialised skills and support cooperation between the public and private sectors.

It will also seek to improve interoperability within the financial system while maintaining standards for financial stability, market integrity, cybersecurity and consumer protection.

The CBO will oversee implementation and coordinate the work of participating institutions. Each regulator and government body will retain its existing statutory responsibilities for policy and regulation.

A governance framework will be established to monitor progress, strengthen accountability and ensure that the strategy's priorities generate measurable economic and social benefits.

Ahmed bin Jaafar al Musalmi, Governor of the Central Bank of Oman, said the strategy represented a major step in



The initiative is being led by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO).



The Oman Fintech portal is a centralised platform intended to provide fintech companies and entrepreneurs with a clearer route into the Omani market.



Integrating regulation, technology, investment and entrepreneurship within a single national framework would help move responsible innovation from concept to market

AHMED BIN JAAFAR AL MUSALMI
Governor, CBO

Oman's financial transformation and would help build a more innovative, inclusive and competitive financial system.

"The ambition goes beyond the Sultanate of Oman's role in responding to shifts in the future of the financial sector; it aims to actively shape that future", he said.

Al Musalmi said integrating regulation, technology, investment and entrepreneurship within a single national framework would help move responsible innovation from concept to market.

The strategy would create an environment in which promising ideas could be developed into scalable products delivering value to individuals, businesses and the wider economy, he added.

Al Musalmi said innovation and financial stability were complementary when supported by sound governance, proportionate regulation and effective institutional coordination.

The CBO would seek to give innovators greater clarity and confidence to develop, test and expand their products while protecting financial stability, market integrity and public trust,

he said.

The strategy is also intended to attract international investment and expertise, develop Omani capabilities and help domestic entrepreneurs create accessible financial products capable of competing in overseas markets.

Abdullah bin Salim al Salmi, Chief Executive Officer of the FSA, said the framework would unify existing initiatives across different segments of the financial services industry.

It would support innovative business models and products that respond to changing customer requirements while improving the efficiency and quality of financial services, he said.

Al Salmi said a supportive regulatory and legislative environment would make Oman more attractive to local and international fintech investors, while facilitating the transfer of expertise and advanced technology into the domestic market.

The FSA will continue working with other stakeholders to support innovation in non-banking financial services, including capital markets, insurance, accounting and auditing.

The authority will also seek to accelerate the use of advanced technologies and enhance the contribution of these sectors to the national economy, he added.

Alongside the strategy, the CBO launched the Oman Fintech Portal, a centralised platform intended to provide fintech companies and entrepreneurs with a clearer route into the Omani market. — ONA

Oman’s real estate shift: From trading to development

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

The real estate sector in the Sultanate of Oman has witnessed notable activity, maintaining robust trading levels during the first eight months of 2026. This growth is driven by an increase in the traded value of sales contracts, alongside sustained activity in real estate financing, mortgages and property exchanges.

The latest statistical indicators from the National Centre for Statistics and Information reveal that the traded value of sales contracts reached approximately RO 954.1 million by the end of August 2026 and a 14.5 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2025, reflecting continued momentum in real



The traded value of sales contracts reached RO 954.1 million by the end of August 2026.

estate transactions.

This growth in sales contract values underscores the market's ongoing activity and aligns with

the general improvement in real estate trading values throughout the year. By the end of July 2026, the total traded value of real estate

stood at approximately RO 1.72 billion, up 7.7 per cent from the RO 1.59 billion recorded during the same period the previous year.

Indicators suggest that 2026 is seeing growth in sales contract values alongside rising property prices, with mortgages remaining a key component of real estate activity.

With the expansion of urban development and investment plans, the future of real estate in the Sultanate extends beyond the mere buying and selling of land and residential units; it is increasingly shifting towards integrated real estate development that combines residential, service, business, commercial, and leisure facilities with robust infrastructure.

The Sultanate of Oman is

working to develop a more integrated urban system through the National Spatial Development Strategy.

This strategy serves as a long-term framework for coordinating urban development, infrastructure and economic activity across the various governorates, while aligning public investments and private development with national priorities.

The trajectory of government policy indicates that the sector's future will not be limited to the buying and selling of land and units; rather, it is shifting increasingly toward integrated real estate development and the linking of residential, commercial, tourism and service projects with infrastructure and economic hubs.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The Business Park brings a new workplace destination to the heart of one of Oman’s most established integrated communities.

Al Mouj Muscat hands over completed buildings of Al Mouj Business Park

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat, Oman’s leading lifestyle destination, has handed over four completed buildings of Al Mouj Business Park to their owners, marking an important milestone for the eight-building development. The handover brings the Business Park closer to welcoming companies and their teams, as a new business community begins to take shape within Al Mouj Muscat.

Set along Al Mouj Muscat’s six-kilometre coastline and within Al Mouj Golf, one of the world’s top 100 golf courses, the Business Park brings a new workplace destination to the heart of one of Oman’s most established integrated communities. Designed around the evolving needs of modern businesses, it combines Grade A office space with access to hospitality, retail, dining and leisure experiences within a connected coastal environment.

Spanning 39,000 square metres across eight mid-rise buildings in two districts, Al Mouj Business Park has been designed to support a more connected and collaborative way of working. Landscaped gardens and outdoor spaces link the buildings, creating opportunities for interaction and business networking, while the wider destination offers a distinctive setting where professional and lifestyle experiences come together.

Ahmed al Massan, Acting CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said: “The handover of the first four buildings of Al Mouj Business Park marks an important milestone in the continued evolution of Al Mouj Muscat. Companies are increasingly seeking workplaces that support productivity, wellbeing and meaningful connections, while giving their teams access to a wider range of experiences and amenities.

Work Reimagined, the theme behind Al Mouj Business Park, captures this shift, bringing premium workspace into an established destination where business, lifestyle and community come together. We look forward to seeing this new business community take shape as owners prepare their spaces for occupation and as the remaining buildings move steadily towards completion”.

The milestone builds on Al Mouj Muscat’s 20-year journey of transforming Oman’s coastline into a dynamic destination that brings together residential, tourism, retail and lifestyle experiences.

Al Mouj Business Park adds a new economic dimension to this ecosystem, expanding the role of the destination as a place to do business and reinforcing Al Mouj Muscat’s contribution to Oman’s investment and business landscape.

MHD, Stellantis celebrate three years of partnership

MHD Automobiles LLC and Stellantis celebrated the third anniversary of their partnership in Oman at a special event held at the Stellantis showroom in Al Hail. The occasion brought together media representatives, customers, partners and members of the leadership team to reflect on three years of progress and look ahead to the next phase of growth for Jeep, RAM, Dodge and Alfa Romeo in the Sultanate of Oman.

The celebration was attended by Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, Chief Executive Officer of MHD ACERE and highlighted the partnership’s focus on strengthening brand presence, elevating the customer experience and delivering dependable sales and aftersales support across Oman.

NEW RAM V8 UNVEILED

A key highlight of the event was the unveiling of the new RAM V8, giving guests their first opportunity to experience the latest expression of RAM’s bold design, commanding road presence and performance-led character.

The unveiling underlined the partners’ commitment to bringing distinctive products and memorable brand



The event was attended by Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE

experiences to customers in Oman.

Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, Chief Executive Officer of MHD ACERE, said, “The third anniversary with Stellantis is an important milestone for MHD Automobiles and the brands we proudly represent in Oman. Over the past three years, we have worked together to build stronger customer relationships, expand ownership value and create a solid platform for future growth.

The unveiling of the new RAM V8 makes this celebration particularly special and demonstrates our commitment to bringing exciting products

and experiences to the Sultanate of Oman. As we move forward, we remain focused on service excellence, customer confidence and sustainable long-term growth”.

CELEBRATING 85 YEARS OF JEEP

The event also commemorated Jeep’s 85th anniversary, recognizing a global legacy that began in 1941 and has since become synonymous with freedom, adventure, authenticity and legendary capability. In Oman, Jeep’s character continues to resonate strongly with customers across city roads, mountain routes,

desert landscapes and coastal journeys. To mark the occasion, MHD Automobiles is offering selected Jeep models with special anniversary prices and ownership benefits for a limited period.

The line-up includes the Jeep Commander starting from RO 12,995, the Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo from RO 14,995 and the Jeep Wrangler Sahara 2.0L from RO 19,995. Eligible retail customers purchasing a Jeep during the promotional period will also receive an entry into a raffle draw for a chance to win an iPhone 17.

Customers will also be eligible for Free First Insurance & Registration depending upon the models and more. It’s a limited time period offer and depending upon the available stock.

THREE YEARS OF PROGRESS IN OMAN

Since commencing the partnership, MHD Automobiles and Stellantis have worked to develop the presence of Jeep, RAM, Dodge and Alfa Romeo through focused sales initiatives, customer engagement and reliable aftersales care.

The third-anniversary celebration recognized the contribution of customers, employees, partners and stakeholders to this journey.

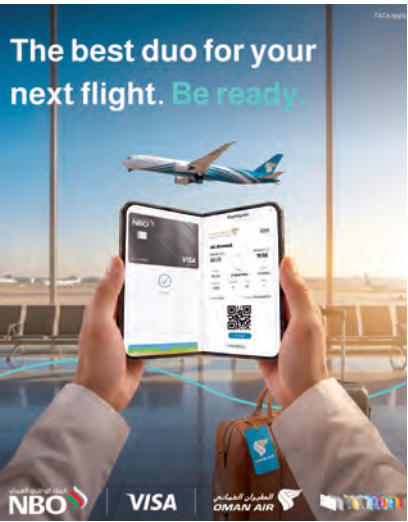
NBO launches exclusive offer for its cardholders

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman (NBO), in partnership with Oman Air, has launched an exclusive offer for its cardholders, with a 25% discount on flights and cashback as NBO reward points on eligible bookings made through the Oman Air app or website.

Available until October 1, 2026, NBO’s credit cardholders can save up to 50% on flight bookings, with a 25% discount plus an additional 25% cashback as Reward Points, capped at RO 50 per card.

Debit and Prepaid Cardholders can enjoy the 25% discount plus 5% cashback as Reward Points, capped at RO 25 per customer. The offer is valid on eligible bookings of RO 100 or more.

The collaboration further strengthens the relationship



NBO’s credit cardholders can save up to 50% on flight bookings.

between NBO and Oman Air, bringing together travel and banking benefits to deliver greater value to customers.

It also forms part of NBO’s continued focus on enhancing its cards proposition through relevant partnerships that reward customers across travel, lifestyle and everyday spending.

Commenting on the offer, Maha al Raisi, Assistant General Manager, Head of Product at NBO, said: “At NBO, we are committed to delivering meaningful benefits that enhance our customers’ everyday banking experience.

Our partnership with Oman Air builds on this commitment by bringing greater value to our Credit, Debit and Prepaid Cardholders, rewarding them when they use their NBO cards to book their journeys”. Beyond the promotional offer, NBO Credit Cardholders can benefit from a range of travel and lifestyle privileges,

depending on their card type. These include NBO Reward Points, airport lounge access, travel insurance, purchase protection, chauffeur services, personal assistance services, car rental privileges and selected dining, travel and lifestyle offers.

Eligible cashback will be credited as equivalent NBO Reward Points to customers’ reward accounts within 30 days of the offer end date. The offer applies to eligible online transactions made through the Oman Air app or website and does not apply to cancelled or reversed transactions.

Customers can book through the Oman Air app or website until October 1, 2026 and pay using an eligible NBO Credit, Debit or Prepaid Card to enjoy the offer.

Lincoln Oman launches ‘Timeless Summer Exclusives’ campaign

MUSCAT: Lincoln Oman is welcoming the months ahead with a new exclusive rewards programme — “Lincoln Timeless Summer Exclusives”, running from September 1 through October 30, 2026.

Built around the Navigator, Nautilus, Aviator and Corsair, the initiative gives buyers extended service, cash-value incentives on trade-ins and loyalty and a chance to win an iPhone 17 through a dedicated raffle — all aimed at making Lincoln ownership as effortless as the cars themselves.

At the heart of the offer is a 5-year or 100,000 km service plan, paired with a matching 5-year or 100,000 km manufacturer’s warranty across all four models.

Private buyers will also receive



The campaign also offers additional value for customers trading in a vehicle.

one year of complimentary vehicle registration and every purchase includes a set of complimentary accessories.

The campaign also offers additional value for customers trading in a vehicle. Those trading in through Best Cars can receive a

bonus of up to RO 2,000 towards a new Navigator, or up to RO 1,000 toward a Nautilus, Aviator or Corsair.

Existing Lincoln owners are eligible for a loyalty bonus of up to RO 100 when purchasing any of the four models. In addition, all customers who purchase a vehicle during the campaign period will be entered into a Buy and Win raffle draw with two winners set to receive an iPhone 17 at the end of the campaign.

Each model in the current line-up continues to embody Lincoln’s “Quiet Flight” philosophy — power delivered without effort, comfort without compromise.

The Navigator, flagship of the range, commands attention with 413 horsepower and the immersive

Lincoln Rejuvenate system, anchored by a 48-inch panoramic display and a 28-speaker Revel Ultima 3D audio experience, its presence further defined by a signature light bar and illuminated Lincoln Star.

The Nautilus cultivates a quieter form of luxury, its acoustic glass and 22-way seats with lumbar massage creating a cabin built for restoration rather than mere transport.

The Aviator brings together spacious three-row versatility and an adaptive suspension calibrated for effortless refinement over any terrain.

And the Corsair offers a 260-horsepower engine, along with the Lincoln Co-Pilot360™ 2.0 Vision suite and a 13.2-inch touchscreen with SYNC 4.

SHORTTAKES



OQBI delivered an exceptional performance during the first half of the year.

OQBI’S H1 NET PROFIT JUMPS 86 PER CENT TO **₹**43.5 MILLION

BALARAB AL TAMIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

OQ Base Industries (SFZ) SAOG has reported an audited net profit of RO 43.5 million for the six months ended June 30, 2026, an increase of 86 per cent on the corresponding period of last year.

The result was achieved despite supply chain and logistical constraints and a scheduled maintenance shutdown of the company’s LPG plant in January, the MSX-listed producer of methanol, ammonnia and LPG said in its audited financial statements filed with the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX).

“Notwithstanding supply chain and logistical challenges, as well as the scheduled maintenance shutdown of the LPG plant in January, OQBI delivered an exceptional performance during the first half of the year”, Chairman Ali al Lawati said in a statement accompanying the results.

He attributed the performance to management’s strategic execution, operational discipline and the adaptability of the company’s business model. OQBI shares closed at 248 baisas on June 30, 2026. The chairman described the share price performance as evidence of market confidence in the company’s governance and financial stewardship.

The company said its strategic focus remains on resilience and operational excellence against a backdrop of geopolitical uncertainty and volatility in global markets. Health, safety, security and environmental performance remains a board-level priority, Al Lawati added.

OQBI is 51 per cent owned by OQ Group and was the fourth OQ subsidiary to list on the MSX, following Abraj Energy Services, OQ Gas Networks and OQ Exploration and Production, as part of the Oman Investment Authority’s divestment programme.

Musandam, ‘Rikan’ discuss community development

KHASAB: A joint introductory meeting was held at the Musandam Centre for Culture and Innovation, in the Wilayat of Khasab, between the Governorate of Musandam and “Rikan” — the energy sector’s social responsibility development foundation.

The meeting aimed to enhance cooperation for supporting development initiatives and projects with a sustainable community impact, in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and the priorities of development in the Governorate



The meeting aimed to enhance cooperation for development initiatives. — ONA

of Musandam.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Faisal bin Hamoud al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam,

and Eng Mohammed bin Ahmed al Ghraibi, CEO of “Rikan”, among other officials.

The meeting elaborated on the

role of “Rikan” in consolidating social responsibility efforts within the energy sector and guiding social investments toward sustainable projects that deliver a tangible developmental impact.

The participants were briefed about the “Rikan” Foundation’s areas of operation, which include fostering human capital development, community infrastructure, national initiatives, charitable activities and the local economy and In-Country Value (ICV). — ONA

Oman can become hub for low-carbon technologies

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

THE Sultanate of Oman, with its strategic location, energy expertise and commitment to Net-Zero by 2050, is well positioned to become a regional hub for carbon markets and low-carbon technologies, according to experts.

Panelists who attended the Oman Climate Week recently also stressed the need for capacity building, robust regulatory frameworks, and private sector engagement to unlock the potential of Article 6 in the MENA region.

“The Sultanate of Oman is situated at the crossroads of global shipping lanes and is capable of offering easy export access to key energy markets in Asia and Europe. Besides the natural resources, the abundant sunlight and strong, and steady winds that it receives create ideal conditions for low-cost solar and wind power generation,” said Dr Said al Sarmi, Senior Net-Zero Expert and Oman Article 6 DNA, Net-Zero Centre.

The other panelists, Mahmoud Fathallah, Senior Economist,

“Oman is situated at the crossroads of global shipping lanes and is capable of offering easy export access to key energy markets in Asia and Europe. Besides the natural resources, the abundant sunlight and strong, and steady winds that it receives create ideal conditions for low-cost solar and wind power generation.

DR SAID
AL SARMi



Panelists who attended the Oman Climate Week recently stressed the need for capacity building and robust regulatory frameworks.

League of Arab States, Prof Nasser Ayoub, Managing Director, CLC EPD MENA International EPD System, Omar al Ajaji, Advisory Services Sector Manager, Voluntary Carbon Market Company (VCM), Kenichiro Yamaguchi, Fellow, Energy and Sustainability, Mitsubishi Research Institute, and Karan Khimji, Chief Commercial Officer of Khimji Group, opined that decades of experience in large-scale oil and gas engineering provide Oman with the technical skills and workforce needed to build complex energy infrastructure.

“This is accentuated by the national green hydrogen ambitions whereby Oman is aiming to produce 1 million tonnes of green hydrogen per year by 2030, backed by massive investments

in alternative energy,” they said.

Oman Climate Week 2026, which was held last week in Muscat on Monday, brought together policymakers, investors and climate experts to discuss energy transition, climate finance and adaptation strategies. A high-level panel discussion on the implementation of Article 6 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held as a side event of the second edition of Oman Climate Week, organised by the Environment Authority.

The session, titled “UNFCCC Side Event: Article 6 Implementation”, brought together international and regional experts to discuss Net-Zero goals.

GCC visitors spend €3 bn in Germany as GNTO strengthens Gulf ties

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

Germany recorded 1.2 million overnight stays by visitors from the GCC in 2025, with travellers from the region generating around €3 billion (RO 1.33 billion) in spending, underscoring the Gulf’s importance to the country’s inbound tourism sector.

The figures were highlighted by the German National Tourist Office GCC (GNTO GCC) during its participation in Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2026, where it used the four-day event to strengthen ties with travel trade, media and tourism partners across the region.

The GNTO said the GCC remains a strategically important market for Destination Germany, with the country seeking to position itself as a diverse, accessible and year-round destination for Gulf travellers.

Opening-day discussions focused on changing traveller preferences and the factors shaping international travel decisions, including connectivity, flexibility, convenience and access to reliable information.

Yamina Sofo, Director of the Marketing & Sales Office – GNTO GCC, said the ATM provided an opportunity to maintain close relationships with regional partners and



Partners at the GNTO stand at the Arabian Travel Market 2026.

gain a better understanding of what GCC travellers are looking for.

“Confidence and flexibility are becoming increasingly important when planning international travel. Travellers

want clear information, dependable connections and greater ease throughout the planning process”, she said.

Sofa added that cooperation with airlines, airports, travel companies and destination

partners was important in helping visitors plan their journeys to Germany with confidence.

GNTO was joined at ATM by Lufthansa Group, Munich Airport, Studiosus Incoming, Value Retail Management GmbH — representing Ingolstadt Village and Wertheim Village — and Visit Berlin. The partners represented different aspects of the visitor journey, including destination experiences, air connectivity, airport services and shopping.

Connectivity and ease of travel were key themes at the event, with GNTO and its partners highlighting

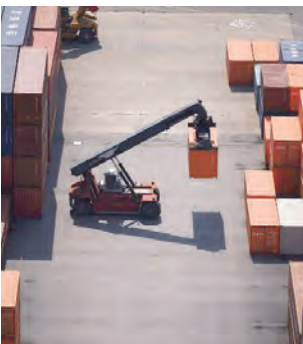
convenient air access, efficient airport experiences, reliable onward transport and clear visitor information as important factors in attracting GCC travellers.

Germany’s year-round tourism offering was also promoted, covering family holidays, city breaks, culture, nature, shopping, wellness and seasonal travel.

GNTO’s current campaigns include ‘Feel Good’ which highlights destinations and tourism providers with recognised sustainability certifications; Next Stop: Travel Destination Germany, showcasing the country’s cities and cultural hubs; and Culinary Germany.

INVESTMENT PACT

S Korea confirms first US investment project



South Korea confirmed its first project under a \$350 billion US investment pact, selecting a gas-fired power plant in Texas while considering two nuclear reactors. The move comes despite concerns over commercial viability and criticism over implementation delays.

Seoul said proposed investments require US government approval and further negotiations before final decisions are announced. — Reuters

PIPELINE RESTART

Saudi restarts key East-West pipeline



Saudi Arabia has restarted operations on its East-West oil pipeline and could resume crude exports from the Red Sea port of Yanbu, sources said.

The pipeline was operating at a low rate following its shutdown on September 13 after drone attacks. The restart could help restore Saudi Arabia’s export capacity and ease supply concerns affecting global energy markets. — Reuters

OIL RETREAT

Oil falls on Hormuz reopening hopes



Oil prices fell on Tuesday by around 1 per cent after reports that Iran could reopen the Strait of Hormuz within seven days if the United States begins easing military pressure.

Brent dropped below \$100 per barrel, while WTI also declined. The development raised hopes that renewed diplomatic efforts could restore flows through the crucial global oil shipping route. — Reuters

OPINION

A strategic economic and investment opportunity



MURTADHA MJ IBRAHIM AL JAMALANI

The writer is Deputy Chairman, Health Committee, OCCI

THE health sector is not merely a social service sector; it is one of the most important economic, investment and social sectors, directly contributing to quality of life, human wellbeing, productivity and economic diversification.

Medical tourism represents a significant opportunity within this sector. It extends beyond hospitals and medical centres to encompass pharmaceuticals and pharmacies, hotels and hospitality, transportation, tourism and travel, insurance and financial services, rehabilitation, wellness, spa and other supporting services.

Therefore, medical tourism should be viewed as an integrated economic ecosystem rather than a stand-alone healthcare activity. It connects more than six major economic sectors and creates a multiplier effect across the wider economy.

Its development can generate new investment opportunities, attract international patients and investors, create skilled employment, increase tourism expenditure and strengthen the contribution of the health and related sectors to Oman’s GDP.

In recognition of this opportunity, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), represented by its Health Committee, is working towards developing an integrated action plan to establish the foundations and infrastructure required to support the growth of medical tourism in Oman.

The objective is to create a stronger ecosystem that brings together government institutions, private healthcare providers, investors, insurance companies, hospitality and tourism operators, transportation providers, pharmaceutical companies, financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

This approach is fully aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, particularly economic diversification, private-sector development, investment attraction and the development of high-value sectors.

The successful development of medical tourism requires a strong and structured public-private partnership (PPP) model. The government can provide the appropriate regulatory framework, infrastructure, incentives, investment facilitation, accreditation and quality standards, while the private sector can contribute capital,

Medical tourism represents a significant opportunity within this sector. It extends beyond hospitals and medical centres to encompass pharmaceuticals and pharmacies, hotels and hospitality, transportation, tourism and travel, insurance and financial services, rehabilitation, wellness, spa and other supporting services.

technology, management expertise, innovation and international networks.

Such a partnership can transform Oman’s natural advantages, strategic geographical location, healthcare capabilities, hospitality infrastructure and quality of life into a competitive regional medical tourism destination.

Oman has the opportunity to develop an integrated destination combining medical treatment, rehabilitation, wellness, relaxation, tourism and hospitality.

This could create a new investment platform connecting healthcare with tourism and other economic sectors, while supporting SMEs and creating opportunities for both domestic and international investors.

The objective should therefore not simply be to attract patients to Oman, but to build a sustainable medical tourism ecosystem capable of attracting patients, investors, healthcare professionals, technology providers, hospitality operators, insurers and international strategic partners.

The next stage should focus on developing a clear National Medical Tourism Roadmap for Oman, supported by appropriate legislation, infrastructure and investment.

Workers idle, trucks empty as war slams Iraqi oil hub



ROBA EL HUSSEINI

The writer is AFP’s Baghdad Bureau Chief

In the Iraqi oil hub of Basra, maintenance contractor Fawzi spends his days cooling his heels waiting for work that seldom comes, as the Middle East war puts a serious crimp on the once-bustling port town.

Basra has long been a key cog in Iraq’s economy but, after months of Iran choking off Gulf oil exports with its blockade in the Strait of Hormuz, the city is suffering.

Fuel trucks stand idle

and workers face pay cuts and lay-offs.

“I haven’t done anything in a month,” Fawzi said. “What are we supposed to maintain?”

Many Basra residents have lost their jobs or taken heavy pay cuts as private contractors, as oil fields and the Umm Qasr cargo port scale back operations.

Crude oil exports account for almost 90 per cent of Iraq’s foreign revenue, and are primarily shipped through Hormuz via the cluster of facilities around Basra, the country’s only gateway to the Gulf.

The war has cruelly exposed Iraq’s dependence on oil, and its main export route, dealing a setback to its economic recovery after decades of conflict.

Fawzi said his company first slashed salaries by 20 per cent, then by half, before laying off dozens of employees. He now reports for duty just 15 days a month.

Basra’s parking areas overflow with oil trucks. Some linger empty, while others wait for weeks with full tanks to load their crude onto ships.

Before the war started at the end of February, Iraq produced around four million barrels of crude per day and exported an average of 3.4 million, mostly via Hormuz. But when Iran blockaded Hormuz, onshore storage quickly filled up, forcing Iraq to slash production.

Experts have long warned Iraq to introduce different income streams to cushion swings in the energy market. But with a fledgling private sector, poor banking system and dilapidated infrastructure, diversification is difficult.

Iraq has sought to calm fears by using alternative routes, including trucks through Syria and a pipeline to Türkiye, but they can handle only a fraction of the sea-bound trade.

After a sharp drop, Iraqi oil exports through Hormuz came climbing back in the first week of September, data from the maritime tracking firm Kpler showed.

However, Iraq sold the oil at “discounted prices”, a government official said. According to authorities, Iraq exported an average of 2.6 million bpd so far in September.

Iran had announced a special exemption for Iraqi tankers in late August, while the US says it has recently managed to boost Gulf exports through a secure Hormuz corridor.

Nonetheless, the economic fallout is evident. Prices have surged and the Iraqi dinar has fluctuated.

Top priority for Trump-Xi summit is no big deals

IT reads like setup for a bad political thriller: with war roiling the Middle East, China’s strongman leader arrives in Washington for a high-stakes state visit with his American counterpart.

The US president once vowed to tariff Chinese imports into oblivion, but now faces record-low approval ratings just before midterm elections and the expiry of a vital Sino-American trade truce. That means any landmark deal between the two superpowers could do more harm than good to the president’s political prospects.

The likely agenda for Xi Jinping’s summit with Donald Trump on Thursday is not short of ambitious subject matter.

Trade and supply chains, cross-border investment, AI regulation, the US war with Iran and Taiwan’s status will all likely feature.

Xi, who travels to Washington for his first state visit in more than a decade, is bringing a coterie of Chinese magnates that may include executives from electric vehicle maker BYD, smartphone maker Xiaomi and battery giant Contemporary Amperex Technology.

The delegation will rub shoulders with OpenAI’s Sam Altman, Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan, Citigroup’s Jane Fraser and Nvidia head Jensen Huang during a state dinner at the White House, according to media reports.

Yet regardless of however many movers and shakers attend, the Trump administration’s incentives argue against substantial and lasting breakthroughs that help permanently ease bilateral tensions.

Start with trade and supply chains.

The US and China have respective chokeholds on semiconductors and rare earth exports which have helped maintain a fragile economic armistice. A formal trade truce, which both sides extended in May, is due to expire on November 10.

The underlying imbalances remain largely unresolved: though direct US imports from the People’s Republic fell to a 16-year low of \$309 billion in 2025, products originating in China are still finding their way stateside.

Last month the US accused more than 40 countries of helping Beijing



HUDSON LOCKETT

The writer is the Asia columnist for Reuters Breakingviews in Hong Kong

The US president once vowed to tariff Chinese imports into oblivion, but now faces record-low approval ratings just before midterm elections and the expiry of a vital Sino-American trade truce. That means any landmark deal between the two superpowers could do more harm than good to the president’s political prospects.

illegally avoid tariffs on some \$75 billion in goods annually via transshipment. But having hurriedly walked back their mutual escalation to triple-digit percentage tariffs following last year’s “Liberation Day”, neither side looks keen to test the other’s mettle.

Trump might be personally open to further rapprochement. The president recently said he would “be OK with it” if Chinese carmakers built vehicles in the US, so long as they hired local workers.

In reality his Republican party and American automakers would probably declare betrayal and reiterate calls to lock in a ban on Chinese rivals. For their part, manufacturers from the People’s Republic would require ironclad guarantees against the sudden closure of any new factories.

The political risks attached to any deal perceived as easing up on China, coming right before midterm elections where the Democratic Party is already forecast to make big gains, means both sides are likely to seek smaller wins.

They could extend the trade truce for another six to twelve months. The US may also lower tariffs on select goods in exchange for bigger Chinese imports of agricultural products, where non-soybean purchases already look set to fall \$10 billion short of this year’s nominal \$17 billion target.

Joint boards of US-China trade and investment, which have gone nowhere since their creation in May, might also get spruced up and re-served to the public as warmed-over proof of progress. Such half-measures would deliver low-cost wins for both leaders without either giving up any real leverage.

A similar cautious logic applies to coordination on artificial intelligence. US and Chinese firms have produced the most impressive and dangerous frontier models in existence.

Yet the intergovernmental dialogue on AI announced by Beijing after the last summit has been such a nonstarter that US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Sunday said he had proposed another US-China AI dialogue at last-minute preparatory talks in New York with his Chinese counterpart He Lifeng. Real appetite for placing sensible limits on machine learning

seems limited. Trump has shrugged off existential fears over the speed of AI development voiced by Anthropic’s Dario Amodei, whose suggestion that any coordinated slowdown might help Chinese rivals was cited in nationalist newspaper Global Times as evidence of an attempt to contain China’s rise.

In short, neither side seems likely to accept any limitations that might give the other a leg up.

That leaves foreign policy, where the impasse looks equally intractable.

Trump is irked by China’s trade ties to Iran but has little leverage to force recognition of American sanctions on Tehran.

Xi meanwhile made a point of reiterating China’s position on Taiwan’s sovereignty at the last summit and the US has since held off on arms sales to Taipei. But giving any more ground would yield no clear benefit to the White House.

These countervailing forces help explain why roughly 70% of investors surveyed by Goldman Sachs earlier this month said they expect Xi’s state visit to be a “symbolic” or “non-event”.

The remainder mostly predicted incremental progress, with none of the hundred-odd investors polled by the Wall Street lender predicting a negative outcome.

This reflects a nascent reality in US-China relations: more frequent meetings like those favoured by Trump lower the stakes of any individual summit, minimising both the potential downside and upside.

That benefits Xi because it allows him to ensure that Trump — who has singled out high-level China affairs as his sole remit — views bilateral ties as a personal relationship between equals.

This prevents hawkish elements in the White House from stoking tensions too far.

Trump’s second term is due to end on January 20, 2029. Until then it behooves Beijing to consent to regular meetings that preserve a limbo in which its chief geopolitical rival has no coherent China policy.

The president may even limit renewals of the trade truce to half a year to ensure more one-on-one meetings. He and Xi are supposed to get together twice more this year.

That suits Beijing just fine and maybe Moscow, too.

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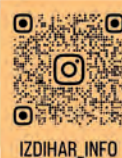
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ART/LIFE



STAL GALLERY BRINGS SOUFFLE ARIDE TO PARIS > 20

ON SECOND **THOUGHT**

THE REAL PRICE OF A VERY GOOD FAKE



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

A friend recently introduced me to a pop-up stall in a Muscat mall with an irresistible promise: some of the world’s best fragrances could be copied for a fraction of their price.

True enough, among the bottles were scents associated with an ultra-luxury perfume house. I knew immediately that they were not the real thing. The fragrance was familiar enough at first, but it did not have the same depth and certainly did not last. Still, for a moment, I understood the appeal.

There is something rewarding about finding an item we thought was beyond our reach and getting a version of it cheaply. It feels less like buying a fake and more like beating the system. We walk away thinking we have found a clever bargain.

Across Muscat, such copies are not difficult to find. They appear as perfumes, watches, shoes, clothes, art and home décor. Sellers may describe them as Class A, AAA, “one-to-one” or “mirror quality”, suggesting an orderly scale from obvious imitation to an almost perfect replica.

But there is no recognised grading system behind these descriptions. No independent body decides what qualifies as Class A or how many

As a handbag deserves. They are sales terms and their meaning can change from one seller to another.

There is also a difference between an affordable product inspired by an expensive one and a counterfeit designed to pass itself off as the original. The first uses its own identity. The second borrows another company’s name, logo, packaging and reputation.

This is where the bargain becomes more complicated. A 2025 OECD report, based on 2021 trade data, valued global trade in counterfeit goods at as much as \$467 billion. Behind that figure are lost sales and taxes, fewer legitimate jobs, weakened businesses and creators watching their ideas reproduced without sharing in the reward.

A European study likewise estimated that counterfeiting costs the clothing, cosmetics and toy industries €16 billion in sales and nearly 200,000 jobs annually.

For consumers, the risks go beyond poor stitching or a fragrance disappearing before lunch. Products made outside regulated supply chains may offer no reliable assurance about their ingredients, safety, or quality. If something goes wrong, accountability can disappear as quickly as the seller.

None of this means that everyone must buy luxury goods. Most of us cannot and perhaps luxury companies should also ask whether some prices have drifted too far from the value of the product itself. There are excellent affordable alternatives carrying their own names.

A fake may let us enjoy the look, scent, or status of something expensive for less.

The attraction is understandable. But the missing amount does not simply vanish. Somewhere along the chain, somebody else pays the difference.

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



LITERATURE

Copies of “Swan Song: Diana, My Sister”, Charles Spencer’s book about his late sister Princess Diana, are unboxed at a bookstore in central London. — **AFP**



FILM FESTIVAL

Argentinian actress Mercedes Moran poses during a photocall to promote the film “Mis Muertos Tristes” during the 74th San Sebastian International Film Festival. — **AFP**



TOURISM

This photograph shows the Beffroi de la Chambre de Commerce beautifully illuminated at night in the enchanting city of Lille, northern France. — **AFP**

INSTA PICKS



Golden wings reaching to the heavens



Salalah Eye dazzles at night

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SUR FESTIVAL CELEBRATES OMAN’S CAMEL HERITAGE



STAFF REPORTER

IN Sur, the bond between Omanis and their camels remains woven into the fabric of community life. At the Al Ardha Camel Race, that enduring connection came alive through camel traditions, folk performances and a heritage village that brought generations together. Held under the auspices of Mohammed bin Salim al Araiimi, head of the Sur Camel Committee and chairman of the organising committee, the event brought camel owners and trainers together in a celebration that placed heritage at its heart. More than a display of camel traditions, the event offered a reminder of the importance of passing customs from one generation to the next. For the Sur Camel Committee, preserving this heritage also means ensuring that younger Omanis remain connected to traditions that have long been part of society. “This is a heritage we are proud of as Omanis, and we are working through the Sur Camel

Committee to promote it and introduce younger generations to it”, Al Araiimi said. The participation of camel owners and trainers formed an important part of the event, with Al Araiimi thanking them for their contribution, alongside those who supported the traditional displays, folk performances and heritage village. The organisers thanked Shaikh Dr Saif bin Mohammed al Ghaithi, Wali of Sur, for his support for heritage activities in the wilayat, while recognising participating companies and institutions. Their involvement reflected the wider community effort behind the event, with committee members, camel owners, trainers and participants each contributing to its success. By bringing together camel traditions, cultural performances and a heritage village, the Al Ardha Camel Race created a space where Oman’s past could be celebrated while keeping its traditions meaningful for generations to come.



Two dog collars belonging to Bardot sold for €9,400, far above their initial estimate.

BARDOT AUCTION IN PARIS FETCHES NEARLY ONE MILLION EUROS



Two of Bardot's guitars fetched €8,600 and €11,900 at the Paris auction.



A family ring belonging to Brigitte Bardot at the preview exhibition of personal belongings once owned by the late French actress

AN auction of French screen legend Brigitte Bardot's personal items fetched nearly one million euros in Paris on Monday, almost 20 times the estimate, the Millon auction house said. A total of 285 objects ranging from straw hats, sunglasses, nightgowns to tableware and furniture from La Madrague and La Garrigue, Bardot's homes in Saint-Tropez in southeastern France and her Paris apartment generated tremendous enthusiasm, an AFP journalist said. Bardot died in December aged 91. The proceeds will go to Bardot's animal welfare foundation and to Nicolas-Jacques Charrier, her only child. Founded by the actor in 1986, the Brigitte Bardot Foundation says it has taken in 13,000 animals through four shelters and 150 partner facilities, supports 350 groups in France and operates in 70 countries. Some 3,000 French and international bidders had registered for the auction. “Brigitte Bardot has once again proved to be a remarkable alchemist: she transformed about 50,000 euros (\$57,000) in estimates into nearly a million euros including fees”, said auctioneer Alexandre Millon. Two dog collars, with an ID tag bearing Bardot's name and the telephone number for La Madrague, estimated at 30 euros for the pair,



French screen legend Brigitte Bardot during the height of her international film career.



The auction's proceeds will benefit the Brigitte Bardot Foundation and her only child, Nicolas-Jacques Charrier.

were sold for 9,400 euros to a Russian buyer. A self-portrait fetched nearly 40,000 euros, while the typewriter she used to write an autobiography sold for 4,634 euros.

Estimated at between 300 and 500 euros, two of her guitars soared to 8,600 and 11,900 euros while three stuffed toys representing baby seals sold for nearly 2,200 euros. “This sale is the logical continuation of the one she herself organised in 1987 with her most precious belongings to create her foundation. Today, her fight continues through this auction”, Ghyslaine Calmels, managing director of the Bardot Foundation, said after the sale. Two days before the auction, Bernard d'Ormale, Brigitte Bardot's last husband, slammed it as a “joke”. “These are personal items. Why hold this sale? For the animals? It's a joke”, Bernard d'Ormale said, adding it amounted to a “disrespect to Brigitte's memory”. Her belongings should have been preserved as part of her legacy rather than sold to raise funds for the foundation she created, d'Ormale argued, adding that Bardot “would not have agreed to this sale”. The Brigitte Bardot Foundation rejected the criticism, saying the auction was approved by the board in June, including Bardot's widower, who was then its president. However, d'Ormale said he had not understood the auction would involve such personal items. The dispute comes days after he was removed as head of the foundation, a role he had held since the star's death. — AFP



Bonnefous' Souffle Aride explores the textures, colours and vast spaces of Al Duqm.

OMAN’S STAL GALLERY BRINGS SOUFFLE ARIDE TO PARIS ART WEEK

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

OMAN'S contemporary art scene will have a presence in Paris this October as Stal Gallery presents French photographer Laura Bonnefous' Souffle Aride series at Menart Fair during Paris Art Week.

The exhibition will bring Bonnefous' interpretation of Al Duqm to an international audience, presenting a selection of photographs created during her time in Oman. Menart Fair, dedicated to modern and contemporary art from the Middle East and North Africa, returns for its seventh edition from October 23 to 25, 2026.

At the centre of the presentation is Souffle Aride, a body of work that emerged from Bonnefous' residency in Oman in 2024. The residency was developed as part of the sixth edition of French Weeks in Oman, organised by the French Embassy to Oman.

During her stay, Bonnefous travelled to Al Duqm, where she began photographing a landscape defined by striking geological formations, vast open spaces and the subtle presence of human activity.

Rather than documenting the city in a conventional way, the photographer approached Al Duqm through its details. Rock surfaces, textures, colours and shifting forms become subjects in their own right, creating images that at times appear abstract.

"Exploring matter, apprehending surfaces, questioning and

understanding territories through their colours, textures and sensibilities, such are the elements that constitute the essence of my photographic work", Bonnefous said.

"With my new project, Souffle Aride, I have chosen to explore and study a singular and captivating town in the Sultanate of Oman, the city of Al Duqm". Around 20 works from the series were first exhibited at Stal Gallery in Muscat in 2024, introducing local audiences to Bonnefous' visual interpretation of an area more commonly associated with Oman's industrial and economic development.

The project has since continued to evolve. In 2025, Souffle Aride was published as a 136-page photobook by Éditions Odyssée, featuring more than 100 photographs.

The publication also includes a text by acclaimed Omani writer Jokha al Harthi, adding a literary response to the visual exploration of Al Duqm. It was produced with the support of the French Embassy in Oman and the Embassy of Oman in France.

Now, the project returns to France in exhibition form.

Among the works selected for Menart Fair are Fragile Immensité, Espace Infini and Au-delà, created in 2024 and presented as fine art prints.

Their presentation takes on particular significance within this year's Menart Fair theme, "Where is home?", which explores ideas surrounding place, belonging and identity.

For Stal Gallery, the exhibition also represents an opportunity to bring



Laura Bonnefous photographed Al Duqm during her 2024 residency in Oman, focusing on the details of its landscape

French photographer Laura Bonnefous' exploration of Al Duqm travels from Muscat to Paris, bringing Oman's striking landscapes and Franco-Omani cultural exchange to the international art stage at Menart Fair.

of Franco-Omani cultural diplomacy: from its development during French Weeks in Oman to its exhibition in Muscat, its publication in France and its presentation at Menart Fair within a Middle Eastern context", said Volodymyra Sobolevska, gallerist at Stal Gallery.

The journey of Souffle Aride reflects that exchange. What began with a French photographer travelling through Oman developed into an exhibition in Muscat, followed by a publication combining French photography with Omani writing. Its next appearance in Paris brings the project full circle while introducing another interpretation of Oman to European audiences.

Founded in 2013 by the Alserkal Group, Stal Gallery in Muscat serves as a cultural hub to promote contemporary art, support local and international artists.

Its participation in Menart Fair places the Muscat gallery alongside artists and galleries connected to the wider Middle East and North African art scene.

Yet it is Al Duqm that remains at the heart of the exhibition.

Through Bonnefous' photographs, the coastal city emerges not simply as a place of rapid development, but as a landscape of unusual forms, quiet spaces and geological character.

As Souffle Aride travels from Muscat to Paris, the exhibition offers international audiences a less familiar portrait of Oman, seen through the textures and immense spaces of one of its most rapidly changing landscapes.