

OMAN
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RISE 05:54 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR 04:38 AM

DHUHR 12:06 PM

ASR 03:33 PM

MAGHRIB 06:14 PM

ISHA 07:25 PM



12

KHAYEGON
SPARKLES
WITH NORTH
WORLD TIME

ROYAL DIRECTIVES ON JOBS AND SOCIAL WELFARE

H i s M a j e s t y 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

HM STRESSES IMPORTANCE
OF JOINING HANDS

ENHANCE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL STABILITY

MEETING THE GOALS OF
OMAN VISION 2040

FOCUS ON NATIONAL LOCAL
CONTENT POLICY

DIGITISATION OF 74%
OF PUBLIC SERVICES

RO 100M FOR WAGE SUPPORT
INITIATIVE

INITIATIVE FOR ONE
GOVERNMENT TEAM

SUCCESS OF THE KHAREEF
DHOFAH HAILED

ISRAELI AGGRESSION
AGAINST QATAR FLAYED

OMAN’S SUPPORT
TO PALESTINIAN CAUSE



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over the meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Maamoura Palace in Salalah on Tuesday.

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK presided over the meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Maamoura Palace in Salalah on Tuesday. At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the bounties of prosperity, security and stability that He bestowed on the Sultanate of Oman.

His Majesty prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect this dear nation, its citizens and residents therein under His divine care, to endow all with abundant blessings and to consummate all efforts and endeavours with success.

Then, His Majesty reviewed the local, regional and international developments as stated below.

In response to a briefing to the Council of Ministers about the results and indicators made during the 10th Five-Year Development Plan (2021-2025) and the 11th Five-Year Development Plan (2026-2030) objectives to achieve balanced social



and human development, sustainable economic growth, boost labour market and employment efficiency and furnish proper grounds for education, health and housing — His Majesty the Sultan commended the efforts of all units of the State Administrative Apparatus and the private sector.

His Majesty valued those units' commitment to implement various development programmes

and projects, noting that this has enhanced the fiscal position and economic performance of the Sultanate of Oman and the country's advancement in economic indicators.

OMAN’S RANKING
His Majesty stressed the need to maintain the progress made so far and to press ahead with steps to upgrade Oman's ranking in those indices and to enhance

economic and social stability and the competitiveness of the national economy, while at the same time benefiting from the review and assessment of the previous plan — with the prime objective of meeting the goals of Oman Vision 2040. He pointed out that the positive outcomes achieved during the current plan foster confidence in the pursuit of future development tracks.

His Majesty underscored

the importance of joining hands towards the achievement of the targets of the upcoming development plan and to maintain the drive to achieve higher growth rates, develop appropriate mechanisms to boost the national economy, expand its structure, diversify the sources of income and to find suitable solutions for addressing the challenges posed to the implementation of employment and training

initiatives and programmes, with special emphasis on generating new employment opportunities in all sectors.

STATE BUDGET
The Council of Ministers reviewed the preliminary results of the State's General Budget for 2025, in which the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 3.4 per cent, at constant prices, due to improved added value of non-oil activities. This budget period saw the launch of projects and programmes in a number of social and economic developmental fields. Following this briefing, a review was made of articles of the draft State General Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 — the first year in the 11th Five-Year Development Plan (2026-2030). His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to the relevant authorities to keep achieving sustainable development goals, supporting economic stability, and achieving efficiency in spending within a balanced and sustainable framework. **TURN TO P2**

RO100 MILLION TO SUPPORT



FROM PAGE 1

LOCAL PRODUCTS

His Majesty the Sultan also stressed the importance of following up the implementation of the National Local Content Policy with the aim of encouraging existing industries, establishing local projects, enhancing productive industries linked to exports, and developing economic programmes and policies to motivate the national economic growth.

The Council of Ministers reviewed the achievements of the Government Digital Transformation Programme (2021-2025) – which saw the launch of the National Services Portal, the issuance of the Government Digital Transformation Regulation, the digitisation of 74 per cent of government services and the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) projects designed to make the Sultanate of Oman a regional hub for data processing centres and AI algorithms that indeed enabled Oman to occupy 45th place globally and 5th place among MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region in the AI Readiness Index.

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DIGITAL ECONOMY

Pursuant to this, the Council underlined the importance of cooperation among all units of the State Administrative Apparatus towards the realisation of the objectives of the National Programme for Digital Economy and its executive regulations and to undertake adequate action to boost readiness in terms of investment, technical, human and legislative spheres, in addition to addressing the obstacles facing this programme and AI projects in the

upcoming stage.

After a briefing was presented to the Council of Ministers about the employment file, as well as the executive status of initiatives of the National Employment Programme – and the challenges involved – and, with a view to the Council's keenness to generate more employment opportunities for job-seekers, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to double the sum previously allocated to support the programmes and initiatives for the employment of job-seekers in the private sector, notably the Wage Support Initiative, so that the sum allocated would stand at RO 100 million, due to the substantial uptake to these programmes and initiatives by both the private sector and job-seekers.

EMPLOYMENT

It was also noted that the National Employment Platform “Tawteen” was launched in December 2024. The platform provides data on job supply and demand, and displays available employment opportunities in the public and private sectors. Emphasis was laid on developing the “Tawteen” platform

and devising a suitable mechanism to increase the number of registered companies and link the platform with relevant databases.

The Council of Ministers listened to a briefing about the results of the semi-annual evaluation of government institutions' performance during 2024, as well as a briefing about the results achieved by the National Platform for Suggestions, Complaints and Reports “Tajawob”.

Following these briefings, the Council underlined the need to continue to develop the “Tajawob” platform and to encourage the departments concerned to indicate the rate of finalisation of reports within the specified period.

The Council also called for responding to the suggestions and complaints, addressing the most notable observations and following up the satisfaction of the beneficiaries of government services. The Council commended the performance of the departments that showed high rates of performance in this respect. It also urged other departments to exert further efforts to raise the levels of their performance.

JOB-SEEKERS IN PVT SECTOR



PERFORMANCE

His Majesty affirmed that, since the beginning of the year (2025), he has approved a mechanism for holding all departments accountable and responsible according to their annual performance results.

Within the context of His Majesty the Sultan's keenness in all that would elevate the services rendered to persons with disabilities, and, following a review of related indicators, and, due to the importance of according proper attention to this segment of society, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives for the establishment of a new sector, at the level of a ministry under-secretary within the structure of the Ministry of Social Development.

The new entity will oversee this sector, accord appropriate attention to its affairs, address the challenges of the sector, and ensure the empowerment of persons with disabilities and their integration in a more efficient manner that enhances their role in building society and facilitating their education.

The Council also gave its blessings for the launch of the National Initiative for the One Government Team that will be implemented

by the Royal Academy of Management (RAM) for all employees of civil units of the State Administrative Apparatus. The initiative aims to instil a mindset that transcends the boundaries of functional thinking to the supreme goal of joining the One Government Team.

In this context, His Majesty stressed the importance of working with a one-team spirit to elevate the nation to the status it deserves.

KHAREEF SUCCESS

Noting the success of the Khareef Dhofar Season 2025, the Council of Ministers commended the efforts made both by the Governorate of Dhofar and the authorities concerned to implement multiple developmental projects, events and programmes aimed to attract tourists to the governorate.

On regional and international affairs, and after noting the principles of the Sultanate of Oman's steadfast policy of preserving international peace and security, the Council of Ministers valued the outcomes of the Emergency Arab-Islamic Summit and its outcomes. The Council expressed its

condemnation of the Israeli aggression against the State of Qatar, noting that the aggression was in blatant violation of Qatar's sovereignty, as well as all international laws and norms. The Council affirmed its full solidarity with the State of Qatar and voiced its complete support for all measures that Qatar takes in this regard.

PALESTINIAN CAUSE

In this context, the Council also reiterated its emphasis on the Sultanate of Oman's unwavering position in support of the Palestinian cause and the situation in the occupied territories and its condemnation of the persistent aggression against the besieged Gaza Strip.

The Council also voiced its absolute rejection of the ongoing practices of deliberately targeting innocent civilians, medical and relief personnel, journalists and infrastructure in the Strip, in addition to the ongoing crimes of starving the Palestinian population, preventing aid from reaching them, and attempts to displace the Palestinians.

The Council termed this as a violation of international law and norms, international

legitimacy resolutions and humanitarian principles. It affirmed that such acts in this regard undermine all regional and international efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees the Two-State Solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The Council also referred to the recent Royal and high-ranking official visits exchanged with Arab and friendly countries. It stressed the need to leverage from the agreements that were signed and converting those gains into tangible executive programmes that would serve the developmental goals of the country.

The Council also noted the Sultanate of Oman's participation in a number of regional and international meetings and summits aimed at affirming the principles of dialogue and developing joint solutions that bolster cooperation, security and stability – to serve the common interests of all countries.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan prayed to Allah the Almighty to grant all continued success for the welfare and prosperity of this dear homeland and its loyal people. — ONA

HIS MAJESTY PRESIDES OVER COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING

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- His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to the relevant authorities to keep achieving sustainable development goals, supporting economic stability and achieving efficiency in spending
- His Majesty stressed the importance of following up the implementation of the National Local Content Policy with the aim of encouraging existing industries
- His Majesty stressed the need to maintain the progress made so far and to press ahead with steps to upgrade Oman's ranking
- His Majesty underscored the importance of joining hands towards the achievement of the targets of the upcoming development plan
- The Council of Ministers called for responding to the suggestions and complaints, addressing the most notable observations
- The Council of Ministers gave its blessings for the launch of the National Initiative for the One Government Team for all employees of civil units
- The Council of Ministers underlined the need to continue to develop the “Tajawob” platform





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SHORTTAKES



Foreign Minister,
British counterpart
discuss bilateral ties

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, received a phone call from Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom (UK).

During the call, they reviewed the historic and strategic bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Kingdom, and ways to enhance them in various fields to serve the common interests of both countries.

The two ministers also exchanged views on several regional and international issues of mutual concern, foremost among them the developments in Palestine, particularly the ongoing tragedies in the Gaza Strip resulting from the war waged by Israel and its encroachment on the sovereignty of countries in the region.

Both sides affirmed the importance of a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, agreeing on a framework for peace, facilitating the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid and working to end the suffering of civilians. — ONA

Cut reliance on imports &
increase local food output

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUWAIQ, SEPT 16

THE FOOD SECURITY Forum and its accompanying exhibition, held under the theme 'Safe Investment for Sustainable Food', concluded after two days of extensive discussions and knowledge exchange. The closing ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Ahmed bin Nasser al Bakri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Agriculture, in the presence of Shaikh Issa bin Ahmed al Maashani, Wali of Al Suwaiq, and Eng Said al Abri, Chairman of OCCI of Al Batinah North Governorate.

With more than 360 participants, 25 expert speakers, two main sessions, and four panel discussions, the forum served as a platform for dialogue on the future of food security in Oman. The accompanying exhibition featured 27 institutions, while over 60 publications and reports were produced, reflecting the scale of the event and its engagement with both public and private stakeholders in the target fields.

Dr Ali bin Mohammed al Hamedhi, Chairman of the Food Security Committee, emphasised the economic context supporting food security initiatives. He noted that Oman's Gross Domestic Product

The forum's discussions and final recommendations placed strong emphasis on modern approaches and sustainable practices. Key outcomes included a call to boost local food manufacturing to reduce reliance on imports, through integrated collaboration between OCCI, the SME Development Authority, and industrial zones, supported by training programmes provided by Mazoon Dairy



The forum served as a platform for dialogue on the future of food security in Oman.

had reached RO 38.3 billion by the end of 2024, with significant growth recorded in the first quarter of 2025 and investments exceeding 11 billion rials, making it an essential driver for national food security projects.

The forum's discussions and final recommendations placed strong emphasis on modern approaches and sustainable practices. Key outcomes included a call to boost local food manufacturing to reduce reliance on imports, through integrated collaboration between OCCI, the SME Development Authority, and industrial zones, supported by training programmes provided by Mazoon Dairy. Another major focus was on strengthening agricultural value chains by establishing collection and sorting centres to ensure product quality, and encouraging investment in food processing industries, particularly dates and other high value crops.

Participants also stressed the importance of attracting private investment into food storage, distribution and marketing systems, ensuring that agricultural, livestock, and fisheries products reach both domestic and international markets efficiently. A recommendation was made to conduct a comprehensive study on Al Batinah North's potential in the food security sector, alongside the creation of a structured entrepreneurial pathway that connects SMEs, OCCI and civil society organisations to support start-ups from foundation to full-scale production.



وزارة الإعلام
Ministry of Information



INTERNATIONAL TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at Ministry of Information announces its Tender for the following works:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Class & Grade	Last Date For Collection	Submission Date	Purchase Fees (R.O.)
2/2025 (323/2025) at E-Tendering	Upgrade of Outside Broadcasting Van (HD1) including Vision Mixer, Router, Monitors and Accessories	Excellent First	30/9/2025	26/10/2025	25/-
3/2025 (322/2025) at E-Tendering	Upgrade of Outside Broadcasting Van (HD2) including Vision Mixer, Router and Accessories	Excellent First	30/9/2025	26/10/2025	40/-
4/2025 (321/2025) at E-Tendering	Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of Outside Broadcasting Racing Vehicle with Gyro-stabilized 4K UHD IP Camera System and Accessories	Excellent First	30/9/2025	26/10/2025	25/-

1. All specialized companies in the field of the tender shown above and are registered with the Tender Board to the degree indicated above, may obtain tender documents, against non-refundable fees, from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>

2. Companies and institutions are exempted from providing a temporary insurance of 1% when submitting their bid, provided that they sign a document committing themselves to the submitted bid for a period determined when the bidding strategy is approved in accordance with the document attached to the Isnad platform. As for international companies that do not have a headquarters in the Sultanate of Oman, they are required to provide temporary insurance of 1%.

(For more information, please see the original circular issued by the Tender Board on the Isnad platform.)

Note that the last date for accepting bids as mentioned above is before 10:00 am. Any bid received after the time and date mentioned in the submission date will be rejected automatically.

You are requested to provide 2 hard copies for your offer after the submission in Projects Department at Ministry of Information.

3. The Ministry has the right to:

- 1) Add or Cancell some works in the tender if necessary.
- 2) Cancellation of the tender without giving reasons.

For clarifications you may contact via:
Telephone : 24943785, 24943177, Email: (Moi.Tenders@omaninfo.om)

Hundreds expected to take part in charity run on Sept 20

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabiyousef

Hundreds of sports enthusiasts and environmental lovers are expected to take part in the highly ambitious 'Strides for Nature Charity Run', an exciting new initiative dedicated to raising funds and awareness for Oman's environmental causes by the Environment Society of Oman.

This is the first time ESO is organising such an event, aligning it with World Cleanup Day to highlight the urgency of protecting Oman's environment. The run will be led by Fahad al Albri, Oman's Guinness World Record holder, and will bring together people of all ages to stride towards a greener future. Speaking to the Observer, a representative from the ESO said that the first-ever run has already attracted people of all ages and

registration is progressing quickly. "We have so far confirmed 415 participants, while many hundreds are expected to take part in the maiden run for the environment," he said. The charity run, which will be held on September 20 at 4 pm at Al Qurum Beach, aims to increase awareness of environmental conservation efforts in the region as well as to raise funds for environmental conservation projects in Oman.

India-Oman Network to boost ties

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

The Indian Embassy in Oman launched the India-Oman Network, a 'track 1.5' platform, envisioned as a smart plug-in to our classical platforms of partnership promotion between the two nations.

Pankaj Khimji launched the official logo of ION. In his address, Khimji pointed out the importance of partnership between Oman and India and said there is more in the pipeline.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the trade volumes and joint investments between the two nations display the significance of the partnership between the two nations.

"Omani entrepreneurs have been active in the Indian market. OCCI is there to support all initiatives," he said. Invest Oman highlighted the initiatives offered to the foreign



Both countries are embarking on transformative journeys, unlocking opportunities that call for them to collaborate, innovate and grow together.

investors in Oman.

On the occasion, the Ambassador of India, GV Srinivas, said, "As we gather here today, envisioning the future trajectories of both India and Oman, we recognise the immense potential for collaboration between our two nations." He said India aims to achieve developed nation status

by 2047. "Simultaneously, Oman is steadily realising its Oman Vision 2040 — a blueprint for sustainable and diversified economic growth. Both countries are embarking on transformative journeys, unlocking opportunities that beckon us to collaborate, innovate and grow together."

SHORT TAKES



The signing of the agreement aims to maximise the benefits of cultural heritage. — ONA

CONTRACT FOR MANAGING BARKA FORT

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) on Tuesday signed a contract with Bait Al Ghasham Trading to manage, operate and utilise Barka Fort in the Wilayat of Barka, Al Batinah South Governorate.

The signing of the agreement aims to maximise the benefits of cultural heritage and its contribution to economic growth, as Barka Fort is one of the most important historical landmarks in the governorate, holding significant cultural and heritage value.

The project will stimulate tourism by attracting visitors from both within and outside Oman and will serve as an opportunity to enhance the private sector’s role in the management and operation of heritage sites. The project will also provide multiple investment opportunities, including tourism activities, cultural events, recreational activities and craft exhibitions, in addition to creating job opportunities in various sectors.

— ONA

NAMA SHOWCASES WASTEWATER NETWORK PROJECTS



The wastewater network projects in the Wilayat of Bausher include main and sub-lines. — ONA

MUSCAT: Nama Water Services on Tuesday held a meeting with Bausher Municipality to review wastewater network projects.

During the meeting, the company presented the projects, implementation plans and various stages of execution. They also discussed challenges facing the projects, including the impact on roads and public facilities.

The meeting explored avenues of cooperation with Bausher Municipality to overcome these challenges and ensure a flexible implementation process. This will align with current and future plans, achieve service integration and facilitate coordination with relevant authorities.

The wastewater network projects in the Wilayat of Bausher include main and sub-lines spanning a total length of 311 kilometres, of which 34 kilometers are for a potable water network. — ONA

OMANI LAWYERS EXPLORE SPANISH LEGAL ASPECTS

KABEER YOUSUF
@KABIYOUSEF

A delegation from the Omani Lawyers Association met with the Board of Directors of the Spanish Bar Association, the apex body of the lawyers practising in Spain, during its visit to the country.

The heads of the two delegations explained to each other the role and importance of both legal institutions.

Dr Hamad bin Hamdan al Rubaie, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Omani Lawyers Association, explained the importance of the visit and its impact on the legal and economic aspects between the two countries. He



The heads of the two delegations explained to each other the role and importance of both legal institutions.

also highlighted the role of the Association in humanitarian work, where it implements an annual humanitarian initiative

to relieve the suffering of those imprisoned for non-criminal cases.

Javier Graciaraya, President

Tamaken programme to navigate mental health

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

APPROXIMATELY 332 million people in the world have depression, which is about 1.5 times more common among women than men, according to the World Health Organization. In Oman, statistics on depression and anxiety indicate a significant burden, with a 2023 Sultan Qaboos University study reporting a 33.7-per cent depression rate among college students.

Data from 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic showed that 57 per cent of youth experienced depression, 40.5 per cent anxiety and 38.1 per cent stress.

Recent studies among university students and medical residents also show high rates, with one study among medical residents in 2020 finding a 28.8-per cent depression rate.

About 25 psychology graduates will undergo special training to emphasise the importance of advancing mental health education in Oman.

The launch of Tamaken, a pioneering training programme in mental health and well-being, was held at the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) in Muscat.

The training programme is designed by Al Harub Medical Centre and supported by BP Oman.

This pioneering initiative is carefully adapted to Oman’s cultural and social context, ensuring relevance to the unique needs of the local community. It blends international best practices with practical, context-specific training to empower early-career psychologists, allied health professionals and community



Tamaken trainees will be able to apply the skills they have learned in university to the realities of an Arab and Omani context.

This pioneering initiative is carefully adapted to Oman’s cultural and social context, ensuring relevance to the unique needs of the local community. It blends international best practices with practical, context-specific training to empower early-career psychologists, allied health professionals and community leaders.

leaders. By bridging the gap between academic learning and clinical practice, Tamaken aims to build a sustainable workforce in mental health and strengthen Oman’s capacity to respond to the rising demand for psychological services.

Idris al Obaidani, Senior Occupational Health Adviser at BP Oman, said in his speech that the Tamaken programme is a significant initiative that BP Oman is proud to support. He mentioned that the programme is designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application for Omani psychology graduates.

The programme aims to offer a comprehensive curriculum that will help the trainees navigate the mental health landscape in Oman by providing local context and exposing them to Omani societal norms, traditions and beliefs, preparing them for client-facing roles in clinics.

Al Obaidani expressed hope that the programme will have a

profound impact on the community and mental health professionals.

Tamaken is the brainchild of Nutaila al Kharusi, Managing Director at Al Harub Medical Centre.

“Tamaken was born out of seeing a clear gap in our field - so many talented, eager graduates in mental health, hungry to put their knowledge into practice, but with no structured path to guide them. During the pandemic, when the world seemed to pause, I began writing the proposal for this programme. The timing was not right then, but today, here we are with the trainees, the very first cohort of Tamaken,” said Nutaila.

She pointed out that the programme is not just training; it’s an investment in the future of mental health in Oman.

The programme will consist of 12 weeks of theoretical training, four weeks of foundational practicum for bachelor’s psychology graduates and six months of advanced practicum for master’s psychology graduates.

Omani author’s book revives history for next generation

MUSCAT: Omani history represents a cultural treasure rich with stories and tales that need to be reintroduced to new generations in an accessible and engaging language.

From this perspective comes the book ‘A Travel Ticket to Oman: Tales from Omani History’ by author Ahmed bin Nasser al Rashdi, published by the Omani Red Fox Library.

Through this work, the author aims to present a collection of historical stories for children and adolescents, using a compelling narrative style that bridges the past and the present.

Author Ahmed al Rashdi explains that reproducing and writing vivid scenes and stories from the history of Oman for children and young people is an urgent necessity.

Library shelves lack books that convey the culture and civilisation of Oman to children. Although there are some titles and publications by Arab writers about Oman, they often lack accurate information, and the illustrations included do not truly reflect its environment, nature and heritage.

He noted that the main motivation for the book came from questions he received from parents and teachers searching for books on Omani



history tailored for children, so they could read and summarise them for cultural competitions.

This inspired the idea for the book, and he began developing plans to complete and author it. He pointed out that he collected and documented the historical stories he read about Omani personalities and maritime and terrestrial environments, among other topics included in the ‘Omani Encyclopedia for Young People.’ He chose to reinterpret tales of Omani Sultans and their cultural achievements, such as the establishment of the Sultanate Printing Press, the printing of books and the

construction of culturally significant transcontinental ships, through this book.

He emphasised that large and voluminous history books have seen declining readership due to the preoccupation of educators in both homes and schools with visually captivating technological and social media distractions.

These books now primarily attract researchers and specialised scholars. He stressed the importance of making history accessible to school students, children and adolescents through engaging publications — both in style and presentation. — ONA

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Mourners carry caskets during a funeral for military media members, in Sanaa. — Reuters

ISRAELI STRIKES HIT YEMEN’S PORT OF HODEIDAH

ADEN: Israel said it struck a military infrastructure site in its latest attack on Yemen’s Ansar Allah group at the Red Sea port of Hodeidah on Tuesday. The attack came hours after the Israeli military issued an evacuation order for the port and a few weeks after a major Israeli attack that killed Ansar Allah officials in August.

Al Masirah TV said that 12 Israeli strikes targeted the port’s docks. Two sources at the port said that the strikes targeted three docks restored after previous Israeli hits. Residents in the area said the attack lasted about 10 minutes.

Ansar Allah has also in the past fired missiles towards Israel, most of which have been intercepted. The group’s military spokesperson, Yahya Saree, said on Telegram that the group’s air defences had been able to force Israeli warplanes away, but provided no proof. The Israeli military’s statement gave no details of the strike beyond saying they hit infrastructure.

Yemen’s Health Ministry said last week the number of casualties in Israel’s attacks rose to 46 people killed and 165 wounded. Israel struck the Yemeni capital Sanaa and the northern province of Al Jawf. — Reuters

CHINA URGES US, JAPAN TO WITHDRAW TYPHON SYSTEM

BEIJING: China urged Tokyo and Washington to withdraw the US-developed Typhon missile system, after it was unveiled in Japan for the first time during joint military exercises. Japan and the United States began the “Resolute Dragon” military drills on Thursday. The drills will last until September 25, Tokyo’s defence ministry said on X. Japan’s Self-Defence Forces confirmed that the missile system had been showcased for the first time in the country over the course of the exercises, though it said the weapon would not be fired.

Beijing’s foreign ministry on Tuesday called on the United States and Japan to “promptly withdraw” the missile system. “The United States and Japan, disregarding China’s solemn concerns, have insisted on deploying the Typhon mid-range missile system in Japan under the pretext of joint exercises,” spokesman Lin Jian told reporters at a regular briefing. “China expresses strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to this,” he added.

The United States’ Typhon missile system is part of the army’s long-range precision strike “modernisation portfolio”, according to an April report on the US Naval Institute’s website. The system “leverages existing Raytheon-produced SM-6 missiles and Raytheon-produced Tomahawk cruise missiles and modifies them for ground launch”, it added. — AFP

SYSTEMIC FRAUD

Billions stolen in South Sudan corruption



South Sudan government officials have stolen billions of dollars in oil money since the country gained independence in 2011, a United Nations report said on Tuesday. “Our report tells the story of the plundering of a nation,” said Yasmin Sooka, chair of the commission, in a statement. “It is driving hunger, collapsing health systems and causing preventable deaths, as well as fuelling deadly armed conflict over resources,” she added. — AFP

NEW DECISION MAKER

Japan political party to install AI leader



An upstart Japanese political party said that it will install an artificial intelligence as leader after its maverick founder quit following a disastrous showing in recent elections. “The new leader will be AI,” Koki Okumura, a doctoral student of AI research, said. The AI will not dictate political activities of party members but will focus on decisions such as distribution of its resources among members, said Okumura, who recently won a party contest. — AFP

HEAVY DOWNPOURS

Landslides kill 12 after Malaysia deluges



At least 12 people were killed in landslides in Malaysia’s Sabah state after heavy rains battered the Borneo island region for the past week. The worst incident happened on Monday, when debris hit an informal dwelling on the outskirts of the capital, killing eight people including four children. Heavy downpours have hit Sabah on northeastern Borneo for the past 10 days, flooding low-lying areas, causing landslides and damage to homes. — AFP

Israel committing genocide in Gaza, say UN investigators



Displaced Palestinians, fleeing northern Gaza, move southward. — Reuters

UNITED Nations investigators on Tuesday accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza in a bid to “destroy the Palestinians”, accusing Israel’s prime minister and other top officials of incitement. The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI), which does not speak on behalf of the world body, found that “genocide is occurring in Gaza”, commission chief Navi Pillay said. “The responsibility lies with the State of Israel.”

The bombshell report, immediately slammed by Israel, marks the first time a UN-mandated investigative body has concluded the country is committing genocide. Israel has since the start of the war in Gaza faced genocide accusations from NGOs and independent UN experts. The UN itself has not labelled the situation in Gaza a genocide, but Pillay said she believed the facts presented by the commission should prompt “high-level leaders at the United Nations also to call this what it is, the genocide”.

After the report was published, UN rights chief Volker Turk said it was up to the courts to determine whether genocide was taking place, but warned: “We see the evidence mounting.” Israel “categorically” rejected Tuesday’s report, with the foreign ministry describing it as “distorted and false” and calling “for the immediate abolition of this Commission of Inquiry”.

The commission published its latest report nearly two years after the war erupted in Gaza following Hamas’s October 7, 2023, attack inside Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people. Israel’s retaliatory campaign has displaced virtually the entire Gaza population and has killed nearly 65,000 people, according to figures from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza that the UN considers reliable.

The report came as Israel on Tuesday launched a ground assault on Gaza City, where the UN has declared a full-blown famine. The COI concluded that Israeli authorities and forces had since October 2023 committed “four of the five genocidal acts” listed in the 1948 Genocide Convention. These are “killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, and imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group”.

The investigators said explicit statements by Israeli civilian and military authorities and their patterns of military action “indicated that the genocidal acts were committed with intent to destroy... Palestinians in



Palestinian children stand at a tent camp sheltering displaced people, in Gaza. — Reuters

UN rights chief Volker Turk warned: “We see the evidence mounting.” Israel “categorically” rejected Tuesday’s report, with the foreign ministry describing it as “distorted and false” and calling “for the immediate abolition of this Commission of Inquiry”

the Gaza Strip as a group”. They concluded that Israeli President Isaac Herzog, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant have “incited the commission of genocide and that Israeli authorities have failed to take action against them to punish this incitement”. “The responsibility for these atrocity crimes lies with Israeli authorities at the highest echelons,” stated Pillay, 83, a South African former judge who once headed the international tribunal for Rwanda and also served as UN human rights chief.

Commissioner Chris Sidoti meanwhile stressed that the people of Israel too “have been betrayed by their government”, whose “genocidal war... has made (their) peace and security... almost impossible for the foreseeable future”. “Their trauma and their suffering has been ruthlessly manipulated by Netanyahu and his cronies,” he told journalists.

The commission is not a legal body but its reports wield diplomatic pressure and serve to gather evidence for later use by courts. Pillay said the commission was cooperating with the International Criminal Court’s prosecutor, and had “shared thousands of pieces of information with them”.

The ICC has already issued international arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. And the ICJ last year ordered Israel “to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide”. The investigators stressed that it could take years for the court to definitively rule on whether a genocide is taking place — but Pillay insisted member states must “act now”. — Reuters

REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE



US President Donald Trump speaks to the press from the South Lawn of the White House, in Washington, DC. — AFP

TRUMP SUES NYT FOR DEFAMATION, LIBEL, SEEKS \$15 BILLION

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump sued the New York Times, four of its reporters and publisher Penguin Random House for at least \$15 billion, claiming defamation and libel and citing reputational damage, a Florida court filing showed. Trump has gone after major media outlets, including the Wall Street Journal and Paramount, in his second term for what he describes as false or misleading coverage and has sought billions of dollars in damages from them.

Monday’s suit cites a series of New York Times articles, one an editorial prior to the 2024 presidential election, which said he was unfit for office, and a 2024 book published by Penguin titled “Lucky Loser: How Donald Trump Squandered His Father’s Fortune and Created the Illusion of Success”. “Defendants maliciously published the Book and the Articles knowing that these publications were filled with repugnant distortions and fabrications about President Trump,” according to the filing lodged on Monday in the US District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Trump also sued the Wall Street Journal and its owners, including Rupert Murdoch, earlier this year for at least \$10 billion over the newspaper’s report that his name was on a 2003 birthday greeting for Jeffrey Epstein and a reference to secrets they shared.

In July, CBS parent company Paramount agreed to settle a lawsuit filed by Trump alleging that the CBS news programme “60 Minutes” deceptively edited an interview with former Vice President Kamala Harris that the network broadcast in October.

Trump’s lawyers said in the filing on Monday that the New York Times had harmed Trump’s business and personal reputation, thereby causing massive economic damage to his brand value and significant damage to his future financial prospects. “The harm to the value of TMTG (Trump Media and Technology Group) stock is one example of how the Defendants’ defamation has injured President Trump,” said his lawyers, citing “a precipitous decline in the stock price.” TMTG stock has been under pressure in recent months, fueled by worries about the end of a so-called lock-up period related to its stock market debut in March.

“This lawsuit has no merit. It lacks any legitimate legal claims and instead is an attempt to stifle and discourage independent reporting,” a spokesperson for the NYT said. — Reuters

SERBIA INDICTS EX-MINISTER, 12 OTHERS OVER TRAIN STATION TRAGEDY

BELGRADE: Serbian prosecutors filed an updated indictment on Tuesday against 13 people, including a former minister, over a fatal railway station roof collapse that has triggered a wave of anti-government protests. The prosecution said all those indicted, among them former construction minister Goran Vesic, face charges of “serious crimes against public safety” over the tragedy that killed 16 people last November. “The indictment proposes that the Higher

Court in Novi Sad order custody for all the defendants,” the prosecutor’s office said in a statement. The roof collapse at the newly renovated station in Serbia’s second-largest city, Novi Sad, became a symbol of entrenched corruption and sparked almost daily protests. Protesters first demanded a transparent investigation, but their calls soon escalated into demands for early elections. The Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office in Novi Sad initially filed an

indictment at the end of December, but judges returned it in April, requesting more information. The accused were released or placed under house arrest following the decision. The prosecutor’s office said it had complied with the judge’s request and had now completed the supplementary investigation. The prosecutor specialising in organised crime and corruption in Belgrade is leading a separate investigation into the tragedy.— AFP

EU’s Russia sanctions delayed over US pressure

THE European Commission will delay presenting its next Russia sanctions package, EU officials said on Tuesday, as the bloc tries to respond to the Trump administration’s demand that it play a stronger role in depriving Russia of energy revenues. The Commission had been expected to present a 19th round of sanctions to envoys of the 27 EU member states on Wednesday that diplomats said was likely to include Russian banks, Moscow’s sanctions-evading “shadow fleet” of oil tankers and listings to deter other countries from circumventing EU and US sanctions.

Two EU officials confirmed the delay, first reported by Politico, but did not say why the timeline had slipped. No new date has been set for the package to be presented. Andriy Yermak, chief of staff to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, pressed the EU to act swiftly. “The 19th EU sanctions package must be adopted without delay - and all strong measures must remain intact,” he wrote on X.

The US has stepped up pressure on Europe to play a more robust role in helping to end Russia’s war in Ukraine, with a peace deal seemingly elusive despite repeated threats of harsher penalties on Moscow and partners. US President Donald Trump has told the EU it should impose harsh tariffs on India and China, the biggest buyers of Russian oil, and stop importing Russian energy itself, as part of a strategy to put pressure on Russia’s war economy. A European Commission spokesperson told reporters “discussions are ongoing in order to have a solid (sanctions) package”.

The EU already intends to end purchases of Russian oil and gas by January 1, 2028 - a goal it says is ambitious and would ensure that EU countries do not face energy price spikes or supply shortages in the meantime. But Washington wants the bloc to move faster. On tariffs, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the Trump administration would not impose additional levies on Chinese goods to halt China’s purchases of Russian oil unless EU nations first hit China and India with punitive duties of their own. European officials have said the bloc is



Firefighters work at the site of a building of a pharmaceutical university hit by a strike. — Reuters

highly unlikely to do so. The EU treats tariffs differently to sanctions and only imposes them after a probe to establish a legal justification within the bloc’s trade laws. “It’s a challenging proposition (from Trump),” one EU diplomat told Reuters. “Even if his requests are deliberately excessive, it still forces us to come to terms with them in some way in order to avoid him shifting the blame onto the EU.” Finance ministers from the Group of Seven nations discussed further Russia sanctions last Friday. Earlier that day, Trump said his patience with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin was running out, but he stopped short of threatening new sanctions. Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said Kyiv supported all efforts to starve the Russian war machine of resources. “They can and should be coordinated steps from both sides of the Atlantic,” he said on X.

Meanwhile, Russian forces launched a large attack early on Tuesday on Ukraine’s southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, killing a 41-year-old man, injuring at least 18 people and triggering a number of fires, the regional governor said. Ivan Fedorov said

that two children were among the injured. Pictures posted by the governor online showed firefighters battling blazes in private homes and other buildings. In Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine’s emergency services reported a fire covering an area of 350 square metres in three residential buildings and in a service station.

According to preliminary reports, Fedorov said, Russian forces had carried out 10 strikes from multiple rocket launch systems, damaging 10 apartment buildings and 12 private homes. “I heard some distant explosions, very far away, so we went to sleep. And then there was a super strong explosion which blew out our windows,” Zaporizhzhia resident Oleksii, 35, said.

Other Ukrainian cities in the centre, south, and east of the country also came under attack as Russian troops launched more than 100 drones and about 150 glide bombs overnight, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said. In the central Kyiv region, a large retail logistical centre was hit in the Russian attacks, with thick columns of dark smoke rising into the sky and firefighters battling the blaze. — Reuters

Nepalis hold funerals for those killed in deadly anti-graft protests

KATHMANDU: Weeping relatives held funerals on Tuesday for loved ones at a sacred Hindu site in Nepal’s capital of Kathmandu, after their deaths in anti-graft protests last week that brought a change of government in the Himalayan nation. At least 72 people died in the unrest and the vandalism and arson that followed “Gen Z” protests by young people frustrated at a lack of opportunities and perceived government lethargy, with more than 2,100 injured.

Thousands of relatives and onlookers watched as smoke and ash wreathed the pyres of four cremated near the temple of Lord Pashupatinath in the capital, following Hindu tradition.

A national flag was placed on each coffin, while police gave them a guard of honour as a mark of respect.

“He will never return now,” said Rachana Khatiwada, a mother

among them, who sobbed as she held a framed portrait of her 18-year-son Rashik, killed in front of parliament.

“He said he would not participate in the protests, watch from the outside and return home early,” she said.

Earlier, a truck had wended its way in solemn procession through the city carrying six coffins, with five more placed on separate vehicles garlanded with marigolds and banners, after hospital officials handed the bodies to relatives. Two ministers of Nepal’s new interim government joined the convoy. Helicopters carried the bodies of others killed in the protests to home towns outside Kathmandu.

Bina Maharjan said she prayed for the well-being of her brother Binod, 34, after hearing of the violence at the protests he was attending, only to be told of his death later in a telephone call from friends.



Family members, friends gather during the cremation of the people who died in protests, in Kathmandu. — Reuters

“We told him not to go for the protests,” Maharjan added. “But he insisted and went, only to get killed.” She said a postmortem showed her brother had been hit by a bullet that passed through one cheek and

emerged from the other, while a second stuck in his throat. Nepal’s deadliest protests in decades erupted just as the country entered its peak tourist season, dealing a blow to businesses that

had been preparing to welcome trekkers from around the globe to experience its world-famous trails. Shops, pubs and restaurants lining the neatly organized alleys of places like Thamel - Kathmandu’s bustling tourist hub - remained largely deserted, even after reopening in the aftermath of a violent anti-corruption protest.

Nepal’s tourism authority, hotel owners and trek organisers said arrivals had fallen by 30 per cent from this time last year, leading to bookings being cancelled.

“I am sitting outside idle because there are no tourists ... Many groups have cancelled in September,” said 49-year-old Ram Chandra Giri, who arranges trekking expeditions and owns a Japanese restaurant. He said 35 per cent of his guests had cancelled their bookings. Renu Baniya, a hotel owner, said all bookings had been completely cancelled. — Reuters

OPINION

HM’s directives to reinforce economic, social stability



HIS Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued several significant directives focusing on economic diversification, social development and job creation, aiming to secure a prosperous future for the Sultanate of Oman. These initiatives are central to the Oman Vision 2040, a comprehensive plan for economic and social development, which seeks to transition Oman from an oil-dependent economy to a diversified, knowledge-based one.

During a meeting of the Council of Ministers, His Majesty directed that the sum previously allocated to support programmes and pathways for employing job-seekers in the private sector – particularly the wage support initiative – be doubled to RO 100 million, in light of the substantial uptake of these initiatives and programmes by both the private sector and job-seekers.

This increase aims to further stimulate employment opportunities for Omani citizens within the private sector. The wage support initiative is a crucial component of Oman’s strategy to address unemployment and enhance the competitiveness of its national workforce. The government has also emphasised strengthening the national employment platform ‘Tawteen’ by increasing registered companies and integrating relevant databases to better utilise data for job creation.

The doubling of the wage support initiative underscores the government’s commitment to social development and job creation as integral parts of its economic reform agenda. This is

further evidenced by the creation of a new undersecretary-level sector within the Ministry of Social Development to oversee initiatives for persons with disabilities, promoting their empowerment and inclusion. These measures collectively aim to reinforce economic and social stability and boost the national economy’s competitiveness.

His Majesty also directed the creation of a new undersecretary-level sector within the Ministry of Social Development structure. This sector will be responsible for supervising all initiatives aimed at improving services for persons with disabilities, addressing sector-specific challenges, promoting their effective empowerment and inclusion to enhance their role in societal development, and facilitating educational access across all levels.

This initiative reflects a broader governmental strategy to foster a more inclusive society and ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to contribute to national development. The establishment of a dedicated sector at the under-secretary level signifies a high-level commitment and a structured approach to tackling the multifaceted challenges faced by persons with disabilities, ranging from accessibility to educational and employment opportunities.

During his meeting with the Council of Ministers, His Majesty also emphasised the importance of coordinated national efforts to achieve the goals of the National Digital Economy Program and its implementation initiatives.

This emphasis reflects a strategic vision to

The doubling of the wage support initiative underscores the government’s commitment to social development and job creation as integral parts of its economic reform agenda.

diversify Oman’s economy, foster innovation and enhance global competitiveness through digital transformation. The programme aims to leverage cutting-edge technologies, develop digital infrastructure and cultivate a skilled workforce to drive sustainable economic growth. His Majesty’s directives highlight the importance of synergy among various government entities, the private sector and academic institutions to ensure the successful execution of digital economy strategies.

Key initiatives under the programme include promoting e-governance, supporting digital entrepreneurship, expanding broadband connectivity, and investing in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. The overarching goal is to position Oman as a leading digital economy in the region, capable of attracting foreign investment and creating new opportunities for its citizens.

Among the programme’s notable achievements is the launch of the unified national services portal, streamlining citizen and business access to government services. The Council also underscored the issuance of the Government Digital Transformation Regulation, which has accelerated the digitisation of public services, with 74 per cent of government services now fully digital.

Oman, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, has embarked on a significant journey of transformation and progress. A central pillar of his vision has been economic growth and diversification, moving away from reliance on finite oil and gas reserves.

FLOODS DEVASTATE INDIA’S BREADBASKET OF PUNJAB

ARUNABH SAIKIA

The fields are full but the paddy brown and wilted, and the air thick with the stench of rotting crops and livestock — the aftermath of record monsoon rains that have devastated India’s breadbasket.

In Punjab, often dubbed the country’s granary, the damage is unprecedented: floods have swallowed farmlands almost the size of London and New York City combined.

India’s agriculture minister said in a recent visit to the state that “the crops have been destroyed and ruined”, and Punjab’s chief minister called the deluge “one of the worst flood disasters in decades”.

Old-timers agree. “The last time we saw such an all-consuming flood was in 1988,” said 70-year-old Balkar Singh in the village of Shehzada, 30 km north of the holy Sikh city of Amritsar.

The gushing waters have reduced Singh’s paddy field to marshland and opened ominous cracks in the walls of his house.

Floods and landslides are common during the June-September monsoon season on the subcontinent, but experts say climate change, coupled with poorly planned development, is increasing their frequency, severity and impact.

Punjab saw rainfall surge by almost two-thirds compared with the average rate for August, according to the national weather department, killing at least 52 people and affecting over 400,000. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a relief package worth around \$180 million for Punjab.

The village of Toor, sandwiched between the Ravi river and Pakistan, is in tatters — strewn with collapsing crops, livestock carcasses and destroyed homes.

Even at the best of times, bringing heavy earth-movers into the area is a tall order, as a pontoon bridge connecting it to the mainland only operates in the lean months.

Punjab is the largest supplier of rice and wheat to India’s food security programme, which provides subsidised grain to more than 800 million people.

Analysts say this year’s losses are unlikely to threaten domestic supplies thanks to large buffer stocks, but exports of premium basmati rice are expected to suffer. — AFP

Need a new global system that responds to crises

WHO do you call when you need help? Each of us carries a mental list of dependable family members and friends who we know will answer in times of distress. In the Sultanate of Oman, when emergencies strike, God forbid, citizens and residents dial 9999, the number of the Royal Oman Police. It represents order, protection and reliability.

But when it comes to the global system, there is no such number to call. The Gulf, like much of the world, has been confronted with the painful reality that there is no dependable superpower ready to answer the call of justice. Historically, for nearly two centuries, the great powers, Britain, France and later the United States, claimed to play the role of “global emergency responders.” In reality, their interventions have often produced the very disasters they promised to prevent.

On September 9, 2024, the US-EU backed Israeli occupation carried out a treacherous strike in Doha, Qatar. The attack spilled the blood of both Palestinian and Qatari martyrs, symbolically uniting the destinies of the Levant and the Gulf. This was not only a military escalation but also a message: Even a Gulf capital that hosts one of the largest US military bases in the world is not safe from violations of sovereignty. Data underscores the contradiction. The US has over 45,000 troops stationed in the Gulf across bases in Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UAE. Al Udeid in Qatar alone is the largest American base in the Middle East, hosting around 10,000 personnel. These forces, marketed as guardians



KHALID AL HURAIBI

, The writer is an innovator and an insights storyteller

The tragedies of Gaza, the violation of Doha, and the destabilisation of Arab lands show that the so-called “global 9999” cannot be trusted. The superpowers that once pretended to guarantee stability have instead institutionalised chaos

of stability, have instead been implicated in enabling interventions and wars that caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands, from Iraq in 2003 to Gaza in 2023-2024. What should have been a guarantee of safety has turned into a glaring vulnerability. A wolf in shepherd’s clothing, the global superpower plays both arsonist and firefighter.

History offers perspective. Arab culture remembers the Battle of Thi Qar, around 610 CE, when a confederation of Arab tribes defeated the tyrannical mighty Sasanian Shah Khusru II who betrayed and executed his Arab ally al Numān ibn al Mundhir. It was the first time Arabs had collectively humbled an empire, which disintegrated completely after one generation of its defeat. The parallels are striking: Then, betrayal and arrogance led a tyrant to alienate its Arab allies, triggering rebellion. Now, tyrannical Western superpowers undermine their supposed allies in the Gulf through disregard of sovereignty and complicity in occupation and war crimes. At Thi Qar, Arab unity across faiths, loyalty and knowledge of terrain overcame imperial arrogance. Today, the lesson is clear: Survival and dignity lie in regional solidarity and global alliances beyond dependency on one superpower.

The Arab and Islamic world must join hands with the Global South to create a new “emergency number” for humanity, a system of cooperation that responds to crises not with xenophobia, Islamophobia, threats and bombs, but with justice and prosperity. This is not an abstract dream. It is already emerging. In

2024, BRICS expanded to include Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt, giving the bloc control of over 40 per cent of global oil production and nearly 36 per cent of world GDP. This represents a historic opportunity for Arab states to anchor themselves in a multipolar order. Intra-Gulf and Asia-Gulf trade has soared. China is now the GCC’s largest trading partner, with bilateral trade surpassing around RO 100 billion in 2023. Qatar and Oman have played outsized roles as mediators, while Gulf sovereign wealth funds, collectively valued at over RO 2 trillion, could be mobilised for sustainable development instead of fuelling dependency on Western security umbrellas. By weaving together energy, finance, and diplomacy, the Arab world can become not just a consumer of security but a provider of global stability.

The tragedies of Gaza, the violation of Doha, and the destabilisation of Arab lands show that the so-called “global 9999” cannot be trusted. The superpowers that once pretended to guarantee stability have instead institutionalised chaos. For the Arab and Islamic world, the path forward is not isolation but strategic coalition: investing in independent defence and technological capacities, leading in global climate and energy transitions, and building a justice-based order with Africa, Asia and Latin America that prioritises human dignity over imperial interests. In a world where the emergency call goes unanswered, or worse, answered by the source of danger, Arabs must remember Thi Qar and recognise that unity, loyalty, and principled alliances are the only reliable emergency responders.

A day for prioritising patient safety in healthcare



SAMUEL KUTTY

The writer is a freelance journalist and author who worked in Oman and India

TODAY marks World Patient Safety Day, a time when families, caregivers, communities, health professionals, policymakers, and patients unite to demonstrate their dedication to ensuring patient safety.

Patient safety is a fundamental principle of healthcare and is being more widely recognised as an essential and escalating international public issue. By emphasising safety, healthcare organisations fulfil vital standards and foster an environment of trust and responsibility.

Established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019 to be observed each year on September 17, the theme for the day varies annually, with the central aim focusing on patient safety as a global health priority, in accordance with the essential medical tenet of “first, do no harm.”

This year’s theme is “Safe care for every newborns and every child,” featuring the slogan “Patient safety from the start!” highlighting the susceptibility of this age group to dangers and injuries stemming from unsafe care.

It is common knowledge that one safety incident can lead to lifelong effects on a child’s health and growth. This is why the day this year is focusing on guaranteeing safe care for all newborns and children, particularly emphasising those from birth to nine years old.

“By focusing on secure care for children, we are protecting the future and guaranteeing that each child gets the optimal start to life,” asserts WHO, the UN’s specialised agency.

Safety represents one facet of quality, which encompasses not just the prevention of avoidable harm but also ensuring access to suitable care—delivering effective services to those in need and refraining from offering ineffective or detrimental services.

According to WHO, all children are entitled to receive safe and quality health care from the start. However, “infants and young kids are at increased risk because of their swift growth, changing health requirements, and distinct disease trends.”

It is a commonly recognised truth that no individual should suffer harm within health care. Nonetheless, there is strong proof of a significant load of preventable patient harm worldwide in both advanced and emerging health care systems. This carries significant human, moral, ethical, and financial consequences.

The reported incidence of patient safety issues concerning newborns and children receiving medical care differs, yet research indicates that adverse occurrences happen in all healthcare environments, with increased risks in critically ill children, especially those in intensive care or needing intricate medical procedures. Despite a 61 per cent reduction in the global under-five mortality rate, which

One safety incident can lead to lifelong effects on a child’s health and growth. This is why World Patient Safety Day 2025 is focused on guaranteeing safe care for all newborns and children, particularly emphasising those from birth to nine years old

fell from 94 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 37 in 2023, enhancing child survival continues to be a critical issue. Unicef reports that in 2023, approximately 13,100 deaths of children under five happened daily, an unacceptably high figure of mostly avoidable child fatalities.

Every newborns, regardless of location, is entitled to high-quality universal health care. Infants are entitled to breathe comfortably, stay warm, receive proper nourishment and be protected from diseases and harm.

The WHO reports that 1 in 30 patients in healthcare experiences harm related to medication, with over 25 per cent of this harm considered severe or life-threatening. Fifty per cent of preventable damage in healthcare is linked to medications.

So, caregivers, health professionals, educators and communities must come together to prevent preventable harm in paediatric care and to create a safer, healthier future for all children. “From medical facilities to residences, each child is entitled to a secure beginning in life.”

Finally, patient safety involves more than just preventing mistakes; it requires fostering a setting where optimal care is provided consistently. Through investing in education, working together with peers, and spearheading safety initiatives, healthcare professionals can help create a system that guarantees all patients receive the utmost quality of care.

Investment deals pave way for Trump’s arrival in Britain

ELIZABETH PIPER AND STEVE HOLLAND

US President Donald Trump was due to arrive in Britain late on Tuesday for a second state visit at which the two nations will seal deals worth more than \$10 billion, a renewal of a “special relationship” Prime Minister Keir Starmer is keen to champion.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and British finance minister Rachel Reeves were leading events ahead of Trump’s arrival, announcing a “Transatlantic taskforce” to deepen work between two of the world’s largest financial centres.

Trump will then be greeted by King Charles on Wednesday, for a day of pomp at Windsor Castle, a regal show of soft power that Starmer hopes will offer him protection from possible pitfalls later on the visit. Starmer, under pressure after being forced to sack Peter Mandelson as his ambassador to the US over his ties to Epstein, will then host Trump at his country residence.

With Starmer hoping to underline that his close ties with Trump can benefit Britain, senior US officials said on Monday that deals worth more than \$10 billion would be announced during the visit, covering energy and technology.

Business executives attending include Nvidia Corp CEO Jensen Huang and OpenAI’s Sam Altman. Google said it would invest 5 billion pounds (\$6.8 billion), partly on a new data centre close to London that would help meet demand for AI services.

“This historic second state visit is set to highlight and renew the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom,” a senior US official said on Monday.

A spokesperson for Starmer told reporters on Monday that the prime minister “sees this state visit squarely through the lens of delivering for working people”, citing US investment pledged over the weekend to create 1,800 jobs in Britain and a civil nuclear partnership that could lower energy prices.Olivia O’Sullivan, a director at the Chatham House think tank, said Britain believed that by closely aligning with the US it could stay “on the cutting edge of the kind of frontier technology” that is dominated by the US and China.

Starmer could well do with shifting the focus to geopolitics when he hosts Trump at his Chequers country residence, after enduring some of his toughest weeks in office.

Several of his Labour lawmakers are angry over his handling of the departures of both his deputy, Angela Rayner, and Mandelson, questioning his full-throated support for both before being forced to let them go. After mis-steps over welfare reform, accepting gifts and tax restrictions on child benefits, several lawmakers are increasingly questioning the British leader’s judgement and political nous, especially at a time when Nigel Farage’s populist Reform UK party is running well ahead in the polls. — Reuters

Lack of jobs forces young Nepalis abroad

AFTER youth protests over corruption and joblessness toppled Nepal’s parliament and left dozens dead, villagers like Santosh Sunar see their own struggles reflected in the nation’s turmoil.

The 31-year-old is jobless and desperately seeking work, yet he dreads the day he finds it - knowing it will likely mean splitting his family further, leaving his daughter with his mother, with his wife already abroad.

“There are no opportunities even after education,” said Santosh, who lives in the rural settlement of Pharping, on the outskirts of the capital Kathmandu. He is far from alone.

A “staggering” 82 per cent of Nepal’s workforce is in informal employment, one in five Nepalis aged 15-24 are jobless, according to the World Bank.

With few prospects at home, where GDP per capita is only \$1,447, millions of Nepalis look abroad.

Remittances now account for a third of GDP, the world’s fourth-highest rate. In Pharping, nearly every second household has a relative overseas.

Santosh’s wife Amrita, 22, is a waitress in Dubai.

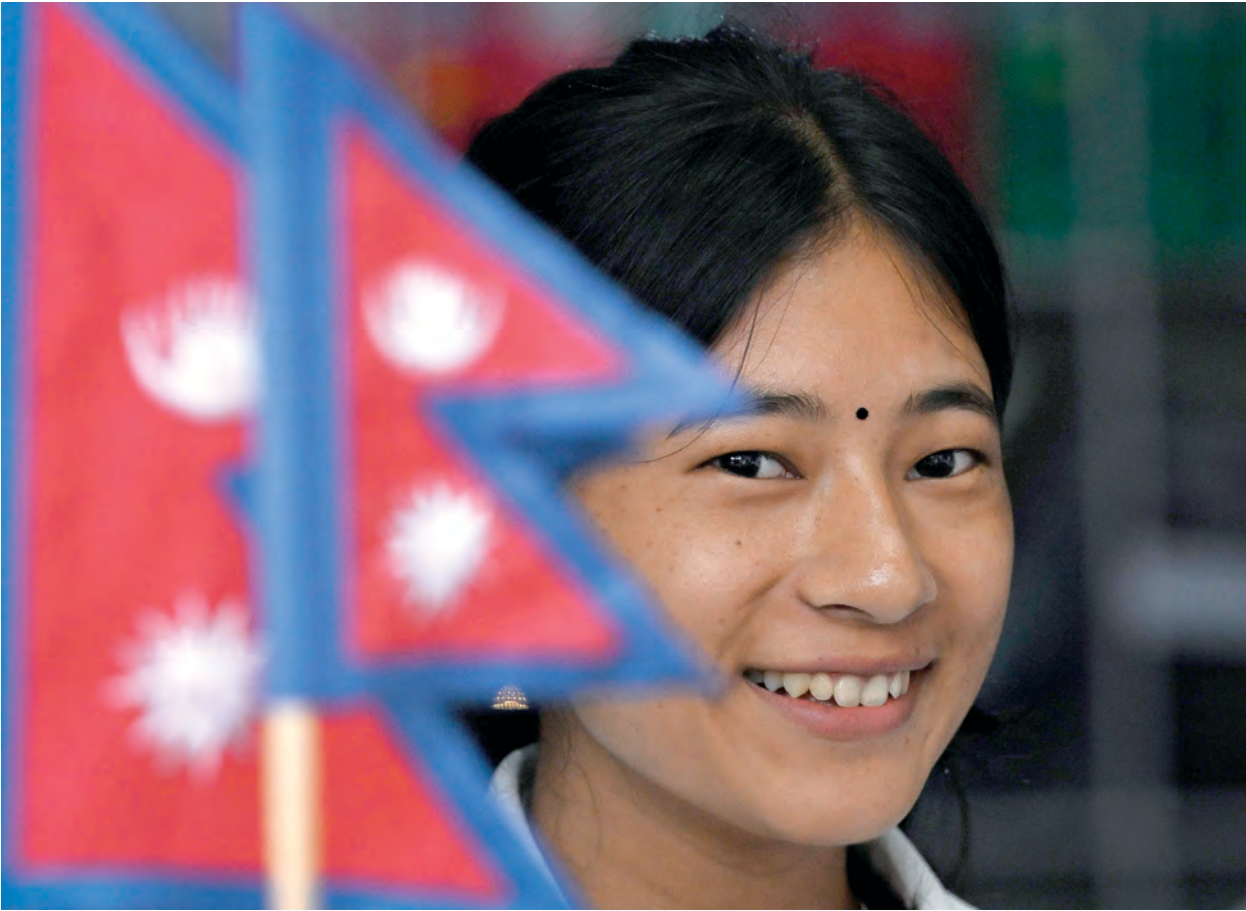
“We really miss each other,” Santosh said, who has previously worked in India’s tech-hub of Bengaluru.

“It’s tough being away from your wife - and tougher knowing I’d also have to leave my mother and young daughter when I find work,” he said. “But what can we do?”

More than 839,000 Nepalis left the country of 30 million to work abroad last year, according to government data.

Tackling endemic corruption and unemployment tops the agenda for Nepal’s new leader, 73-year-old former chief justice Sushila Karki, who was sworn in as interim prime minister last Friday.

Her predecessor quit on September 9, as protesters set parliament and key government buildings on fire.



A young woman smiles as she is pictured in the rural settlement of Pharping, on the outskirts of Nepal’s capital, Kathmandu. — AFP



BHUVAN BAGGA

The writer is South Asia Correspondent for AFP

Protests began a day earlier, sparked by a ban on social media, but fuelled by long-standing economic woes.

At least 72 people were killed in two days of protests, with 191 still recovering in hospital, according to government figures.

Santosh didn’t take part, but said he backed what the protesters had done. His mother, Maiya Sunar, 48, dreams of a time when the young don’t have to choose between food and family.

“We miss living like a family,” she said. “But I also understand that the young have no choice.”

Her neighbour, Kamala Sunar, 40, also faces the prospect of living without her children nearby. Her younger daughter Diksha, 24, works as a housekeeper in Dubai.

Now her older daughter, Rakshya, 27, a single mother to a two-year-old, hopes to follow in her sister’s footsteps, leaving her daughter

behind.

“She has repeatedly warned me against the idea, as the hours are long and the living conditions tough,” Rakshya said.

“But what life would I be able to give my daughter here? There is nothing here. If I toil for a few years and save some money for her education, maybe my daughter would have a bright future.”

Sitting outside their one-room house, with unplastered brick walls painted red and white, Kamala said the thought of her daughter leaving fills her with sadness.

“Most of our people our age have no option but to leave,” Kamala said.

Shyam Bahadur Khatri, 69, an elected village official, said that Nepal is creating ageing villages where subsistence agriculture was the only option.

“There will be no young person left even to carry the dead,” he said, warning of the future.

SPORTS

MAIDEN SUCCESS



Iva Jovic of the US celebrates with the trophy after winning the Guadalajara Open. — Reuters

JOVIC CLAIMS FIRST WTA TITLE AT GUADALAJARA OPEN

GUADALAJARA, Mexico: American Iva Jovic captured her first WTA Tour-level title on Sunday with a 6-4 6-1 win over Colombia's Emiliana Arango in the final of the Guadalajara Open.

The 17-year-old Californian, who entered the WTA 500 hardcourt tournament ranked 73rd, became the youngest player to win the title, and the youngest American to clinch a tour-level crown since Coco Gauff triumphed in Parma in 2021.

With the win, Jovic also breaks into the Top 50 when the rankings are released on Monday.

Arango battled valiantly despite dealing with illness, the 24-year-old saving three set points at 5-3 in the opener and breaking Jovic's serve twice to stay in contention.

However, she was unable to capitalise while leading 30-15 in the next game and Jovic closed out the set. The American then dominated the second set, wrapping up the match in just over 90 minutes.

Jovic had warm words for Arango, who also finished runner-up in Merida in February and is still seeking her first WTA title.

"You showed so much fight and gave the people a show," Jovic said. "It's not easy to start out on tour when you're young ... but people like Emiliana make it easier and always have a smile on their face." — Reuters

Oman U17 players in intensive training for Gulf Cup

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

The Oman Under-17 football team is undergoing a domestic preparatory camp with intensive training sessions at Seeb Stadium ahead of two major assignments — the U17 Gulf Cup Championship in Qatar which will begin on Saturday and the AFC U17 Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers in Saudi Arabia in November.

Oman will kick off their Gulf Cup campaign against the United Arab Emirates on Sunday, before taking on hosts Qatar on September 24. Their final group-stage match will be against Yemen on September 27. The Gulf Cup, organised by the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation (AGCFF) in collaboration with the Qatar Football Association, will be staged in Doha from September 20 to October 2. Oman are drawn in Group A alongside Qatar, UAE and Yemen while Group B featured Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait. The top two teams from each group will advance to the semifinals.

The junior Red Warriors concluded the first phase of their training camp in Muscat last week and the second part is going on before they travel to Doha on Thursday. The Oman Football Association (OFA) recently announced that coach Ahmed Bait Said will temporarily lead the squad until a



Coach Ahmed Bait Said said the camps will assess the players before the tournament.

permanent appointment is made.

"I am very pleased to lead the junior national team and thanks to OFA for their confidence and trust. The first camp of

the team, which took place last week, was purposely to assess the selected squad and finalising the starting list ahead of Gulf Cup. In this camp we will continue on the

14 teams advance to finals of women's bowling

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

FOURTEEN teams have qualified for the finals of the 17th Women's Bowling Championship for Government and Private Sector Institutions 2025, after rounds filled with excitement and fierce competition. Oman Oil Development Company (PDO) topped the standings with 1,632 points, reaffirming their strong presence in the tournament. The Royal Air Force of Oman team followed in second place with 1,467 points, while the Royal Court Affairs team secured third with 1,424 points. Sohar International Bank also booked a spot in the finals with 1,329 points, along with Rolly Oman Engineering (1,322 points), Occidental (A) (1,319 points), and Asyad Group (1,280 points).

The list of finalists also includes Bank Muscat (1,122 points), Occidental (B) (1,106 points), and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (1,101 points). Bank Nizwa qualified with 1,056 points, followed by MB Petroleum (1,045 points), Oman Electricity Transmission Company (1,015 points), and Muscat Municipality (A) with 1,011 points. The next stage is expected to bring even more intensity as these teams compete for the championship title.

GROUP RESULTS

GROUP B

Competition was particularly intense, with the Royal Air Force of Oman leading the pack with 1,467 points. Sohar International Bank came second with 1,392 points, just ahead of Occidental (A) with 1,391 points. Asyad Group maintained its spot with 1,280 points, while the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority secured their place with 1,101 points, joined by Bank Nizwa (1,056) and Oman Electricity Transmission (1,015). Other results included Al Maha (A) with 933 points, the SME Development Authority team with 924 points, Al Maha (C) with 848 points, and Al Maha (B) with 777 points.

GROUP A

This group witnessed high scores, as PDO dominated with 1,632 points, followed by Royal Court Affairs (1,424



Oman Oil Development Company (PDO) topped the standings with 1,632 points.

points), Rolly Oman Engineering (1,322 points), and Bank Muscat (1,122 points). Occidental (B) also advanced with 1,106 points, alongside MB Petroleum (1,045 points) and Muscat Municipality (A) (1,011 points). Other results saw Muscat Municipality (B) earn 962 points, Oil & Gas Exploration and Production Co. (947 points), Omantel (952 points), Marsa Operations Services (890 points), Daleel Petroleum (887 points), and finally the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) with 861 points.

With this competitive landscape, the championship now heads into its decisive final stages, where thrilling matchups will determine the most deserving team to lift the 17th edition's trophy.

Khawla al Rawahi, Director of the Women's Sports Department at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth

(MoCSY), said that the competition had shown high technical levels from the very beginning. She noted that announcing the championship back in April gave institutions ample time to prepare and form strong teams through regular training programmes and internal qualifiers. She added that this year's edition introduced a format change, starting with team qualifiers instead of singles as in previous years, which added more excitement and highlighted the spirit of teamwork among the players.

Al Rawahi emphasised that the championship provides female employees with the opportunity to step away from daily work routines and practice sport as part of their lifestyle. She stressed that the availability of coaches, trainers, and steady training programmes contributes to achieving the goals of the event.

UAELOSS



Jatinder Singh in action during Asia Cup.

OMAN SKIPPER
JATINDER RUES LACK
OF EXPERIENCE

MUSCAT: Oman captain Jatinder Singh conceded that his side’s inexperience proved costly against the UAE in their Asia Cup fixture on Monday in Abu Dhabi but insisted the team is heading in the right direction as it continues to find its feet at the top level.

On Monday, during their Group A match, UAE had scored 172/5 and then bowled Oman out for 130 in 18.4 overs.

Speaking during the post-match presentation, Jatinder said: “Well, I believe credit goes to the UAE batters — the way they started their innings, they had their plans and executed them well.”

“When we started, we were right on target but I think we lost too many wickets. I feel the team is picking up; we just lack a bit of experience. I think in the coming years, we’ll be firing at full throttle.”

Jatinder pointed out that the surface eased out as the evening progressed, making batting more straightforward for the opposition.

“The track was quite placid, especially in the evening. The ball came nicely onto the bat; we knew a good powerplay was important, but that didn’t happen,” he said.

On his dismissal after he had struck four boundaries, Jatinder said: “I feel he (Junaid Siddique) bowled as per the plan, with a slower one, but I was a bit early in the shot.”

Oman batter Aryan Bisht echoed the skipper’s views but underlined the importance of sticking to strategies at this level. “We failed to execute our plans and UAE had a better game plan,” Bisht admitted in the post-match press conference.

The 20-year-old added: “Asia Cup is a big learning stage and playing alongside Test-playing nations will give the team a lot of exposure. We are now looking forward to our final game against India and will give our best.”

For the UAE, captain Muhammad Waseem praised his side’s aggressive start and the meticulous preparation that went into the contest.

“As I said, the past is past for us [big India defeat in their opening match]. We wanted to show our calibre and the way we want to play, and we did that. We talked in the meeting, prepared three days before, and executed our plans. We wanted to play aggressively in the powerplay, and we did exactly that,” he said.

Waseem, who also crossed the milestone of 3,000 career runs during the game, called the win “a proud moment” and stressed his desire to continue leading from the front.

With one match left against heavyweights India, Oman’s campaign offers another tough test. For Jatinder and Bisht, however, the bigger picture is clear: every outing at this level adds to the team’s experience, something they believe will soon turn into consistent results.



Oman’s Aryan Bisht plays a shot against the UAE.



Sri Lanka’s Wanindu Hasaranga (C) celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Hong Kong’s Babar Hayat (R) during the Asia Cup 2025 Twenty20 match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. — AFP

Lanka survive Hong Kong
scare for 4-wicket win

SRI LANKA were made to sweat before edging Hong Kong by four wickets in the Asia Cup on Monday, as Wanindu Hasaranga’s late cameo spared the former champions an embarrassing stumble.

Chasing 150 on a sluggish surface, Sri Lanka looked comfortable at 119 for two with 31 needed off 30 deliveries, but a flurry of wickets, four for eight runs, set nerves jangling.

Hasaranga steadied the innings with an unbeaten 20 off nine balls, striking two fours and a six to seal victory with seven balls left.

Pathum Nissanka was again the batting linchpin, cracking 68 off 44 balls with six fours and two sixes. The opener, ranked seventh in the ICC T20 batting standings, posted back-to-back half-centuries to become the tournament’s leading scorer with 118 runs. Fortune favoured him. He was reprieved on 22, 58 and 59, before being run out going for a risky second.

Hong Kong’s spirited effort was undermined by sloppy fielding as they grassed five catches that might have turned the contest on its head.

“It was a very good performance but we’re disappointed we dropped so many catches,” said skipper Yasim Murtaza.

Earlier, after being sent in, Hong Kong charged to 31 for no loss in the first three



Sri Lanka’s Dasun Shanaka (L) and Wanindu Hasaranga celebrate their team’s win at the end of the Asia Cup 2025 Twenty20 match against Hong Kong in Dubai. — AFP

overs. A 61-run stand from Anshuman Rath (48) and Nizakat Khan (52) anchored their innings, the latter posting his 12th half-century.

Dushmantha Chameera’s pace proved too hot to handle, finishing with two wickets.

“Very pleased with my form, but we have a long way to go,” said Nissanka, who continues to flourish at the top of the order.

The win puts Sri Lanka top of Group B, all but ensuring a place in the second round with one match in hand. — AFP

Zandvoort, Singapore to host F1 sprints for first time

PARIS: Zandvoort, Singapore and Montreal will host sprint races for the first time in 2026, Formula One and the sport’s governing body the FIA announced on Tuesday.

These three venues will join Shanghai and Miami, which have staged the Saturday dashes for the past two seasons, and Silverstone, which last hosted a sprint in 2021.

Next season will be the sixth year of the sprint format which has proved a popular addition to a race weekend.

Sprint qualifying takes place on Friday after the first practice session, with the sprint race and qualifying for Sunday’s main Grand Prix on the Saturday.

Sprint race winners get eight points down to one point for the driver finishing eighth.

Shanghai will get the 2026 sprint season up and running



General view as spectators watch on during practice for Canadian Grand Prix at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, Montreal, Quebec, Canada on June 13. — Reuters

at the March 13-15 Chinese Grand Prix, followed by Miami (May 1-3), Canada (May 22-24), Silverstone (July 3-5), Zandvoort (August 21-23) and Singapore (October 9-11).

F1 boss Stefano Domenicali said: “The F1 Sprint has continued to grow in positive

impact and popularity since it was introduced in 2021.

“With four competitive sessions rather than two during a conventional Grand Prix weekend, F1 Sprint events offer more action each day for our fans, broadcast partners, and for the promoters — driving

increased attendance and viewership.”

F1 is introducing a new set of regulations for 2026, adding an air of uncertainty as to which teams will master the fresh generation of cars the best.

The last time the technical landscape was changed in 2022 Red Bull and Max Verstappen stole a march on their grid rivals.

The format has also proved popular in MotoGP, which unlike F1 incorporates a sprint race every weekend.

The 2026 F1 season gets underway at the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on March 8. McLaren are dominating the 2025 season, with Oscar Piastri leading his teammate Lando Norris by 31 points ahead of the 17th round of the 24-race season in Azerbaijan this weekend. — AFP

SPORTS

SPRINTSERIES



The BMW M4 GT3 EVO pair are in confident mood after their stunning Gold Cup category win in Nurburgring.

AL MANAR RACING’S
AL ZUBAIR,
KLINGMANN AIM FOR
SUCCESS IN VALENCIA

VALENCIA, SPAIN: Al Manar Racing by Team WRT’s Al Faisal al Zubair and Jens Klingmann round off their challenge for honours in the GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Sprint Series at the Circuit Ricardo Tormo Valencia in Spain this weekend.

The BMW M4 GT3 EVO pair are in confident mood after their stunning Gold Cup category win at the penultimate round of the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup powered by AWS at the Nurburgring at the end of August.

They were also in form at the last round of the Sprint Series at Magny-Cours in France at the start of August, where they earned second and fourth-place finishes in the two Sprint races. They are currently classified in fifth in both the Teams’ and Drivers’ Championships.

Oman-based Al Zubair said: “Very excited to get it going again and get to the final round of the Sprint series, the penultimate round of the whole championship. We are in a solid position now but, coming off the win at the Nurburgring, our momentum heading into the final two rounds is strong.

“Hopefully, we can end the Sprint and the Endurance championships on a high note, The team has been getting stronger and stronger. I hope we can cement in more good result and bring back more podiums this weekend. That is the goal and to gain as many points as possible.”

All Sprint titles across the four classes will be decided in Valencia, where the race weekend has attracted a 40-car grid.

Emil Frey Racing’s Chris Lulham and Thierry Vermeulen lead the Gold Cup category on 90 points from Sainteloc Racing (87.5pts) and the Garage 59 Team (80pts). Tresor Attempto Racing (73pts) and Al Manar Racing by Team WRT remain fifth with 68.5 points.

This will be the fourth time the series has visited the 4.005km circuit after previous visits in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Located in neighbouring Cheste, Circuit Ricardo Tormo Valencia was built in 1999 and is named after the late Spanish two-time world champion motorcycle racer Ricardo Tormo. The circuit is well known as a host venue for MotoGP.

The GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Sprint Series shares the circuit this weekend with the GT2 European Series powered by Pirelli, the Porsche Carrera Cup France and the Clio Cup Series.

Private testing is permitted on the Spanish circuit on Thursday for GTWC entrants but the first official free practice session takes centre stage from 09.40hrs on Friday (September 19). Pre-qualifying rounds off the day’s action at 15.00hrs.

Qualifying for the first of the Sprint races is scheduled for 09.00hrs on Saturday morning and the first Sprint race fires into life at 14.00hrs. Sunday’s action follows a similar timetable with Q2 at 09.00hrs and the second race getting the green light at 14.00hrs.

SPRINT SERIES

TEAMS – Latest Gold Cup standings

- 1. Emil Frey Racing 90 pts
- 2. Sainteloc Racing 87.5 pts
- 3. Garage 59.80 pts
- 4. Tresor Attempto Racing 73 pts
- 5. Al Manar Racing by Team WRT 68.5 pts
- 6. Barwell Motorsport 15 pts
- 7. CSA Racing 9 pts

DRIVERS – Latest Gold Cup standings

- 1. Chris Lulham/Thierry Vermeulen 90 pts
- 2. Gilles Magnus/Paul Evrard 87.5 pts
- 3. Louis Prette 80 pts
- 4. Sebastian Ogaard/Leonardo Moncini 73 pts
- 5. Al Faisal al Zubair/Jens Klingmann 68.5 pts
- 6. Thomas Fleming 54.5 pts
- 7. Adam Smalley 25.5 pts
- 8. Bijoy Garg/Ricky Collard 15 pts
- 9. Arthur Rougier/James Kell 9 pts



Kenya’s Faith Kipyegon celebrates with her gold medal and a Kenya flag after winning the women’s 1500m final. — Reuters

Kipyegon sparkles with
fourth 1,500m world title

Tinch’s time away pays off

Kerr completes Kiwi double

Katzberg retains hammer title

FAITH KIPYEGON cemented her status as an athletics legend on Tuesday by winning her fourth world 1500 metres title whilst Cordell Tinch’s decision to return to the sport paid off with 110m hurdles gold.

The 31-year-old Kipyegon had bad news for those who entertained hopes of winning the 5000m later in the week — the Kenyan is going to try and achieve the double as she did in Budapest in 2023.

Tinch was also at those championships two years ago but bowed out in the semifinals, with Grant Holloway going onto win his third world gold.

On Tuesday, the roles were reversed as Holloway bowed out in the semis and 25-year-old Tinch took his crown.

Not bad for someone who stepped away from the sport and five years ago was selling mobile phones and then worked in a paper factory. Sadly their golden moments were not shared by a full house, with just 37,000 in the National Stadium and that despite Japan having several athletes in action, including two in the high jump final.

Just as on Monday so it was on Tuesday — New Zealand and Canada won a gold apiece.

Despite deafening patriotic cheers for Yuto Seko and Ryoichi Akamatsu, they had pulled on their tracksuits and were mere spectators long before New Zealand’s Olympic high jump champion Hamish Kerr had added world championships gold to his collection.

Canada’s Ethan Katzberg retained the men’s hammer title, emulating his teammate Camryn Rogers in the women’s event on Monday.

The mild-mannered Olympic champion, 23, recorded a new championship best, throwing 84.70 metres in the second round.

Some had thought the women’s 1500m might see a new generation take over in the shape of Kipyegon’s 22-year-old teammate Nelly Chepchirchir.

However, Kipyegon put that theory firmly in its place, and just as at the Covid-delayed Tokyo Olympics she will be bringing something gold back to her daughter.

“This sport drives me,” said Kipyegon, who also set a new world record over the distance in Oregon in July. “I won here in 2021 (at the Olympics) just after becoming a mother, so being back here, winning again, means I can show a new gold medal to my daughter.”

‘HOMEWORK TO DO’

Tinch’s road back to the track was sparked by a jest made at his expense by his stepfather in 2020, but as being the new world



USA’s Cordell Tinch, Jamaica’s Orlando Bennett, Japan’s Rachid Muratake, Jamaica’s Tyler Mason and Spain’s Enrique Llopis cross the finish line in the men’s 110m hurdles final during the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo on Tuesday. — AFP

champion sank in he had no regrets about the sabbatical.

“If I hadn’t taken that break from the track, I wouldn’t be a world champion now,” said Tinch.

“Everything I learned at that time away from the sport made me the man I am and a world champion.”

Kerr is an entertainer and played to the crowd throughout the final, cupping his hands to his ears on the two occasions he went over on the third and final attempt.

Once he had sealed victory the Kiwi ran down the infield almost as fast as compatriot Geordie Beamish’s finishing winning burst in the 3,000m steeplchase on Monday.

“Geordie (Beamish) gave me a kick in my ass after his win last night so I had to win too,” said the 29-year-old.

Katzberg said he had felt the pressure after Rogers’s victory.

“I can’t ask for much more,” he said. “Camryn (Rogers put the pressure on me to perform tonight.

“It was an incredible performance from her, so for Canada to win the men’s hammer tonight as well is amazing.”

As they absorbed their victories Tinch’s

teenaged teammate, 800m runner Cooper Lutkenhaus, left the scene but with lessons learned.

At 16 years 8 months and 28 days old he became the youngest runner to represent the United States at a world championships. But he finished seventh in his heat.

“I did not feel any pressure and I really wanted to come out here and give everything,” he said.

“Being 16 on the world stage is very exciting. My parents and my family still see me as a 16-year-old kid.”

Lutkenhaus added he could now go out in Tokyo and have some fun, although reality is also biting.

“I still have homework to do on this trip,” he admitted.

Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone meanwhile showed she could threaten the women’s 400m record set four decades ago by Marita Koch.

The American, running this event instead of her speciality, the 400m hurdles, practically strolled over the line in her semifinal in 48.29sec.

Koch’s record is 47.60sec. All eyes will be on Thursday’s final. — AFP



MUSCAT
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BUSINESS

CRUDE OIL
OMAN \$70.36
BRENT \$67.24
LIGHT \$63.11



SHORTTAKES



The growth underscores Salalah Airport’s expanding role as the main gateway to Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef Dhofar Season.

SALALAH AIRPORT SEES 13% GROWTH DURING KHAREEF DHOFAR SEASON

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

Salalah Airport reported a 13.2% increase in passenger traffic during the Khareef Dhofar Season 2025, with travellers drawn to the governorate’s cooler climate, cultural activities and leisure offerings. From the beginning of June to the end of August, the airport handled 562,561 passengers, compared with 496,936 in the same period of 2024.

Aircraft movements also rose by 10%, totalling 3,409 flights compared with 3,105 last year. The growth underscores Salalah Airport’s expanding role as the main gateway to Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef Dhofar Season.

For the first time, the airport introduced a drive-through check-in service (July 15 to September 15), enabling travellers to complete their travel procedures directly from their vehicles.

In addition, Transom introduced its “Marahib” service, allowing passengers to complete check-in and baggage drop-off in advance, alongside a home check-in option. Self-service kiosks were also launched, providing faster and more flexible check-in. Salalah Airport also welcomed new routes, including the launch of scheduled flights by Saudia, two charter flights from Basra by Fly Baghdad and two charter flights from Baghdad operated by Iraqi Airways.

Oman Airports, in coordination with the Civil Aviation Authority and partners in airlines, security and ground-handling, reported full operational readiness at Muscat International Airport and Salalah Airport to accommodate the seasonal rise in travellers.

The company noted that initiatives introduced during the season, such as new check-in services and additional routes, supported smoother passenger flows and expanded connectivity.

The Khareef Dhofar Season 2025 further highlighted the growing role of Salalah Airport in supporting tourism activity and regional travel links.

OCCI seminar highlights leadership & management

FAISAL AL AJMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

THE Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) hosted a seminar on theme, ‘Leadership and Management Development’, in Muscat on Tuesday.

The Chief Guest, His Highness Sayyid Luay bin Ghalib al Said, was joined by Shaikh Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, members of the State Council, dignitaries, businessmen and entrepreneurs.

The event attracted distinguished professionals from both within Oman, who underscored the importance of knowledge sharing and professional enhancement in leadership and management.

Speaking at the opening, Shaikh Faisal of OCCI, said: “The aim of this symposium is to upgrade the skills of private sector leaders.

We are also accompanied today by a team of international, Gulf and Omani experts to make an assessment of the most recent management practices on how to build them and enhance productivity in the private sector without altering the administrative framework of companies”.

Sayyid Ayman bin Hamad al Busaidy, Vice President, SABCO Group, commented: “The leadership symposium underlined how transformational leadership relies on openness, communication and compassion, guiding organisations through crises and a rapidly changing world safely.

Drawing lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic and other challenges in the private sector, the speakers emphasised the necessity of finding a balance between strategy and human touch to achieve tangible and realistic goals”.

Areej Mohsin Darwish, Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the Automotive, Construction Equipment and Renewable Energy Group at Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC, said in her keynote address,



Regional and international speakers explored avenues for inspirational, inclusive and crisis-capable leadership



The aim of this symposium is to upgrade the skills of private sector leaders. We are also accompanied today by a team of international, Gulf and Omani experts to make an assessment of the most recent management practices on how to build them and enhance productivity in the private sector without altering the administrative framework of companies.

SHAIKH FAISAL
BIN ABDULLAH
AL RAWAS
Chairman of
Oman Chamber
of Commerce and
Industry (OCCI)

“Today’s leadership is defined by inspiration, adaptability and the ability to confront crises with confidence.

This conference is convening experts to exchange experience, transfer best practices and discuss the future of professional networks for productivity, innovation and competitiveness to propel business”.

“Through panels, papers and workshops, the symposium will promote leadership skills, boost innovation, facilitate youth employment opportunities and enhance cross-sector economic ties; and generate sustainable growth and investment”. She concluded.

In remarks to the Observer, Swati Dlamini Mandela, entrepreneur, humanitarian international speaker and granddaughter of Nelson Mandela, described the event as a critical forum to unite participants from all corners of the globe to share ideas, collaborate and help each other tackle challenges in the world.

“In a crisis-affected age, the meeting seeks to create solutions and discover fresh ways to handle concerns”, Mandela said. “One of the things that were emphasised forcefully was getting women around the table.

Even though giant summits have an abundance of men, the call was made for getting women placed in the centre of the conversation about leadership and problem-solving and calling attention to the fact that varying minds need to be at the decision-making table”.

A highlight of the event was a panel discussion titled “Inspirational Leadership in a Rapidly Changing World: Between Self-Empowerment and Crisis Management”, featuring leading figures: Sayyid Ayman bin Hamad al Busaidy, Vice Chairman of SABCO Group; Dr Aflah bin Said al Hadhrami, Managing Director of Petroleum Development Oman (PDO); Swati Mandela, Chairperson of the Mandela Institute for Humanity; and Aisha Alfardan, Vice Chairwoman of the Qatar Businesswomen Association.

The seminar also included a live session on theme, “Challenges and Opportunities in a Transforming World”, moderated by Chairman Concordia Group Dr Amer bin Awadh al Rawas. He spoke about challenges faced by business owners amidst regional and international shifts, but underlined opportunities that emerge due to shifting economic landscapes.

10th Five-Year Plan sees mid-2025 progress led by youth, culture and health

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

Oman’s Tenth Five-Year Development Plan (2021–2025) is posting steady but uneven progress at the halfway point of 2025, with human-capital priorities outpacing the broader economy and environment, according to Ministry of Economy infographics covering the first half of the year.

The Human and Society pillar leads at 57% actual achievement, buoyed by stronger results in youth sector development and citizenship, identity, heritage and national culture, both at 67%, while education, learning, scientific research and national capabilities reached 58%, health 54% and welfare and social

protection 38%.

Health is flagged as a top development priority and the project pipeline is moving, with the National Centre for the Treatment of Blood Diseases & Bone Marrow Transplantation at 95% completion, Mahout Hospital at 93.7%, Al Suwaiq at 85%, Khasab at 83%, Samayil at 50.3%, Al Nama in Al Mudhaibi at 21.9%, Al Falah at 11.3% and Sultan Qaboos Hospital in Salalah at 66%.

The figures point to tangible capacity additions coming on stream while several builds still require acceleration to meet end-plan timelines.

The Economy and Development pillar stands at 48%, signalling continued work to deepen diversification and job creation. Sustainable governorate and



Health is flagged as a top development priority

cities development leads within the pillar at 58%, followed by economic diversification and financial sustainability

at 54% and information and communications technology at 50%, while leadership and economic management registers 46%, private sector, investment and international cooperation 43% and the labour market and employment priority 38%.

Governance and Institutional Performance records a 49% achievement rate, with legislation, judiciary and oversight advancing to 62% as the strongest governance component, contrasted by governance of the state’s administrative apparatus, resources and projects at 36%, indicating that execution efficiency and project-level oversight remain the main drag.

The Sustainable Environment pillar is at 45%, with the environment and natural

resources priority also at 45%, underscoring incremental progress towards a safe, well-preserved environment and balanced ecosystems.

Taken together, the mid-2025 snapshot suggests that youth development, cultural identity and health infrastructure are anchoring momentum, while labour market outcomes, operational governance and environmental delivery need a sharper push in the plan’s final stretch to year-end 2025.

The Ministry positions the programme under the themes of “A Society of Creative Individuals” and “A Competitive Economy”, signalling an emphasis on quality of life, innovation and private-sector-led growth as the plan enters its closing phase.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Markets are anticipating US crude inventory declines for the week ended September 12, with official data expected on Wednesday. — Reuters

OIL STEADIES AS MARKET WEIGHS RUSSIA SUPPLY RISK AND US RATE DECISION

LONDON: Oil prices held steady on Tuesday as markets weighed potential supply disruptions from Russia following Ukrainian drone attacks on its refineries, alongside expectations of a US Federal Reserve interest rate cut.

Brent crude futures slipped 20 cents, or 0.3%, to \$67.24 a barrel by 08:19 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was at \$63.11, down 19 cents, also 0.3%.

On Monday, Brent settled up 45 cents at \$67.44, while WTI rose 61 cents to \$63.30. Ukraine has intensified attacks on Russia's energy infrastructure to weaken Moscow's war capability, as peace talks remain stalled. JP Morgan analysts said attacks on export terminals like Primorsk aim to limit Russia's oil sales abroad, potentially adding upward pressure on global oil prices.

Goldman Sachs estimates that Ukrainian attacks removed about 300,000 barrels per day of Russian refining capacity in August and so far this month.

While secondary tariffs and additional sanctions remain uncertain, Russian production is expected to fall only modestly as Asian buyers continue importing Russian crude.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the government would not impose additional tariffs on Chinese goods to curb Russian oil purchases unless European countries followed suit.

Investors are also focused on the Federal Reserve's September 16-17 meeting, widely expected to result in a rate cut. While lower borrowing costs typically boost fuel demand, analysts remain cautious about the overall health of the US economy.

Investors are also focused on the Federal Reserve's September 16-17 meeting, widely expected to result in a rate cut. While lower borrowing costs typically boost fuel demand, analysts remain cautious about the overall health of the US economy.

Markets are anticipating US crude inventory declines for the week ended September 12, with official data expected on Wednesday at 14:30 GMT. Macquarie Group strategist Walt Chancellor said inventories likely fell 6.4 million barrels following a 3.9 million-barrel build the previous week.

— Reuters

IEA: GLOBAL OIL AND GAS DECLINE RATES RISING

LONDON: The natural decline rate of the world's oil and gas fields is accelerating, driven by greater reliance on shale and deep offshore resources, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Tuesday. This trend means companies must increase investment just to maintain current production levels.

The IEA warned that without continued investment in existing fields, global oil output could drop by the equivalent of Brazil and Norway's combined production

each year, with major implications for energy markets and security.

"Nearly 90% of upstream investment is spent offsetting losses at existing fields, not meeting rising demand", IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said. "Decline rates are the elephant in the room and they have accelerated in recent years".

The report, based on data from roughly 15,000 fields worldwide, found average annual post-peak decline rates of 5.6% for conventional oil and 6.8% for

conventional natural gas. Halting upstream investment could cut oil supply by 5.5 million barrels per day annually, up from just under 4 million bpd in 2010.

Gas declines have risen to 270 billion cubic metres per year from 180 bcm.

By 2024, about 80% of global oil production and 90% of natural gas production came from fields past their peak, highlighting the pressing need for sustained investment in existing resources. — Reuters

Bank Muscat wins award for supporting SMEs

BANK MUSCAT, Oman's leading financial services provider, has been named the Best Bank in Oman for SMEs for 2025 at the MEED MENA Banking Excellence Awards.

The award highlights the Bank's commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises through tailored financial solutions.

Ibrahim bin Khamis al Balushi, Senior Assistant General Manager, SMEs at Bank Muscat, said: "Being recognised as the best bank in Oman for SMEs reflects our dedication to initiatives that support entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Through training programmes, workshops and advisory services, we help business owners enhance their financial, administrative and marketing capabilities. This award motivates us to continue providing top-tier solutions to meet current and future needs". Bank Muscat's Al Wathbah Programme plays a central role in supporting SMEs, offering a range of banking solutions alongside training opportunities, networking events and workshops that foster innovation, sustainability and business excellence in line with Oman Vision 2040.

The Bank's commitment spans sectors including industry, retail, hospitality and micro-enterprises.

Its Najahi Business Banking

Bank Muscat's "Al Wathbah" Programme plays a central role in supporting SMEs, offering a comprehensive suite of banking solutions designed to meet the sector's unique needs.



The recognition underscores the Bank's ongoing commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and supporting the growth and development of small and medium-sized enterprises through tailored financial solutions.

Unit, launched in 2014, provides unsecured financing of up to RO 100,000, helping businesses seize growth opportunities and improve efficiency. SME customers also benefit from specialised accounts, debit cards and other tailored solutions.

Beyond financing, Bank Muscat actively promotes entrepreneurial skills. The Al Wathbah Academy trains Omani entrepreneurs in business administration and finance, while the annual Al Wathbah Souq, held during

Ramadhan, allows entrepreneurs and home-based businesses to showcase products, reach new customers and explore marketing opportunities. The event encourages collaboration, knowledge sharing and the promotion of locally made products.

Through these initiatives, Bank Muscat continues to strengthen its role as a key SME partner, providing financial solutions, advisory support and platforms that enable growth, innovation and sustainable economic development in Oman.

GOLD HITS RECORD HIGHS AS DOLLAR DIPS

Gold surged to a record high on Tuesday, supported by a softer dollar ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy meeting, where a rate cut is widely anticipated.

Spot gold rose 0.5% to \$3,696.02 per ounce, hitting an intraday record of \$3,697.70. US December gold futures increased 0.4% to \$3,733.80.

The dollar fell to a two-month low against major currencies, boosting gold's appeal as a non-



The dollar fell to a two-month low against major currencies, boosting gold's appeal as a non-yielding asset. — Reuters

yielding asset. "The weaker dollar is tied to expectations of a Fed rate cut this week", said UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo. Traders are pricing in a near-certain 25-basis-point reduction, with a small chance of 50 bps.

Market sentiment is also influenced by US President Donald Trump's calls for larger cuts and speculation that rate reductions may continue in 2026, supporting gold further.

Non-yielding bullion typically performs well in a low-interest rate environment.

Despite the rally, experts at the India Gold Conference in New Delhi expect a healthy correction before gold surpasses \$4,000 per ounce in 2026. Other precious metals saw mixed moves: spot silver fell 0.1% to \$42.69, platinum rose 0.1% to \$1,402.39 and palladium climbed 0.9% to \$1,194.43. — Reuters

New World Autos to distribute MatraX Tyres in Oman

New World Autos has announced a strategic partnership with MatraX Tyres, a globally respected tyre brand under the Alves Bandeira Group, to distribute its products across Oman.

The collaboration will give customers wider access to innovative tyre technology designed for safety, durability, comfort and performance, spanning budget, mid-range and premium segments with professional service and trusted after-sales support. Backed by over 50 years of expertise from the Alves Bandeira Group, MatraX Tyres combines European engineering precision with safety-driven design.

Its range includes ultra-high-performance and high-performance



The collaboration will give customers wider access to innovative tyre technology designed for safety, durability, comfort and performance, spanning budget, mid-range and premium segments with professional service and trusted after-sales support.

passenger car tyres, durable SUV and 4x4 models; and truck and bus tyres featuring advanced tread compounds, reinforced sidewalls and fuel-efficient technologies.

Already present in more than 60 countries, MatraX Tyres is recognised for its consistent quality, innovation and commitment to on-road safety, values that align with New World Autos' customer-first philosophy.

Abdullah bin Mohammed Saud Bahwan, CEO of Saud Bahwan Group, said: "Partnering with MatraX Tyres reflects our commitment to delivering trusted automotive solutions that enrich the lives of our customers.

Their focus on innovation, quality, value and safety perfectly

complements our extensive infrastructure and wide-reaching network". Andre Bandeira, CEO of Alves Bandeira International, added: "We are delighted to partner with New World Autos to make our full range of tyres available across Oman.

Together, we aim to provide drivers with superior tyre solutions that prioritise safety, durability and driving comfort".

This partnership will expand access to quality tyres that meet diverse driving conditions from city commuting to off-road exploration and commercial transport, reaffirming both companies' commitment to safety, reliability and customer satisfaction.

SELECTIVEGROWTH



Experts also seek to train participants in the design of sustainable economic zones and improve investor experience and post-investment aftercare

FDI TRAINING PROGRAMME OPENS IN SALALAH

BUSINESS REPORTER
SALALAH, SEPT 16

An executive programme designed to enhance local capabilities in attracting and promoting foreign direct investment (FDI) opened in Salalah on Tuesday.

Taking part are around 40 people, representatives from various public and private sector companies, investment promotion departments and divisions, economic policymakers, consultants in the fields of finance and planning, executive directors and planners working in national development initiatives.

The programme has been organised by Smart Investment and Consulting Gateway (SIG) in partnership with NxtZones, a grouping of economic development and FDI specialists led by prominent international experts in economics and investment.

The 3-day programme, featuring intensive lectures and workshops, aims to develop a comprehensive vision for promoting efforts to attract investments.

The programme focuses on some key themes, the most prominent of which are: attracting potential FDI Clients and mechanisms for aligning investment plans with national visions.

Experts seek to train participants in the design of sustainable economic zones and improve investor experience and post-investment aftercare, as well as how to use AI integration tools in investment promotion.

It also highlights successful Gulf models and conducts a performance comparison with global experiences in managing free and private zones.

On the first day, the programme reviewed the global and regional investment landscape and analysed a number of successful projects.

The second day will look at strategic investment promotion and facilitation plans, legal frameworks, artificial intelligence and engagement with local partners.

The third day is all about designing economic zones and industrial parks for the future and linking zones to sustainable development and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The programme incorporates extensive international expertise, implemented in partnership with international institutions that have previously delivered specialised FDI programmes in collaboration with international organisations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

This provides participants with an opportunity to learn about the best global tools used to attract and facilitate investments.

Another edition of this event will be held in Muscat during the first half of November aimed at imparting similar skills to interested parties in Oman and the wider region.

OMAN’S TELECOM SECTOR POSTS 15.5% GROWTH

MUSCAT: Oman’s telecommunications sector continued to post strong growth through the end of July 2025.

According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), the total number of mobile service subscriptions reached 8,153,859, an increase of 15.5% compared with the same period in 2024.

Active postpaid mobile subscriptions grew by 3.3% to 1,241,626, while prepaid

subscriptions rose by 4.9% to 5,342,870. Internet of Things (IoT) subscriptions recorded exceptional growth of 105%, reaching 1,569,363 by the end of July 2025.

Mobile broadband also expanded significantly, with active subscriptions rising to 5,595,686. Fixed broadband subscriptions increased by 2.9% to 591,972.

Fiber optic subscriptions climbed by 11.2% to 344,505, while fixed 5G subscriptions edged up by 1.8% to 217,657.

In contrast, fixed 4G subscriptions dropped sharply by 41.2%, standing at 17,261.

Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) subscriptions fell by 47.5% to 11,036, while satellite-based subscriptions increased by 13% to 754.

Other subscriptions (including internet via power lines, Ethernet and leased internet lines) declined by 11.9%, totalling 759 at the end of July 2025 compared with the same period in 2024. — ONA

Deal for Sultan Haitham City digital twin awarded

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

A partnership between leading Slovakia-based international property technology firm WooW Studio and Oman’s Northsys — a provider of GIS services — has been awarded a contract by Oman’s Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to deliver a digital twin of Sultan Haitham City, the Sultanate of Oman’s flagship sustainable urban development.

A digital twin for an urban project is a dynamic virtual model of a city that integrates real-time data from sensors, infrastructure and systems to mirror and optimise the physical environment. It enables planners and operators to simulate scenarios, monitor performance, predict maintenance needs, improve sustainability and engage citizens, ultimately supporting smarter, more efficient and resilient urban development.

Juraj Krc, CEO of the Bratislava-headquartered WooW Studio, said the digital twin will be “designed to accelerate property sales and attract investment by giving buyers and stakeholders an immersive view of the city before it is built”.

The project will also help developers to market their projects faster and more effectively; enable

A digital twin for an urban project is a dynamic virtual model of a city that integrates real-time data from sensors, infrastructure and systems to mirror and optimise the physical environment.



Sultan Haitham City: The digital twin will help developers market their projects faster and more effectively

government and planners to communicate the city’s vision, coordinate with partners and engage citizens; and allow future residents to explore and experience their neighbourhoods before moving in. Since winning the contract, the partnership of WooW Studio and Northsys has delivered a masterplan view of the entire Sultan Haitham City, along with a detailed digital twin of the Sarooj Oasis neighbourhood within the development. These creative

works also enabled the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to showcase the project at the recently concluded Comex 2025 in Muscat, the CEO further noted.

Envisioned as one of the region’s most ambitious urban developments, Sultan Haitham City is designed to accommodate 100,000 residents across 20,000 housing units within a 14.8 million m² area, featuring sustainable infrastructure, extensive green corridors and a vast central park.

Oman advances 5 places in Innovation Index 2025

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 16

The Sultanate of Oman advanced five positions in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025, ranking 69th out of 139 economies, according to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). This progress reflects Oman’s stronger foundations for investment, competitiveness and knowledge-based growth.

The report ranked Oman within the top 20 worldwide in six sub-indicators directly tied to economic performance: development of economic clusters (9th), policy stability for doing business (10th), share



Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Haddabi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation for Research and Innovation and Chair of the National Team for GII

of science and engineering graduates (12th), net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows as a percentage of GDP (14th), ICT access (15th) and electricity output (16th).

Oman also advanced across three main pillars: institutions (40th globally, up 3 places), infrastructure (55th, up 8) and business sophistication (63rd, up 23) — all critical to investor confidence and private-sector development.

Notable improvements were recorded in key sub-indicators with economic impact, including a 60-place jump in patents per billion dollars of GDP, 22 places in high-tech manufacturing, 21 places in

both gross capital formation and FDI inflows as a share of GDP and 20 places in knowledge production. Gains were also seen in university-industry research collaboration (+5).

Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Haddabi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation for Research and Innovation and Chair of the National Team for GII, credited the progress to national programmes supporting research, scientific publishing, incubators, academic innovation centers, digital infrastructure, human capital in science and engineering and supportive legal frameworks.

NEW RTX6000D

Nvidia’s new chip faces weak demand



Nvidia’s new RTX6000D AI chip tailored for China has seen tepid demand, with major tech firms citing high costs and lower performance compared to the grey-market RTX5090. Alibaba, Tencent and ByteDance are awaiting clarity on H20 and potential B30A orders. Analysts had projected strong production, but shipments began only this week amidst trade and regulatory uncertainties. — Reuters

AI SECTOR

Google to invest £5 billion in UK AI



Google will invest £5 billion in the UK over the next two years to expand AI services, research and engineering, including pioneering work through Google DeepMind. The investment, which coincides with the opening of its Waltham Cross data centre, is expected to create 8,250 jobs annually, boost technological breakthroughs and strengthen the UK’s AI economy, officials said. — dpa

FISHERMEN’S LIVELIHOODS

Vietnam seeks US seafood ban reversal



Vietnam has asked the US to reconsider a ban on some seafood exports starting January 2026, citing threats to fishermen’s livelihoods and local economies. NOAA determined that certain Vietnamese fishing methods pose risks to marine mammals. The US, Vietnam’s largest seafood market, imported \$1.24 billion worth of seafood from January to August, representing around 17% of total exports. — Reuters

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(2) In charge of management and the supervision of our facilities management segment as well as of the standardization and of the deployment of the company FM processes.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensure the knowledge, the analysis and the synthesis of the market segment are accurate. Identifies the areas of lack of knowledge of the market, and with lucidity, take actions to fill these areas
- Responsible for the elaboration of the Development Strategy on this segment. Focuses on acquiring new clients and growing the business through strategic planning and execution
- Identifying new market opportunities, developing and implementing business development strategies, building and maintaining client relationships, and managing the integrated sales process
- Ensure the implementation of MSOP and the response to Invitation to Tenders
- Dealing with clients, managing, and monitoring of Facility management project(s)
- In regards of the marketing tools required for successful sales conclusion, he/she recommends and/or coordinates with the group resources for offer deployment and local market adjustments
- Ensure self-awareness of company QHSE policies & procedures and follow them

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF CAPITAL REDUCTION

In accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law.

The company **AL FARDAN MOTORS (LLC)**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No. 1011886, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials 6,865,000.000 to 500,000.000.

Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry within 30 days from the date hereof.

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN electrical engineer more than 20 years experience in “MEP” construction field in Oman seeks suitable job.
Contact: 92919281

ACCOUNTS/ SALES

Indian male (b com) having 2+ years of experience in India accounts sales looking for suitable placement, join immediately.
Contact: 76324360

ACCOUNTS/ Finance:

Indian male (MBA Fin) having more than 19 years of experience in Oman accounts & finance looking for suitable placement, NOC available and can join immediately.
Contact: 92076716

INDIAN male MBA, 20 years experience in Oman & GCC in Project sales/ Dealer market in All construction materials including Cables & Accessories having D/L looking for the post of Sales Manager/Assistant Manager.
Contact: 00968 78099493

CHIEF accountant, MBA finance, 9+ years experience in financial statements, auditing, budgeting, VAT, tax, fixed assets, reconciliation, payroll. Seeking a full-time or part-time position in a senior role. Contact: [akramhaniffa@yahoo.com](#) / 93988825.

Indian electrical engineer more than 20 years experience in “MEP” construction field in Oman seeks suitable job.
Contact: 92919281

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MABELA. Contact: 99888390/ 79939666

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**BANGLADESH SOCIAL CLUB OMAN**

Notice For Annual General Meeting 2026

The Annual General Meeting of Bangladesh Social Club, Oman will be held on Friday, 27 March 2026 from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Agenda:

- Recitation from the holy Quran.
- Address by the Chairman.
- Annual General Report by the General Secretary.
- Presentation of Accounts.
- Report of The Auditor.
- Election of the Executive Committee for the Period of 2026-2027 (Board of Directors).

Schedule of Elections:

1. Collection of Nomination Paper	25 February - 28 February 2026
2. Submission of Nomination Paper	10 March 2026
3. Withdrawal of the Candidature.	12 March 2026
4. Display of Final List of The Candidates	14 March 2026
5. Polling & AGM	Friday 27 March 2026 at Muscat Club Hall. From 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Important Note: * Membership renewal will be closed on 31 January 2026. * Members with at least six months of valid membership up to the date of the AGM, or who have cleared all dues up to 31-3-2026, are eligible to attend the AGM. * Members with at least one year of valid membership, or who have cleared all dues up to 31-3-2026, are eligible to contest in the election. * All members are requested to carry their membership cards and Oman resident cards to attend the AGM and voting.

M.N. Amin
General Secretary (Bangladesh Social Club-Oman)

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SIT. WANTED

INDIAN female BSC graduate and Internship Python. Presently in family visa. Seeks suitable placement as admin. Contact: 94942510

INDIAN female Pharmacist with 2 years' experience in Oman. Passed Oman Prometric and licensed. Seeking a suitable job opportunity. mob:96126261 /95137665

PLANNING Engineer, PMP. Indian male 11 years experience in Construction Projects. Well versed with Primavera P6 Software, strong communication skills, Interpersonal skills, EDT Claims, Recovery schedules, project control. Having Omani Driving Licence. Contact: 78002582. Email: [engineer4planning@gmail.com](#)

INDIAN male (Mechanical Engineering) with 3 years experience in diesel engine works (Gensets/ Engines), 2 years in Machine Maintenance, seeks job. Contact: 78022420

LOOKING for part time OR full time Accounts/ Finance job. 20yrs experience in Muscat. Upto finalization & Audit. Please contact: 92065499

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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ART

400-year-old Rubens found in Paris mansion



A LONG-LOST painting by 17th-century Flemish master Peter Paul Rubens has been found in a Paris mansion, a French auctioneer said on Wednesday.

“It is a masterpiece”, said Jean-Pierre Osenat, who had made the discovery, referring to the sketch of Jesus Christ on the cross painted in 1613.

“It was painted by Rubens at the height of his talent”, he said, adding that the artwork was in “very good condition”.

Osenat, the head of the eponymous auction house, said he had found the painting in September 2024 while preparing to sell the private mansion in the French capital’s chic 6th district.

“It is an extremely rare and incredible discovery”, he said.

The painting has been authenticated by German art historian Nils Buttner, known for his research on the master of the Flemish Baroque, Osenat said.

Its provenance was certified through methods including X-ray imaging and pigment analysis, he added.

Osenat remembered pacing back and forth while a committee of experts was deciding on the authenticity of the painting. Then came a phone call from Buttner. “Jean-Pierre, we have a new Rubens!” he said Buttner had told him.

The auctioneer called the painting “a true profession of faith and a favourite subject for Rubens, a protestant who converted to Catholicism”.

“It’s the very beginning of Baroque painting, depicting a crucified Christ, isolated, luminous and standing out vividly against a dark and threatening sky”, he said.

Although Rubens produced many works for the Church, the newly discovered painting, measuring 105.5 by 72.5 centimetres (42 by 29 inches), is likely to have been created for a private collector.

It is thought to have belonged to the 19th-century French academic painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau and later to the owners of the Parisian mansion where it was found.

The painting is set to be auctioned off on November 30. — AFP

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



FASHION

A model walks the runway for the Tory Burch Spring/Summer 2026 show during New York Fashion Week. — AFP



FILM

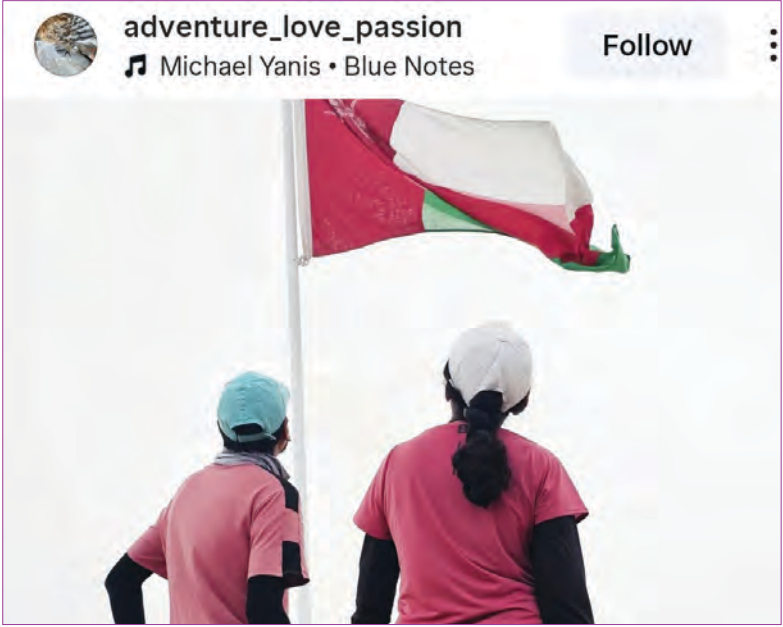
Irish actor Colin Farrell attends the world premiere of “A Big Bold Beautiful Journey” at AMC Lincoln Square in New York City. — AFP



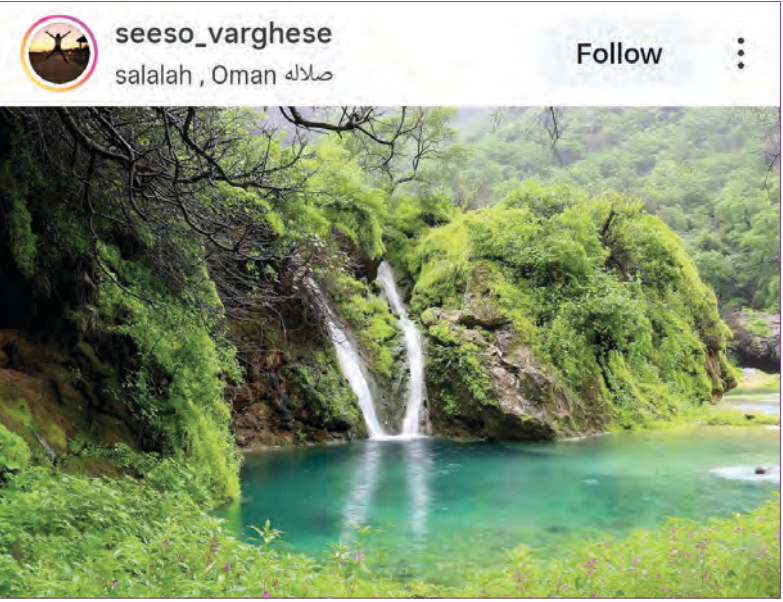
MUSIC

Argentine singer Yami Safdie performs during the Cordillera music festival at Simon Bolivar park in Bogota. — AFP

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Justin Bieber and Sabrina Carpenter among Coachella headliners



JUSTIN BIEBER will make his festival comeback at Coachella in 2026, with Sabrina Carpenter also headlining the event.

The third night of the US festival in Indio, California, will be headlined by Colombian star Karol G.

The lineup also boasts The Strokes, Nine Inch Noize, David Byrne, Iggy Pop, Disclosure, Young Thug, Addison Rae, Labrinth, Teddy Swims, Moby, Wet Leg, Little Simz, Major Lazer, FKA Twigs and PinkPantheress.

Coachella will be held over two weekends in April 2026 and Bieber will take to the stage on April 11 and April 18.

Bieber recently made his musical comeback with his new albums Swag and Swag II, after a four-year absence from the industry.

During that time, he made more headlines for his personal life and his marriage to wife Hailey than for his musical output.

The couple had their first child, son Jack Blue, last year.

Swag was his first album since his 2021 record Justice.

Carpenter will return to the Coachella stage two years after she premiered her juggernaut hit song “Espresso” at the festival in 2024.

Since then, she has become a global megastar and released her most recent album, Man’s Best Friend, last month.

The festival announced the lineup on Instagram with a post that said: “Hard launch. Passes on sale on Friday, September 19 at 11 am PT [18:00 GMT]. Register now for access”. — PA Media/dpa



How mowing less lets flowers bloom along Austria’s ‘Green Belt’



ON A MEADOW

in southeastern Austria near the border with Slovenia, Josef Hadler is working his tractor to mow several acres of land in a bid to better preserve the plot’s biodiversity.

“Yesterday, a buzzard followed me at a distance of only five metres”, the cattle farmer said in the municipality of Sankt Anna am Aigen in the Styria province.

Thanks to Hadler’s efforts for the local nature conservation association, endemic species of flora and fauna that have disappeared elsewhere have been able to survive on the 15 hectares (37 acres) of protected land he manages.

Located where the Iron Curtain once separated Austria from the former Yugoslavia, the fields near the Slovenian border are rich in biodiversity, precisely because the area used to be a no-go zone during the Cold War.

It is also part of the wider “European Green Belt” along the former Iron Curtain, a corridor of interconnected wildlife havens that stretches 12,500 kilometres (just over 7,700 miles) from Norway to Türkiye.

“No one would dare to build their house right on the border (with Slovenia), which therefore remained

green”, explained Johannes Gepp, president of the local environmental protection organisation Naturschutzbund, which buys up plots of land from farmers.

Hadler mows the meadow only once or twice a year. The former owner, who had cultivated maize there, willingly sold the dry land 15 years ago to acquire another plot offering a better yield.

“We’ve gone from a monoculture to 70 to 80 species per 100 square metres” by eliminating fertilisers and reducing the mowing frequency, said Naturschutzbund’s managing director Markus Ehrenpaar.

Hadler usually mows his fields five times a year for silage bales and hay to feed his livestock.

But he observed that mowing more frequently prevented flowers from growing, while mowing less often allowed many native species to flourish or even return.

Among them are the great burnet — the only plant on which two different species of butterfly feed exclusively — or the venomous nursery web spider.

Maintaining the fields is essential, as it prevents the proliferation of grasses to the detriment of wild flowers.

- ‘WONDERFUL NATURAL GEMS’ - Hadler receives compensation

for his work and can harvest the hay, which he uses as litter for his livestock.

According to Andrea Pock, the mayor of Sankt Anna am Aigen, the “wonderful natural gems” also have an educational value for biology lessons.

“A form of gentle tourism has developed”, the 46-year-old mayor said, adding that “many people come to see the flowers and observe the insects”.

Signs nearby recount the dark past of the fortified and mined border, which once sought to deter people from behind the Iron Curtain to cross into the West.

In the present, crossing points that allow for genetic mixing of plants have been created to ensure the long-term survival of such dense and diverse areas.

The effort costs millions of euros each year as “land is very expensive”, said Gepp.

The region, the government and the European Union have all contributed financially to this costly revival.

And the stakes are high: Austria is home to 1,300 kilometres of the “Central European Green Belt”, which it shares with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia.

But at present, only a third of it is protected environmentally. — AFP

FEATURES



A MOBILE PLATFORM RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT RESPONSIBLE PET CARE AND ANIMAL WELFARE

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ON A RADIANT morning in Muscat, as the sun bathes the city in a warm glow, a vibrant, cheerfully decorated bus pulls to a halt in a bustling neighbourhood. A crowd quickly gathers — children with wide eyes, adults with camera phones, all drawn by the colourful stickers emblazoned on the windows.

This is no ordinary vehicle; it's a moving sanctuary, a small universe of furry creatures that has captured the imagination of the local community.

Welcome to 'Paw and Toe', an innovative project spearheaded by Oman's Qadha initiative that seamlessly marries care, education and compassion through the lens of the nation's overlooked feline friends.

The bus's colours blur with the lively chatter of children and adults alike. Inside are 16 meticulously registered cats, representing a variety of breeds including Scottish Fold, Scottish Straight, British, Maine Coon and Bengal. These cats are preserved in their purity, verified by the World Cat Federation (WCF), dispelling myths surrounding hybridisation and genetic compromise. But the bus is more than a showcase for pedigrees — it's a rapidly evolving centre for experiential learning and emotional connection.

Samiya al Jahwari, the creative director of Qadha, explains that 'Paw and Toe' is about redefining relationships — showing that animals are not mere objects of entertainment, but sentient beings deserving of understanding and stewardship. "We see how visitors respond to the cats", she says. "Initially, many are hesitant, afraid to touch them — yet, within minutes, they're hugging these animals as if they're old friends. Many tell us, 'We had no idea cats could bring so much comfort'". This discovery is at the heart of the project. It isn't just about pet care; it's about cultivating empathy, compassion and responsibility. The quiet transformation that unfolds when someone interacts with the cats — children specifically — could, Samiya suggests, be a seed for wider societal change. "People are rediscovering their humanity. Children and girls refuse to leave the bus; others ask to volunteer. These are not incidental moments but the real victories", she affirms.

The project's organisers believe strongly that establishing a sense of responsibility in humans begins with touch and real-world experience. Children learn



that adopting a cat isn't a fleeting fad but a long-term commitment — an understanding often lost in the rush of modern life. Educational sessions inform prospective owners about balanced nutrition, veterinary care and mental stimulation, aiming to combat ignorance that can lead to neglect or abandonment.

Samiya underscores that small acts in neighbourhoods can make a significant difference. "A bowl of water, a simple food container, a gentle word — these actions contribute to the well-being of street cats and, by extension, the environment". She highlights the troubling consequences of neglect and overpopulation: the death of street cats doesn't just evoke sadness, but also contributes to soil and water pollution, parasite spread and the proliferation of stray dogs. The bus's community outreach aims to transform individual gestures into a collective movement, fostering a culture of responsibility long term.

A CULTURAL SHIFT AND A CALL FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

From the outset, 'Paw and Toe' has sought to involve not just the community, but also corporations and educational institutions. Samiya points out that schools are "fertile ground for values", emphasising that nurturing kindness to animals amidst young minds can shape a more compassionate, balanced generation. The recent establishment of the Oman Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals opens further doors for partnerships with charities that specialise in therapeutic and educational initiatives.

Corporate sponsors and local businesses are encouraged to support through funding, logistical aid,

or joint programmes. "We're building a sustainable ecosystem — combining the mobility of the bus, institutional backing and school-led awareness — to cultivate a culture that sees respect and kindness towards animals as fundamental", Samiya explains.

With its reach expanding beyond Muscat, the project aims to deliver educational programmes across Oman's various governorates. Visits to Al Sharqiyah North and South Governorates, Al Batinah North and South Governorates and Al Dakhiliyah demonstrate the bus's role as both a community catalyst and a regional model. Looking ahead, there's a desire to integrate technology — via apps for adoption and awareness — to broaden its impact further.

HEALING THROUGH CONNECTION

The bus reveals profound truths about human and animal companionship. Samiya recounts stories — such as a woman who, lacking children, found solace in her cats, or a young girl suffering from severe anxiety whose bond with a feline transformed her sense of safety. "One woman told us she found in her cats an escape from loneliness, adopting three since her first visit. Such stories affirm that cats offer emotional therapy; they fill voids that nothing else can". Scientific research supports these anecdotal truths. The purring of cats, which produces vibrations between 25 and 150 Hz, has been scientifically linked to healing benefits — accelerating bone healing, reducing inflammation and alleviating stress. Listening to a cat's purr can help lower cortisol levels and boost oxytocin, fostering



feelings of peace and emotional support. It's no surprise that many who care for or simply interact with cats report feeling calmer, less anxious and more connected.

However, Samiya stresses that these benefits come with responsibilities. "A cat is not a piece of furniture. It is a living soul that requires care, respect and commitment. If you cannot provide that, it's better to help street animals in your community — by providing water, food and kindness — than to adopt impulsively and neglect their needs". Unfortunately, there remains a misconception among some that the independence of cats means they do not require attention or care. Samiya's message is clear: "A cat's independence is a gift, not an excuse for neglect. It's about understanding their needs — balanced diet, vaccination, mental stimulation and long-term loyalty. They can live for more than 15 years and during that time, they become a part of your family".

The project's future plans involve expanding its reach across all Oman's governorates, collaborating with schools to embed pet welfare into curricula and forming partnerships with local animal welfare groups. Samiya envisions a future where technology plays a vital role — perhaps through mobile applications that promote responsible adoption, accessible care tips and community engagement initiatives.

"Our goal", she affirms, "is to foster a culture where animals are valued, respected and cared for as an integral part of society. The mobile bus is our starting point — a moving symbol of compassion, education and community effort. We hope it will inspire similar initiatives regionally and beyond".