

GRAND EGYPTIAN MUSEUM REPRESENTS ENTIRE ARAB WORLD: SAYYID THEYAZIN

ON BEHALF OF HM, SAYYID THEYAZIN ATTENDS INAUGURATION OF THE MUSEUM

ON behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, attended the official opening ceremony of the Grand Egyptian Museum on Saturday evening. Upon his arrival at the museum, HH Sayyid Theyazin was received by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt, his spouse and some Egyptian government officials.

Prior to the beginning of the ceremony, a commemorative photograph was taken of the Egyptian President with the heads of the delegations participating in the opening ceremony.

His Highness witnessed the opening ceremony, which included a visual presentation about the museum's contents. The museum houses over fifty thousand artifacts representing various eras of Egyptian history, a scientific restoration center, educational and cultural zones, and open gardens. The ceremony also featured musical and theatrical performances embodying Egypt's ancient civilization.

HH Sayyid Theyazin expressed his profound honour at having represented His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik at the inauguration ceremony of the Grand Egyptian Museum. He



Upon his arrival at the museum, HH Sayyid Theyazin was received by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and his spouse. — ONA

emphasised that this monumental achievement reflects the new Egypt's vision to safeguard its human heritage and present it through a contemporary lens, positioning the nation among the leading countries that successfully balance cultural authenticity and modern

innovation in the fields of culture and museums. HH Sayyid Theyazin affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman views this monumental achievement with profound pride and honour, noting that it represents not only Egypt but the entire Arab world.

TURN TO P2



HIS MAJESTY TO VISIT SPAIN ON MONDAY

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on a state visit to the Kingdom of Spain on Monday. A statement was issued by the Diwan of Royal Court to this effect. It reads as follows: "In response to an invitation received by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik from King Felipe VI of the Kingdom of Spain, His Majesty the Sultan will go on a state visit to Spain during November 3-5, 2025. The visit comes in a manifestation of ties of friendship between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Spain. It aims to meet the aspirations of the two countries.

During the visit, the two monarchs will explore areas of cooperation between the two countries in various spheres and means of promoting them to serve the joint interests. The visit will also address a set of regional and international developments.

His Majesty the Sultan will be accompanied during the visit by

a high-ranking official delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs; Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court; Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office; Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister; Dr Hamed bin Said al Aufi, Head of Private Office of His Majesty the Sultan; Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority; Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion; Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals; and Thamer bin Fayez al Alawi, Ambassador of Oman to Spain. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan in his journeys, grant him good health and well-being, and guard him as a source of pride for Oman and its people!" — ONA SEE ALSO P4

IN BRIEF

HIS MAJESTY GREETES PRESIDENT SAMIA

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Samia Suluhu Hassan, of the United Republic of Tanzania, for being re-elected to a new presidential term. His Majesty expressed his sincere wishes to the president for continued success in leading this friendly country and hoped for continued growth and development of cooperation relations between the two countries in various sectors for the benefit of both peoples. — ONA

MAJLIS ASH'SHURA MEETING ON NOV 9

MUSCAT: At the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Majlis Ash'shura will commence its third ordinary convening (2025-2026) of the tenth term (2023-2027) on Sunday, November 9. Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed al Nadabi, Secretary-General of Majlis Ash'shura, stated that the Majlis continues to perform its legislative and oversight roles in active partnership with state institutions, within the framework of implementing Oman Vision 2040.

Adoption of Nov 20 as National Day affirms connection to Al Busaidy State

MUSCAT: The adoption of November 20 as a National Day in the Sultanate of Oman affirms the deep connection to the roots of the Al Busaidy State. Oman draws on its historical memory to embody the continuity of its approach; the founding legacy was not a fleeting moment, but an enduring project whose significance continues into the present phase of the Renewed Renaissance, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

His Majesty referred to this in his Royal speech last January, on January 11 — the day he assumed the reins of power — stating: "It is a source of our pleasure and an honour to our ancestors, the Sultans, and a commemoration of a glorious day in Oman's history filled with bright days, that we announce on this occasion that November 20 of every year shall be a National Day for the Sultanate of Oman. This is the day on which the Al Busaidy



The Founding Imam established the roots of the Al Busaidy State with firmness and steadfastness, thereby laying the foundations of a historic state that has ruled Oman to this day

Dynasty has been honoured to serve this dear nation since 1744, at the hands of the Founding Imam, Sayyid Ahmed bin Said al Busaidy, who unified the banner of the Omani nation and led its struggle and noble sacrifices for the sake of full sovereignty and freedom and dignity for its faithful sons. After him came great Sultans who carried its banner with all courage and competence and completed its triumphant march with all

determination and resolve." The Founding Imam established the roots of the Al Busaidy State with firmness and steadfastness, thereby laying the foundations of a historic state that has ruled Oman to this day. This was no easy task amid the internal and external challenges he faced after assuming the reins of power in Oman on November 20, 1744. This day (Al Busaidy Dynasty Foundation Day) thus became a National Day for Oman, celebrated every year. On November 20, 1744, the memory of the Al Busaidy Dynasty Foundation Day and the founding of the Al Busaidy State is revived, whose effects extend to a glorious present that Oman enjoys today and a flourishing civilisation, under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, drawing from the accumulation of history a strength that helps shape the features of the present and craft a promising future. DETAILS ON P3

OMAN

SAYYID
THEYAZIN
ATTENDS
INAUGURATION OF
GRAND EGYPTIAN
MUSEUM



CAIRO: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, attended the official opening ceremony of the Grand Egyptian Museum on Saturday evening. Upon his arrival at the museum, HH Sayyid Theyazin was received by President Abdel Fattah El Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt, his spouse and some Egyptian government officials. — **ONA**

Grand Egyptian
Museum represents
entire Arab world

FROM PAGE 1

He described the project as an inspirational milestone that strengthens the presence of Arab culture on the global stage and establishes a foundational platform for intra-Arab cultural cooperation in heritage, archaeology, and museum management. He emphasised that it offers a significant opportunity to construct enduring bridges of understanding and knowledge exchange among cultural institutions throughout the Arab world.

His Highness concluded his statement by extending his congratulations to the Arab Republic of Egypt, its leadership, and its people for this monumental cultural achievement.

He noted that this historic moment stands as a testament to Egypt's enduring legacy of accomplishments, expressing his sincere wishes for the nation's continued prosperity and brilliance in its cultural, civilizational and developmental pursuits.

President Abdel Fattah El Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt, delivered a speech in which he welcomed the participants at the opening ceremony of the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo. He emphasized that this achievement was realized through extensive international cooperation with major global companies to serve as a platform for dialogue and a destination for humanity.

The idea for the Grand Egyptian Museum began in the 1990s, with the foundation stone laid for the project in 2002 at a prime location overlooking the Giza Pyramids. — **ONA**

Oman calls on Iran and US
to resume nuclear talks

OMAN, which hosted several rounds of US-Iran nuclear talks that were derailed by the Israel-Iran war in June, urged the countries on Saturday to return to the negotiating table. The talks had aimed to reach a new agreement that would curb Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief.

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, stressed that true security is not built on policies of isolation or exclusion, but on inclusiveness and positive engagement among the countries of the region. He pointed out that history has shown that policies of marginalisation have only worsened tensions and prolonged conflicts.

Speaking at the Manama Dialogue 2025, held in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Sayyid Badr said that the Sultanate of Oman has long maintained that an isolation policy against Iran is not a solution, and that including Iran in a comprehensive regional security framework contributes to consolidating stability and promoting joint cooperation.

He mentioned that Iran has shown openness and a willingness to engage in constructive dialogue at various stages, demonstrating restraint in numerous



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy

instances despite repeated attacks. He emphasised the importance of adopting a comprehensive diplomatic approach that involves all parties to address common challenges such as maritime security, combating smuggling and climate change.

Sayyid Badr noted that earlier this year, the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States had made tangible progress during five rounds of talks.

However, just days before the sixth round, which was expected to be decisive, Israel launched its illegal military campaign against Iran.

He explained that Israel's deliberate

actions of prolonging tensions have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of innocent Iranian civilians. He observed that Iran responded with remarkable restraint, just as it did when Israel bombed its consulate in Syria, injured its ambassador in Lebanon, and assassinated a senior Palestinian negotiator in Tehran.

The foreign minister stated that such acts of sabotage constitute a serious violation of international law and clearly show that Israel, not Iran, is the primary source of insecurity in the region.

He emphasised that exclusionary policies fuel extremism and instability, while comprehensive partnerships contribute to creating an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and shared prosperity. He called for the establishment of a regional security framework encompassing all countries, including Iran, Iraq, and Yemen, to effectively address common challenges.

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, confirmed that the Sultanate of Oman will continue to support inclusive dialogue as a strategic option for achieving security, peace, and prosperity in the region, noting that dialogue is the only way to build a more stable and prosperous future for its peoples. — **ONA**

Oman participates in the session
of Unesco General Conference

SAMARKAND: The Sultanate of Oman is participating in the 43rd session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), which began on October 30, and continues until November 13 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Delegations representing member states of the Unesco, as well as representatives of international, non-governmental, and civil society organisations are participating.

The Sultanate of Oman's delegation is headed by Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education and Chairperson of the National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

The minister of education delivered the Sultanate of Oman's address during the conference's plenary session. She conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, and his wishes for the success of the conference and the realisation of its noble goals.

The minister of education expressed her gratitude to the friendly Republic of Uzbekistan for hosting this conference and to Unesco for organising it, commending



Dr Madeeha is heading Oman's delegation at the Unesco session in Samarkand

their efforts to promote dialogue and peace and to protect human heritage.

The minister of education said: “We meet today amidst escalating humanitarian and security challenges which impact the present and future of generations, particularly the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, which has affected the foundations of life. While Oman welcomes the implementation of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, it emphasises the necessity of continuing international and regional efforts to ensure the implementation and sustainability of the agreement. We call upon Unesco to intensify its efforts to protect educational institutions and cultural property, and to promote

constructive dialogue, free from intolerance and hatred, in support of international peace and security.”

Underscoring Oman's efforts in developing its educational system based on the principles of inclusion and equity, the minister said, “The Sultanate of Oman has developed inclusive education policies and expanded the scope of vocational and technical education to encompass diverse specialisations that align with the requirements of national development and meet the requirements of the local and global labour market.”

She added that the Sultanate of Oman attaches great importance to teacher training and skills development, adding that in early 2026, the ministry will launch the first International Conference on the Teaching Profession in the Middle East, titled ‘Sustainable Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence’ in collaboration with regional and international organisations. This conference embodies the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to empowering teachers and developing educational policies

— **ONA**



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5/2025	Bidding for the design, build, finance, operate and transfer of the Muscat-Ad Dakhiliyah Road (Al Maabala - Thumayd).				400 Omani Rials (non-refundable)
6/2025	Bidding for the design, build, finance, operate and transfer of the Bausher-Al Amerat Tunnel Road and the Al Amerat-Dema Wa Thaeen Road.				500 Omani Rials (non-refundable)

Specialized companies interested in implementing the above-mentioned projects are requested to submit a participation request, including a copy of their commercial registration, to the following email address (investment@mtcit.gov.om).

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A L B U S A I D Y S T A T E

Imam Sayyid Ahmed bin Said al Busaidy, established the roots of the Al Busaidy State and set the foundations of leadership that made him a pivotal figure in confronting internal and external challenges, extending to the establishment of the concept of national sovereignty, which remains to this day the cornerstone of the independence of Omani political decision-making.

Social factors played a prominent role in shaping the personality of Imam Sayyid Ahmed bin Said. During his governorship of Suhar, he gained the trust of those around him, as he demonstrated justice and wisdom and earned respect, and his fame spread for sound judgement and exceptional leadership.

The role of the women of the Al Busaidy Dynasty in the political sphere was not incidental or marginal, but rather an integral part of the journey of this ancient family, whose legacy and extended history we celebrate today since 1744. The National Day for Oman and its people is a day to honour this Dynasty whose rule began on November 20, 1744.

The Al Busaidy Dynasty continued the project of building the modern state through integrated and evolving historical stages. It began with consolidating the foundations of governance and stability during the era of Imam Sayyid Ahmed bin Said, who established the pillars of the Al Busaidy State upon assuming power in 1744.

THE Al Busaidy Dynasty Foundation Day by Imam Sayyid Ahmed bin Said, in 1744, was a pivotal event and a landmark in Omani history. It laid the foundations of national unity and delineated the contours of national sovereignty.

Since that time, the Al Busaidy Dynasty has remained at the forefront of steering the state's course, preserving its internal balance, confronting external challenges, upholding the values of stability and openness, and continuing the march of nation-building.

Dr Nasser bin Abdullah al Saqri, Assistant Professor of Modern History in the Department of History at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), said that the rule of the Founding Imam, Sayyid Ahmed bin Said al Busaidy, established the roots of the Al Busaidy State and set the foundations of leadership that made him a pivotal figure in confronting internal and external challenges, extending to the establishment of the concept of national sovereignty, which remains to this day the cornerstone of the independence of Omani political decision-making. His legacy also illustrates how the Al Busaidy Dynasty has been able to maintain the stability of the state over the centuries, while enhancing national unity, so that the Founding Imam's project remains a living reference for the new generation in understanding leadership and national strategy.

EVOLVING HISTORICAL STAGES
Dr Bahiya bint Said al Athobiyah, a researcher in Omani history, said that the Al Busaidy Dynasty continued the project of building the modern state through integrated and evolving historical stages. It began with consolidating the foundations of governance and stability during the era of Imam Sayyid Ahmed bin Said, who established the pillars of the Al Busaidy State upon assuming power in 1744. It then evolved and expanded to include the economic, military, and administrative fields, which in turn contributed to making Oman an influential force in the Indian Ocean and East Africa.

She added that this trajectory continued to evolve under the subsequent Sultans, specifically during the era of Sayyid Said bin Sultan, under whom Oman achieved great expansion in all fields domestically

and regionally. It then reached its peak in the modern era under the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour beginning in 1970, when the country witnessed a comprehensive renaissance extending to all sectors – from education, health and infrastructure to economic and social development.

His reign, she said, was also distinguished by the adoption of a policy of positive neutrality and quiet diplomacy, which enabled Oman to assume the role of a trusted mediator in resolving many regional and international conflicts, earning it global respect and appreciation.

She emphasised that during the prosperous era of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Oman has entered a new stage of Renewed Renaissance since 2020, focusing on deep administrative and economic reforms, modernising the machinery of government, and implementing Oman Vision 2040, which aims to diversify income sources away from reliance on oil and to develop vital sectors such as tourism, logistics, and manufacturing, in addition to empowering youth and investing in human capital.

MUTUAL LOYALTY
Regarding the nature of the relationship between the Omani people and the Al Busaidy leadership, and how this relationship helped overcome national challenges, Dr Bahiya said that it has been characterised by a unique mutual loyalty and cohesion. It is, she added, reinforced by the leadership's commitment to direct and open communication with citizens through public councils and periodic meetings to listen to their concerns and aspirations.

GEOGRAPHICAL CHALLENGE
Dr Yunis bin Jameel al Numani, a researcher and writer in history, pointed out that geography has posed a challenge for Oman: the sea before them, and mountains and desert behind them. Consequently, the response was to take to the sea and explore its depths, so Omani ships reached China, the Malay Archipelago, and Indonesia.

Dr Hanan bint Mahmoud Ahmed, a researcher in Omani cultural identity, emphasised to Oman News Agency that national days and occasions play a vital role in rooting national identity and entrenching a sense of belonging

and national unity among peoples. The importance of celebrating national memory on a specific national day lies in reviving and recalling various historical scenes, and in inspiring Omani symbols and figures to renew allegiance and to preserve the fabric of the relationship between the citizen and the nation.

During the era of Sultan Sayyid Faisal bin Turki (1888–1913), he continued his diligent pursuit of what the Imams and Sultans before him had started in the renaissance of Oman and in consolidating its trade, political and economic relations with various countries of the world.

LEADERSHIP SYMBOL
As for the role of the Founding Imam, Ahmed bin Said, in establishing the foundations of the modern Omani state and unifying it politically, economically, and socially, Dr Rana bint Hamdan al Dhoyaniyah, a researcher and writer in history, pointed out that the Founding Imam is considered a leadership symbol who was able to achieve Omani unity. She added that the Founding Imam implemented a prudent economic policy; he abolished taxes, which contributed to attracting merchants to his administration. This confirms his personal commercial expertise and illustrates his deep understanding of commercial movement and its course, as he started as a merchant, and this had an impact on shaping his personality.

Regarding the role of the women of the Al Busaidy Dynasty in the political sphere, Dr Ahlam bint Hamoud al Jahwariyah, a researcher and writer in history, pointed out that their role was not incidental or marginal, but rather an integral part of the journey of this ancient family, whose legacy and extended history we celebrate today since 1744.

She said that as we celebrate this solemn occasion, we revive the biographies of women from the Al Busaidy Dynasty who played important roles in the course of governance and the transfer of power, and of others who had an impact and influence on the civilisational scene in general.

The Al Busaidy State remains a fundamental pillar of nation-building in Oman, and an immortal legacy for Oman to continue, under the wise leadership of His Majesty, the march of building and renaissance. — ONA



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GROWING EFFORTS TOWARDS NEW PARTNERSHIPS

UNDER the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Sultanate of Oman is committed to leveraging its distinguished international relations to achieve shared interests and uphold the principles of global peace and security. His Majesty's forthcoming state visit to the Kingdom of Spain represents a significant international engagement in this pursuit, building upon over five decades of bilateral ties founded on mutual respect and understanding.

For the past fifty years, Omani-Spanish relations have been defined by mutual respect and constructive cooperation, culminating in a robust partnership across diverse fields, with politics and economics being particularly prominent. This is demonstrated through a consistent exchange of views, high-level meetings and bilateral agreements, including the visit of King Felipe VI of Spain to meet with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to offer condolences on the passing of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos.

The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Spain enjoy collaborative ventures in numerous sectors, especially economic and investment fields. Business forums, bilateral agreements, MoUs between public and private entities, and investment funds all contribute to a synergistic relationship that enhances mutual benefits and capitalises on opportunities in renewable energy, tourism, food security, infrastructure, technology and defence.

The economic and investment partnership between the two nations has seen remarkable growth since the 1980s, a trajectory that accelerated with the establishment of the Oman-Spain Private Equity



Inbound tourism to Oman from the Spanish market showed significant growth, increasing by 19 per cent during the third quarter of this year (2025) to reach 6,764 Spanish visitors.



THAMER BIN FAYEZE AL ALAWI

Oman's Ambassador to Spain

Fund in 2018. This fund emerged from the economic partnership between the Oman Investment Authority and the Spanish state-owned company 'COFIDES' and was strengthened in 2023, reaching a total value of approximately RO 133 million. The fund has invested in 11 Spanish companies across diverse

sectors, including food industries, renewable energy, technology, industry, healthcare and marketing.

Total trade volume between the two countries surpassed RO 94 million by the end of 2024. Omani exports to Spain amounted to RO 33.8 million, while Oman's imports from Spain reached RO 60.4 million, according to data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information. Key Spanish imports included ships, aircraft, vehicles, foundry products, flooring and ammunition. Conversely, Omani exports to Spain comprised aluminium, plastics, electrical materials, organic chemical products and frozen fish.

By the end of September 2025, the number of Spanish companies registered in Oman stood at 58, with a total invested capital exceeding RO 69 million and a Spanish contribution rate of 66.5 per cent.



FRANCISCO JAVIER SIMONE

Spanish Ambassador to Oman

These companies are primarily focused on construction, transport and storage, and wholesale and retail trade, as per data from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

Thamer bin Fayeze al Alawi, Oman's Ambassador to Spain, stated that this historic visit reflects

the profound and solid bonds of friendship between the two nations and their peoples. He affirmed that the meeting between the two leaders will provide powerful momentum to elevate the strategic partnership, which began with the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972, towards broader horizons in all domains.

The ambassador noted that Omani-Spanish relations are experiencing consistent development and growth, characterised by close bilateral cooperation that has yielded multiple partnerships across different levels. He highlighted a significant recent expansion in agreements between the sovereign wealth funds of both nations, which operate internationally. Consequently, Oman has become the third-largest recipient of Spanish investments in the GCC states, with investments nearing RO 37 million, positioning Oman as a reliable and attractive partner for various Spanish economic sectors, including tourism, civil engineering, chemical and metal industries, water management and commercial activities.

On cultural relations, the ambassador emphasised their deep historical roots, tracing back to the Arab migration to Al Andalus and their role in its civilisation. A notable Omani figure from that era was the physician Abdullah bin Muhammad Al Azdi Al Sohari (Ibn Al Thahabi), author of the "Encyclopedia of Water" – considered the first medical-linguistic glossary in history – who died in Spain's Valencia region in 1064. Further evidence of the longstanding historical connections includes the discovery by Spanish researchers of royal emblems of Spanish monarchs engraved on historic cannons located in Omani forts and castles, notably at Jabrin Fort. — ONA

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HISTORIC VISIT REFLECTS THE PROFOUND AND SOLID BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS AND THEIR PEOPLES

THE MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS WILL PROVIDE POWERFUL MOMENTUM TO ELEVATE THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

TOTAL TRADE VOLUME BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES SURPASSED RO 94 MILLION BY THE END OF 2024

OMANI EXPORTS TO SPAIN AMOUNTED TO RO 33.8 MILLION, WHILE OMAN'S IMPORTS FROM SPAIN REACHED RO 60.4 MILLION

THE NUMBER OF SPANISH COMPANIES REGISTERED IN OMAN STANDS AT 58, WITH A TOTAL INVESTED CAPITAL EXCEEDING RO 69 MILLION

INBOUND TOURISM TO OMAN FROM THE SPANISH MARKET SHOWED SIGNIFICANT GROWTH, INCREASING BY 19 PER CENT

Ministry of Economy

TENDER NOTICE

The Ministry of Economy Announces the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender Title	Document Fees In Omani Riyals	Last Date For Tender Submission
10/2025	Feasibility Study on the Use of Renewable Energy as an Alternative to Natural Gas in the Industrial Sector under the Gas Allocation Policy	LQ: 25 SME: 10 RE: 25	11/12/2025

First

All specialized and interested companies that are registered with the Projects, Tender and Local Content Authority can participate and collect the specification and conditions of the tender from the following website: www.etendering.tenderboard.gov.om

Second

The bidders must submit their offers electronically via the website.

Third

Tenders that does not meet the above conditions shall not be considered. The ministry shall have the right to reject any tender, and shall not be obliged to award the tender for the lowest bid without giving reasons.

For inquiries regarding tenders, please contact through the website of the electronic tendering system; <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>

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SHORTTAKES



RGO TO MARK ANNUAL DAY TODAY

MUSCAT: The Royal Guard of Oman (RGO) will celebrate its Annual Day today, Sunday, corresponding to the first of November each year. The celebration will be held at the RGO military parade ground under the auspices of Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister. The ceremony's events will include the graduation of a batch of recruits, alongside a number of activities that embody the meanings of pride and honour on the RGO Day. — ONA

Oman celebrates Agriculture Day to boost food security

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
MUSCAT, NOV 1

OMAN Agriculture Day, observed annually on October 31, continues to see week-long celebrations across the Sultanate of Oman, reaffirming the importance of the agricultural sector in achieving food security and promoting sustainability. The day serves as a tribute to the nation's farmers and their pivotal role in strengthening agricultural and economic development. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the total cultivated area in Oman reached 311,000 acres in 2024, with plant production amounting to 3.94 million tonnes. The ministry also distributed 37,000 kg of seeds and 68,000 seedlings to enhance productivity. Dates topped the list of Oman's most



The Environment Authority organised student visits to the Rehabilitation and Propagation Centre in Barka.

produced crops with 400,000 tonnes, followed by tomatoes (236,000 tonnes), pepper (181,000 tonnes), cucumber (132,000 tonnes), and watermelon (102,000 tonnes). In terms of self-sufficiency, dates achieved 99 per cent, vegetables 79 per cent and fruits 24 per cent. Data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) revealed that fodder crops represent the largest share of the total cultivated area, accounting for 41.9 per cent. To mark Oman Agriculture Day, the Environment Authority organised student visits to the Rehabilitation and Propagation Centre in the Wilayat of Barka, Al Batinah South Governorate. The initiative aimed to raise awareness among students about the importance of Oman's native wild trees and the need to care for them. Students also learned about the centre's role in preserving plant species and supporting sustainable agricultural practices in Oman.

Oman, UK review bilateral cooperation

MANAMA: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, met with Yvette Cooper, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the UK, on the sidelines of the Manama Dialogue 2025, on Saturday. They reviewed the historical relations between the two friendly



Sayyid Badr holds talks with Yvette Cooper

countries and discussed ways to develop bilateral cooperation in the political, economic and security fields. They also exchanged views on regional and international developments. The two sides discussed ways to enhance efforts aimed at regional security and promoting peace in the Middle East. — ONA

MALAYSIA WOOS OMANI MEDICAL TOURISTS THROUGH HEALTHCARE ROADSHOW

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, NOV 1

A delegation of leading Malaysian healthcare providers has arrived in Muscat to take part in Malaysia Healthcare Week, a major initiative launched at Muscat City Centre, Al Seeb, to promote Malaysia as a preferred medical tourism destination for Omanis and residents. The week-long roadshow, which runs until November 5, aims to connect Omani patients directly with Malaysian medical specialists through a series of exhibitions, consultations, and professional exchanges. It marks the first major Middle East activation under the Malaysia Year of Medical Tourism (MYMT) 2026. “This healthcare roadshow demonstrates Malaysia’s ‘Healing Meets Hospitality’ approach to international healthcare,” said representatives of the IHH Healthcare initiative, which leads the Malaysian delegation in partnership with the Embassy of Malaysia in Oman. Participating hospitals and institutions include Prince Court Medical Centre, Alpha IVF & Women Specialists, and PERKESO Rehabilitation Centre, alongside the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) and Tourism Malaysia Dubai Office. The programme features two components — the first being a public exhibition at City Centre Mall which concludes today, November 2, offering visitors insights into Malaysia’s medical services, interactive booths, and live Q&A sessions with clinicians. Malaysian hospitals also tailor their services for Middle Eastern patients — from halal-certified food and Arabic-speaking care coordinators to family accommodation within hospital complexes and culturally informed care protocols that respect privacy and religious values. “Malaysia Healthcare Week Oman reflects our national commitment under MYMT 2026 to deliver world-class medical excellence in an environment built around patient comfort and cultural understanding,” said Suriaghandi Suppiah, Chief Executive Officer of MHTC. “Omani patients receive not just treatment, but a complete care experience that honours their cultural and personal preferences.”

وزارة الصحة
Ministry of Health

Announcement

The Ministry of Health announces to all citizens and residents selected, through the electronic allocation by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, to perform the Hajj pilgrimage for the year 1447 AH / 2026 AD, that they must visit the designated healthcare centers in each governorate to receive the following mandatory vaccinations.

Vaccine Type	Target Group	Vaccination Procedure & Duration
Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (ACYW135)	All individuals wishing to perform Hajj, including adults and children from two months of age and older	A single dose of the meningococcal conjugate vaccine protects against meningococcal disease and its complications. This vaccine provides protection for five years. Individuals who have previously received the vaccine and can provide proof do not need to be revaccinated unless five years have passed since their last dose
Seasonal Influenza Vaccine	All individuals wishing to perform Hajj, including adults and children six months of age and older	A single dose of the seasonal flu vaccine protects against complications of influenza and provides seasonal immunity

All individuals are required to receive the vaccination at least ten days prior to travel in order to safeguard public health and prevent the transmission of infection.

محافظة مسقط
Muscat Governorate

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Announcement of Public Auction No. (43/2025)

Muscat Municipality, represented by the Auction Committee, announce the establishment of a public auction as per the following details:

No.	Items	Location
1	Light & Heavy Vehicles – Motorcycles (81 No.)	Auction Yard at Al Wadi Al Kabeer

Interested individuals for this Auction must comply with the conditions set out here under:

- Those wishing to enter the auction must pay a fee and its amount (≈/4 OMR) (four Omani rials) which are not refundable, and an amount of (500 OMR) (five hundred Omani rials) as a temporary deposit to participate in the auction (refundable). The payment shall be done electronically to Muscat Municipality's representative at the auction day at site.
- The person who wins the auction is obligated to pay the full price of the **items** if they were awarded to him plus 5% as value added tax, and the brokerage fees by (≈/3%OMR) of the total amount of the **items**. The payment shall be done electronically to Muscat Municipality's representative at the auction day at site.
- Items are sold in their current condition, and Muscat municipality is not responsible for the loss or damage of any part of it once its value has been paid; and it does not bear any obligation regarding the sold **items**. Those wishing to participate in the auction must inspect the **items** on the day specify for that purpose.
- The sold **item** is neither refundable nor devalued, and no appeal will be accepted in this regard.
- The buyer is obligated to transfer the **items** that have been awarded to him after paying their full value within a period not exceeding two weeks from the date of purchase. In the event of delay, a daily penalty of (≈/50 OMR) shall be imposed for each day, but not exceeding one month. Muscat Municipality shall not be responsible of the sold items if it were not transferred within the specified period; and it reserve the rights to resell the items on the expenses of the buyers.
- The buyer is obligated to clear and clean the site after transferring the sold items. In the event of failure, the temporary deposit will not be paid back to the buyer.
- The auction details are specified as follows:

Location	Auction Yard at Al Wadi Al Kabeer
Date/Time of the inspection	From 04/11/2025 to 06/11/2025 From 08: 00 AM to 12:00 PM
Site for submission participation fees	Auction Yard at Al Wadi Al Kabeer
Auction date	12/11/2025 at 7:30 AM
For inquires and coordination	Please contact the Auction Committee representative on (99293206 – 24753648)
Other terms	- The VAT specified in the law will be applied to the successful bidder. - It is not allowed to enter the auction yard without paying the entrance fee and the insurance amount. - Muscat Municipality reserve the rights to cancel or postpone the sale without providing any justification. - The security deposit will not be refunded in these cases: - If the buyer does not pay the value of the sold items. - If the buyer does not transfer the items from the auction yard within the specified period.

الوزارة
Ministry of Economy

TENDER NOTICE

The Ministry of Economy Announces the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender Title	Document Fees in Omani Riyals	Last Date For Tender Submission
(11/2025)	Providing cleaning services for the Ministry's buildings in 2026	LO: 25 SME: 10 RE: 25	11/12/ 2025

First

- All specialized and interested companies that are registered with the Projects, Tender and Local Content Authority can participate and collect the specification and conditions of the tender from the following website: [www.etendering.tenderboard.gov.om](#)

Second

- The bidders must submit their offers electronically via the website.

Third

- Tenders that does not meet the above conditions shall not be considered. The ministry shall have the right to reject any tender, and shall not be obliged to award the tender for the lowest bid without giving reasons.

For inquiries regarding tenders, please contact through the website of the electronic tendering system; [https://etending.tenderboard.gov.om](#)

For inquiries regarding the technical support of the electronic tender-ing system, please contact via e-mail and phone:

etenderhd@mtc.gov.om

+ 96824402200

WORLD

PRODUCTIVEDISCUSSION



CHINA’S XI PLEDGES TO WORK FOR PEACE ON KOREAN PENINSULA

GYEONGJU: Chinese President Xi Jinping told South Korean President Lee Jae Myung that he would continue to make efforts to resolve issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula, South Korea’s top security adviser said on Saturday. During a summit between Lee and Xi, the South Korean leader called on China to play a constructive role in order to resume dialogue with North Korea, the adviser Wi Sung-lac said at a media briefing.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung sought Chinese President Xi Jinping’s help in efforts to resume talks with nuclear-armed neighbour North Korea. Lee hosted Xi at a state summit and dinner after an Asia-Pacific leaders’ forum in the South Korean city of Gyeongju, marking Xi’s first visit in 11 years. Beijing attaches great importance to relations with Seoul and sees South Korea as an inseparable cooperative partner, Xi said ahead of the summit according to Lee’s office.

Lee, who was elected president in a snap election in June, has promised to strengthen ties with the United States while not antagonising China and seeking to reduce tensions with the North. “I am very positive about the situation in which conditions for engagement with North Korea are being formed,” Lee said, referring to recent high-level exchanges between China and North Korea. “I also hope that South Korea and China will take advantage of these favourable conditions to strengthen strategic communication to resume dialogue with North Korea.” Lee has called for a phased approach to denuclearising North Korea, starting with engagement and a freeze on further development of nuclear weapons.

In a statement on Saturday, Pyongyang, a military and economic ally of China, dismissed the denuclearisation agenda as an unrealisable “pipe dream”. North Korea has repeatedly and explicitly rejected Lee’s overtures, saying it will never talk to the South. In recent years Pyongyang abandoned its longstanding policy of unification with the South and called Seoul a main enemy.

South Korean national security adviser Wi Sunglac told a briefing that China expressed its willingness to cooperate for peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, but the leaders did not specifically discuss what kind of role China would play. Both sides also agreed that US-North Korea dialogue was most important, Wi said.

Chinese state media reports on the meeting with Lee made no mention of the North Korea discussions. According to Xinhua, Xi proposed ways to open a new chapter in relations, including having each country “respect each other’s social systems and development paths, accommodate core interests and major concerns, and properly handle differences through friendly consultation.” Xi also called for upholding multilateralism and increasing cooperation in areas such as artificial intelligence, biopharmaceuticals, green industries and ageing populations, Xinhua reported. During Xi’s visit, China and South Korea signed seven agreements including a won-yuan currency swap and memorandums of understanding on online crime, businesses that cater to ageing populations, and innovation, among other issues. — Reuters

RUSSIA ATTACKS UKRAINIAN SPECIAL FORCES TEAM IN POKROVSK

MOSCOW: Russian forces defeated a team of Ukrainian special forces which were rushed to the embattled eastern city of Pokrovsk in an attempt to prevent Russian forces from advancing further into the city, the Russian defence ministry said. Russia wants to take the whole of the Donbas region, which comprises Luhansk and Donetsk provinces. Ukraine still controls about 10% of Donbas - an area of about 5,000 square km (1,930 square miles) in western Donetsk.

Capturing Pokrovsk, dubbed “the gateway to Donetsk” by Russian media, and Kostiantynivka to its northeast which Russian forces are also trying to envelop, would give Moscow a platform to drive north towards the two biggest remaining Ukrainian-controlled cities in Donetsk - Kramatorsk and Sloviansk. Ukraine said that it had deployed special forces in Pokrovsk earlier in the week, landing a Black Hawk helicopter. At least 10 Ukrainian servicemen could be seen

dismounting from a helicopter in a field in a video. Russia’s defence ministry said it had killed a group of Ukrainian military intelligence special forces. “All 11 people who disembarked from the helicopter were killed,” the ministry said, adding that Russian forces were pushing forward in Pokrovsk and clearing the area. Battles around Hryshyne are significant, as they indicate Russian forces are close to cutting off Ukrainian supply lines to Pokrovsk. — Reuters

Thousands feared ‘in grave danger’ in El Fasher

THOUSANDS of civilians are feared trapped and in imminent danger in the Sudanese city of El Fasher after its fall to paramilitaries, Doctors Without Borders said on Saturday, as Germany’s top diplomat described the situation there as “apocalyptic”. At war with the regular army since April 2023, the Rapid Support Forces seized El Fasher on Sunday, pushing the military out of its last stronghold in Darfur after a grinding 18-month siege marked by starvation and bombardment. Since the city’s fall, reports have emerged of summary executions, violence, attacks on aid workers, looting and abductions, while communications remain largely cut off. Survivors from El Fasher who reached the nearby town of Tawila have said of mass killings, children shot before their parents, and civilians beaten and robbed as they fled.

The UN says more than 65,000 people have fled El Fasher since Sunday but tens of thousands remain trapped. Around 260,000 people were in the city before the RSF’s final assault.

“Large numbers of people remain in grave danger and are being prevented by the Rapid Support Forces and its allies from reaching safer areas,” Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said. The NGO added that only 5,000 people had managed to make their way to Tawila, about 70 kilometres to the west. The number of people arriving in Tawila “doesn’t add up, while accounts of large-scale atrocities are mounting”, said MSF head of emergencies



Displaced Sudanese gather and sit in makeshift tents after fleeing El Fasher city in Darfur. — Reuters

Michel Olivier Lacharite. “Where are all the missing people who have already survived months of famine and violence in El Fasher?” he added. “The most likely, albeit frightening, answer is that they are being killed, blocked, and hunted down when trying to flee.”

Several eyewitnesses told MSF that a group of 500 civilians, along with soldiers from the military and the army-allied Joint Forces, had attempted to flee on Sunday, but most were killed or captured by the RSF and their allies. Survivors reported that people were separated based on their gender, age or presumed ethnicity, and that many were still being held for ransom. Hayat, a mother of five who fled the city, previously said that “young men travelling with us were stopped” along the way by paramilitaries and “we don’t know what happened to them”. The UN said on Friday the death toll from the RSF’s assault on the city may be in the hundreds, while army allies accused the paramilitary group of killing over 2,000 civilians. Yale University’s Humanitarian Research Lab suggested on Friday that mass killings were likely continuing in and around El Fasher. The lab, which uses satellite imagery and open-source information to document human rights abuses during wars, said fresh images from Friday showed “no large-scale movement” of civilians fleeing the city, giving them reason to believe much of the population may be “dead, captured, or in hiding”. The lab identified at least 31 clusters of objects consistent with human bodies between Sunday and Friday, across neighbourhoods, university grounds and military sites. — AFP

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SERBIANS MARK ANNIVERSARY OF STATION COLLAPSE

NOVI SAD: Tens of thousands of Serbians on Saturday marked the first anniversary of a deadly railway station roof collapse in Novi Sad, observing 16 minutes of silence for the 16 victims in the country’s second-largest city. At 11:52 am, the time when the tragedy occurred on November 1, 2024, the crowd of tens of thousands stood in silence in downtown Novi Sad at the start of the commemoration rally.

Crowds filled the roads under bright sunny skies, with many people in tears. Students, war veterans and victims’ families stood alongside people holding wreaths in front of the station, where people had earlier placed candles and flowers. Since the tragedy, which became a symbol of entrenched corruption, Serbia has been gripped by regular student-led protests. Protesters first demanded a transparent investigation. — AFP

HEIST ARRESTS

Louvre suspect released without charge



One of five suspects arrested this week over the unprecedented jewel heist at the Louvre has been released without charge, his lawyers said. “In these serious crime cases, we find that waves of arrests look more like drift nets,” Bougrine said, pointing to what she said was the indiscriminate nature of some of the arrests. The Paris public prosecutor’s office did not specify the number of suspects brought before the court. — AFP

GUNFIRE INCIDENT

2 dead, more injured in Greek shooting



At least two people died and several were injured in a shooting on the Greek island of Crete suspected to be linked to a family vendetta. State news agency ANA said at least two people, including a 50-year-old woman, were killed after gunmen opened fire on houses in the central village of Vorizia, some 52 kilometres southwest of the island capital Iraklio. At least 10 more people were injured. — AFP

EFFORTS REDUCTION

UN reduces peace mission in Colombia



The UN Security Council voted to reduce its peacekeeping obligations in Colombia, which has denounced President Gustavo Petro’s policies. In a resolution adopted with 12 votes in favour and two abstentions — the US and Russia — the UN will extend its mission for another year in Colombia, but reduce provisions related to the protection of ethnic minorities there. US Ambassador Mike Waltz praised the reduction efforts. — AFP

Nasa gets moon lander plan from SpaceX, Blue Origin



KENNETH CHANG

The author is a Science Reporter at The New York Times

NASA wants ideas of how to speed up the return of its astronauts to the surface of the moon. And now, it has some. On Wednesday, the space companies owned by two of the richest people on Earth — Elon Musk’s SpaceX and Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin — submitted ideas to the space agency for a faster programme to land astronauts near the lunar south pole under the Artemis III mission. The proposals follow appearances by Sean Duffy, the secretary of transportation who is temporarily also serving as the head of Nasa, on cable news networks last week. He said Nasa was looking to accelerate its return-to-the-moon programme known as Artemis, and the next landing of Nasa astronauts would occur before President Donald Trump’s second term ends in January 2029.

SpaceX currently has a \$2.9 billion contract to build a version of its gargantuan Starship rocket to serve as the lander for Artemis III. But after several failed test flights of Starship this year, leaving major technological hurdles yet to be cleared, Musk’s company is running behind schedule. That means that the next footprints on the moon could be made by astronauts from China, which is aiming to send its astronauts to the moon’s surface by 2030. Several weeks ago, Nasa went to SpaceX and Blue Origin, which has a contract to build a lander for later Artemis missions, and

asked if they could come up with alternative designs for Artemis III that would be quicker to build.

In a posting on its website on Thursday, SpaceX described at length what it has accomplished so far. However, it has yet to demonstrate a key milestone — moving millions of gallons of liquid methane and liquid oxygen propellant between two Starships. That will be needed to fill up the tanks of the Starship lander before it can head to the moon. SpaceX also needs to demonstrate that it can quickly and reliably perform a dozen, perhaps dozens of, launches of Starship fuel tankers. Experts said that many might be needed to provide enough propellant to send a single moon lander from Earth’s orbit to the lunar surface. But near the end of its posted update, SpaceX also noted, “In response to the latest calls, we’ve shared and are formally assessing a simplified mission architecture and concept of operations that we believe will result in a faster return to the Moon while simultaneously improving crew safety.” The lander that Blue Origin is building for a later Artemis moon mission is smaller than Starship, but also requires in-space refilling of propellant tanks.

Blue Origin’s new proposal to Nasa uses both that lander as well as a smaller lander it has developed to test some of the needed

Several weeks ago, Nasa went to SpaceX and Blue Origin, which has a contract to build a lander for later Artemis missions, and asked if they could come up with alternative designs for Artemis III that would be quicker to build

technologies. The first mission of the smaller lander, known as Blue Moon Mark 1, is scheduled to launch to the moon next year on the company’s large New Glenn rocket. The Blue Origin Artemis III proposal eliminates the need for any propellant transfer in space, said a person familiar with the plan but not authorised to describe a proprietary proposal.

That simpler approach could be ready for a mission launching in 2028 and would eliminate some of the risk of unproven technology, the person said. Perhaps concerned that it might indeed be replaced for Artemis III, Musk and SpaceX have been attacking both critics and competitors.

When the current shutdown of the federal government ends, a Nasa official said it would seek additional lander ideas from other aerospace companies. Bethany Stevens, the NASA press secretary, said in a statement, “A committee of Nasa subject matter experts will be assembled to evaluate each proposal and determine the best path forward to win the second space race given the urgency of adversarial threats to peace and transparency on the moon.”

One proposal could come from Lockheed Martin, where company officials have said they have been working with other aerospace companies for several months on a design using existing technologies and even parts already manufactured for other spacecraft.

Top senators slam Pentagon marine vessel opreations

THE top Republican and Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee said that the Pentagon had refused for weeks to share with Congress key information about its strikes on marine vessels that the Trump administration says are carrying drugs, despite repeated requests that it divulge the directives initiating the operation as well as its legal justification. In a brief statement, Sen Roger Wicker, the Republican chair of the panel, and Sen Jack Reed, the senior Democrat, made public two letters that they jointly sent to Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth over the past several weeks requesting the information. “To date, these documents have not been submitted,” Wicker and Reed wrote.

The senators’ decision to publicise their requests and Hegseth’s failure to meet them reflected growing bipartisan alarm on Capitol Hill about President Donald Trump’s expanding and open-ended military campaign, undertaken without consultation with or approval by Congress. It also reflected deepening frustration with the administration’s lack of transparency about an operation whose legal justification is in question.

The senators shared two separate requests made to the Pentagon. In one letter, in late September, they asked for a copy of the president’s orders to carry out the military strikes. By law, that letter noted, the Pentagon is required to provide Congress with copies of “execute orders” within 15 days of the president’s issuing of them, a deadline the senators said the Trump administration had missed.

In a second letter, in early October, they again sought the execute orders, as well as the Justice Department’s legal justification for the attacks and a “complete list” of designated terrorist organisations and drug trafficking organisations “with whom the president has



Senator Mark Warner speaks to reporters at the Capitol in Washington.

determined the United States is in a non-international armed conflict and against whom lethal military force may be used.” Top House Democrats sent a similar request earlier this month for the list of targets but have not received any information from the White House.

Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said on Friday that House Republicans were also concerned about the lack of transparency around the legal justification for the strikes, even if they were not saying so broadly or publicly. “There is definitely strong bipartisan concern that the administration just has not provided information to Congress that they’re supposed to provide to us,” Smith said in an interview. “And yes, I’ve heard Republicans, as well as Democrats, express concern about the legality of it.”

Trump has sought to justify strikes on alleged drug-trafficking vessels by designating certain cartels as terrorist organisations. The senators’ announcement on Friday came amid rising concern in both parties over the Trump administration’s failure to follow the law to inform Congress about the president’s escalating military campaign against drug traffickers

The senators’ decision to publicize their requests and Hegseth’s failure to meet them reflected growing bipartisan alarm on Capitol Hill about President Donald Trump’s expanding and open-ended military campaign, undertaken without consultation with or approval by Congress.

off the coast of Central and South America.

A decision to exclude Senate Democrats from a briefing on Wednesday on the strikes, which so far have killed at least 61 people, drew ire from both sides of the aisle Sen Mike Rounds, R-S D, told reporters he spoke with the White House after the briefing and said the Senate had always worked on a bipartisan basis when it came to matters of defense and national security. “We want to keep it that way,” said Rounds, a member of the Armed Services Committee and the Intelligence Committee.

House lawmakers in a classified briefing on Thursday asked Pentagon officials for bipartisan access to the legal memo justifying the strikes but were not given a specific answer as to when the administration would give that to Congress. Military legal experts were meant to brief lawmakers in that closed-door meeting, but the administration opted at the last minute not to send them and offered no explanation why. “I’m walking away without an understanding of how and why they’re making an assessment that the use of lethal force is adequate here,” Rep. Jason Crow, D-Colo, said as he exited that briefing. Crow, a member of the House

Armed Services and Intelligence committees and a former Army Ranger, stressed the importance of congressional oversight on US military action abroad. “I fought in Iraq and Afghanistan,” he said. “Our country spent over 20 years, \$3 trillion, thousands of American lives, using tactics and strikes against terrorists. And most of that ended up poorly.”

US officials have said that the military has identified potential targets inside Venezuela, should Trump decide to expand the Pentagon’s maritime campaign against the purported drug traffickers to land. But on Friday, Trump indicated that he had not made any decisions about such an escalation. As the president headed to Mar-a-Lago for the weekend, reporters aboard Air Force One asked him directly if he was weighing whether to attack military sites in Venezuela. He replied, “No, it’s not true.”

The Pentagon has ordered an aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R Ford, to the region, but it will take several weeks for it to reach the Caribbean. The military is likely to hold off on any potential escalation of the Trump administration’s campaign against drug trafficking until the arrival of the Ford, which carries around 5,000 sailors when fully staffed.



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The writer is a reporter covering the US intelligence agencies



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OPINION

Cooking as therapy, lessons from a Korean Drama



DR HAMED
AL SINAWI

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at SQU Hospital

THE South Korean drama “Bon appétit, your majesty” captured my attention not only for its amazing historical setting but for the warmth and subtle emotional lessons embedded within its story. The plot centres around Yeon Ji-yeong, a modern chef who gets mysteriously transported back to the Joseon dynasty in Korea during a solar eclipse. She arrives at the royal court of King Yi Heon, who appoints her as a palace chef after impressing him with her innovative cooking, which combines modern techniques with traditional ingredients.

The show offers a delightful blend of historical events unfolding at the magnificent palace quarters, along with a heartwarming romance, which are common ingredients in Korean dramas.

Yet behind the humour and kitchen competitions, the series does a great job exploring the psychology of food and how cooking can be a language of care and a tool for emotional expression and resilience.

At the palace, tensions rise among corrupt officials who are plotting against the king. Yet

Ji-yeong disrupts this rigid world not through force or authority, but through flavour. She takes familiar ingredients and reshapes them with modern techniques, surprising everyone in the palace, including the Chinese envoy who visits with his team of royal cooks and special Chinese ingredients.

We see how Ji-yeong creates not just meals, but moments of connection and emotional comfort. I enjoyed watching how certain dishes brought buried childhood memories of the King and Queen dowager, who were both separated from their mothers at an early age.

In psychology, food is deeply connected to our memory and emotions. We often celebrate by eating special dishes, and when we feel sad or depressed, we may lose our appetite or restrict our food intake.

The smell of certain foods can transport us to our childhood, and a shared meal can dissolve conflict more effectively than hours of conversation. Cooking can also be therapeutic. It demands presence, measuring, tasting, adjusting; all of this pulls the mind away from endless worries and

The smell of certain foods can transport us to our childhood, and a shared meal can dissolve conflict more effectively than hours of conversation

grounds it in the senses. For many people, the kitchen becomes a refuge where control, creativity and comfort return.

In the series, Ji-yeong’s journey reflects another psychological theme of adaptation. When she was suddenly removed from her familiar world, she was able to navigate new social norms, understand power dynamics and deal with dangers. Her survival depends not on physical strength, but on flexibility, empathy and emotional intelligence. These are the same qualities that help us cope with major life transitions such as loss, a new role, or an unexpected challenge.

What I found interesting about this show is how resilience was portrayed, not as heroism or perfection. We see Ji-yeong doubt herself, make mistakes and feel homesick. Yet she keeps going, one dish at a time. Her cooking becomes a reminder of who she is, even in a world that is not her own.

In my opinion, the show reminds us of the importance of slowing down, tasting more carefully, and acknowledging that nourishment is not only for the body but for the mind and heart as well.

AI GIANTS TURN TO MASSIVE DEBT TO FINANCE TECH RACE

THOMAS URBAIN

Meta raised \$30 billion in debt on Thursday, as tech giants flush with cash turn to borrowing to finance the expensive race to lead in artificial intelligence.

On a day when Facebook-parent Meta’s share price plunged on the heels of disappointing quarterly earnings, demand for its bonds was reportedly four times greater than supply in a market keen to hold the social networking titan’s debt.

The \$30 billion in bonds scheduled to be repaid over the course of decades is intended to provide money to continue a breakneck pace of AI development that has come to define the sector.

“(Mark) Zuckerberg seems like he’s got no limit in terms of his spending,” said CFRA Research senior equity analyst Angelo Zino.

Zino noted that Meta takes in more than \$100 billion a year, and that while Wall Street may be concerned with Zuckerberg’s spending, it sees little risk that debt won’t get repaid.

“(But) they just can’t use up all their excess free cash flow and completely leverage it into AI.”

The analyst wouldn’t be surprised to see Meta AI rivals Google and Microsoft opt for similar debt moves.

Shareholder worry over Meta spending, on the other hand, is believed to be what drove the tech firm’s share price down more than 11 per cent during trading hours on Thursday.

Meta’s debt, however, drew flocks of investors despite rates for corporate bonds being at decade lows, noted Byron Anderson, head of fixed income at Laffer Tengler Investments.

“Is there some worry about the AI trade? Maybe,” Anderson said. “But the revenue and profit coming off that company are massive.”

If not for a one-time charge related to US President Donald Trump’s Big Beautiful Bill, Meta would have recorded \$18.6 billion in its recently ended quarter.

That amount of net income is more than General Motors, Netflix, Walmart and Visa profits for that quarter combined.

Anderson doubts that so-called fear of missing out on the AI revolution drove demand for Meta’s bond. “I don’t think this was FOMO,” he said.

“People want good quality names in their portfolios at attractive levels, and this is a high-quality name - just like Oracle.”

Business cloud application and infrastructure stalwart Oracle is reported to have raised \$18 billion in a bond offering last month.

According to Bloomberg, the Texas-based tech firm is poised to issue an additional \$38 billion in debt, this time through banks rather than bond sales. — AFP

Brazil opens cruise cabins for COP30 delegates

DOZENS of countries have yet to secure accommodation for their delegations at the COP30 climate summit just a week before it opens, with host Brazil offering free cabins on cruise ships to poorer nations in a last-minute bid to ensure they can attend.

Around 50,000 delegates are expected in the rainforest city of Belem, where nearly every government will convene from November 10-21 to negotiate climate goals. But logistical concerns have plagued preparations: Belem usually has only 18,000 hotel beds, sending nightly rates soaring to several hundred dollars.

As of October 31, 149 countries had confirmed lodging, while 37 were still negotiating, the Brazilian government said.

Brazil has vowed to ensure the world’s poorest and most climate-vulnerable nations have their voices heard at the UN summit. Soaring accommodation costs had already led the UN to hold emergency meetings in response to African countries and small island nations’ warnings that they could not afford to attend - even after Brazil and the UN subsidised hotel costs.

A leaked email seen by Reuters showed that Brazil last week offered three free cabins aboard cruise ships moored in Belem to delegations from low-income nations.

The email, sent by the UN climate secretariat (UNFCCC), said the cabins would be financed through “private donors” and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, and coordinated by Brazil’s government in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

“These cabins will be offered free of cost to your delegation,” the email said, adding that they were supplementary to existing bookings.



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva inaugurates the redeveloped Port of Outeiro on Caratateua Island, ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30), in Belem, Brazil. — Reuters



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PARAGUASSU

The writer is a reporter at Thomson Reuters



KATE ABNETT

The writer is the European Climate & Energy Correspondent at Reuters

Neither the UNFCCC nor the UNDP responded to requests for comment.

Last week, COP30 president Andre Correa do Lago said the free cabins would go to African countries, small island states and Least Developed Countries - around 96 nations in total, according to Reuters’ calculations.

“With this, we will have significant support so that all developing countries can be present at the COP,” Correa do Lago said.

Some wealthier European countries have also indicated they may skip this year’s global climate talks after being quoted prices for accommodation exceeding \$500 per person per night.

Meanwhile, the United States will not send any top officials to the COP30 climate talks in Brazil later this month, a White House official said Saturday, as President Donald Trump instead works to boost fossil fuels.

Trump, who withdrew from the Paris climate agreement for a second time upon his return to the

White House in January, had not been expected to attend a leaders’ summit ahead of the annual UN climate conference in Belem.

But it now appears he will not dispatch any top negotiators to the talks, to be held from November 10 to 21, either. “The US is not sending any high level representatives to COP30,” a White House official said on condition of anonymity.

“The president is directly engaging with leaders around the world on energy issues, which you can see from the historic trade deals and peace deals that all have a significant focus on energy partnerships.”

Brazil said Friday that fewer than 60 world leaders have confirmed they will attend the climate summit on November 6-7 -- held separately this year to ease accommodation pressures.

The leaders of France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway, Colombia, Chile, Cape Verde and Liberia will attend, their governments have confirmed. — Reuters/AFP

Food glorious food... and you



RAY PETERSEN

The writer is a media consultant

If you're anything like me, you can't look at food without putting on weight. But also, if you're like me, you detest diets, can't stand so-called health foods, and things that are 'good for you.' That said, I generally do try, most years, to "go on a diet", as long as I don't call it a diet, because when I'm "on a diet", my mates and work colleagues, as with anyone, will usually have fun at my expense. Beneath my self-deprecation and jolly nature, I hate that.

I know I shouldn't be so 'portly', or 'pleasantly plump', but I have probably gone past the point of no return in my desire for a 'six-pack' or 'abs.' Most of us know whether we are overweight or not, but for those who need a little more reassurance or scientific validation, we can calculate our body mass index, or BMI, which measures our ratio of weight to height. It is calculated as kg per square metre, and the calculation is usually categorised as either underweight (below 18.5), normal (18.5-24.9), overweight (25-29.9), or obese (above 30). This offers a specific rating that allows health professionals an objective bodyweight upon which to base patient discussions.

It's inescapable, isn't it? Whether it's Weight Watchers, Atkins Diets, Intermittent Fasting, Joe Wick's Shift Plan, the 21 Day Dash, the

Carnivore Diet, Cider Vinegar, NutriSystem, the Keto Diet, the Mayo Clinic Diet, the Ginger Tumeric Miracle, The Cut, Jane Fonda's Workout, the 7-Day Shed, Lean in Fifteen, Belly Burn, Dr Mollen's Anti-Aging Diet, Jenny Craig, and the new age Mounjaro and Wegovy jabs, you can't get away from being guilt tripped by it all, can you?

Consumer Health explains that all these seek to empower their clientele to make the lifestyle changes that they say will "align with your weight loss journey", and as such, they may include coaching, technology, peer support groups, and/or even medication, that can promote the belief that weight loss is a coherent reality for them. This may be facilitated through subscription platform lifestyle change, weight loss, meal plan (diet) style commitment, or psychological approaches.

It doesn't matter whether it's a commercial operation, merely the tip of the iceberg, or a genuine healthcare provider; they generally explain that if you're overweight, weight loss has undeniable health benefits such as reducing the risks of high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Look, I know these are the fragile realities of our physiologies, our lives and lifestyles... but me... I just don't want to hear it.

I generally do try, most years, to "go on a diet", as long as I don't call it a diet, because when I'm "on a diet", my mates and work colleagues, as with anyone, will usually have fun at my expense. Beneath my self-deprecation and jolly nature, I hate that

That said, I've just finished reading a UK NHS article based on the harmfulness to our health of what are seen as 'ultra-processed foods', those which include emulsifiers, dyes, lecithin, preservatives, dyes and sweeteners, and are frequently high in calories, saturated fats, salt and sugars. Their experts offer that generally, if a product has even one ingredient that you don't find in your kitchen at home, and its wrapped in plastic, it's ultra-processed and can be harmful.

Apparently, in developed countries, about 60 per cent of our current intake consists of UPS enhanced foods, and ironically, many of those, like cereals, yoghurts and in-house produced breads, would be on a 'hit-list' of the most likely. Flavoured yoghurts contain added sugars, fake fruits and artificial flavours; Chocolate, although most of us' guilty sin, will usually contain more than twenty processing ingredients.

On balance, its antioxidants do have benefits on cholesterol counts; Cereals have added salt and sugar for flavour, as in their raw form they could taste like eating cardboard; and potato crisps include so little potato and so much salt, they are known only as crisps nowadays. But they are still a weakness... it's so hard to open a packet of crisps without finishing it. Isn't it?

FIRE, FURY AND THE 'N-WORD': TRUMP'S NUCLEAR OBSESSION

DANNY KEMP

In his first term as US president, Donald Trump reportedly suggested nuking hurricanes. In his second he has caused fresh concern by ordering the Pentagon to start nuclear weapons tests.

His latest remarks, made minutes before a landmark meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, follow a pattern of deeply contradictory signals about atomic bombs.

One day, Trump talks about making a deal with Russia and China to give up their arsenals. The next he appears — though no one is sure — to be talking about overturning a three-decade halt on testing.

Barely a speech goes by without him addressing the destructive power of nuclear weapons with a kind of awe that befits a 79-year-old who grew up during the Cold War.

"It's been on his mind since the 80s. He wants to solve this issue," Daryl Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Association, said.

"My concern is that his current approach as president is incoherent, inconsistent, and his team is not constructed or managed in a way that can follow through on his best intentions."

The threat — and promise — of nuclear weapons has been a thread through both of Trump's presidencies.

During his first he spent much time and energy on summits with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un — after initially dubbing Kim "Rocket Man" and threatening Pyongyang with "fire and fury like the world has never seen."

Trump's three encounters with Kim failed to produce any deal with the only country known to have carried out nuclear tests in the 21st century.

But the US president has continued to hold out hope of a breakthrough, saying he would have liked to meet Kim during his trip to Asia this week and hailing their "great relationship."

It wasn't just nuclear proliferation on Trump's mind in his first term.

A report emerged in 2019 that Trump had asked national security officials whether it would be possible to drop an atomic bomb in a hurricane to stop it approaching US shores. Trump said the report was "fake news."

After his return to the White House in January, Trump swiftly rekindled his old obsession.

He has repeatedly suggested a deal with Russia and China for "de-nuking", and in February even suggested an extraordinary three-way summit with Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on the subject.

"There's no reason for us to be building brand new nuclear weapons," Trump told reporters at the time. "We already have so many you could destroy the world 50 times over, 100 times over."

Discussing his recent decision to deploy two US submarines after what he said were nuclear threats by former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, Trump even referenced a racial slur.

"I call it the n-word. There are two n-words and you can't use either of them," Trump said in a speech to US military officers in September. — AFP

World Cancer Congress: A milestone in health journey

CANCER continues to be a growing global health challenge, and Oman is no exception. Among women, breast cancer remains the most common form, while prostate cancer tops the list among men, followed by colorectal and thyroid cancers. However, in recent years, Oman has made significant strides in early detection and improved survival rates, largely due to the tireless awareness efforts of hospitals, health institutions, and notably, the Oman Cancer Association (OCA).

Through its extensive campaigns and screening services, especially for breast cancer via its Mobile Mammography Unit (MMU), OCA has played a pivotal role in promoting early diagnosis. The support of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the presence of advanced facilities such as the National Oncology Centre and the Sultan Qaboos Regional Comprehensive Cancer Centre (SQRCCC) — equipped with state-of-the-art technology and expert professionals — have also contributed immensely to reducing mortality and morbidity rates.

Every October, the world marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and Oman too joins the global movement with events, lectures and outreach programmes. At the forefront of this mission stands Yuthar al Rawahi, a four-time cancer survivor and the visionary founder and Life President of OCA since 2000. Her courage and dedication have transformed OCA into a globally respected organisation.

Marking its 25th anniversary, OCA is set to host the World Cancer Congress, Summit and Exhibition 2025 in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The landmark event will take place in Muscat from November 3 to 6, bringing together global leaders, researchers, and healthcare professionals to advance cancer control and care.

The conference will feature scientific sessions, a multi-sectoral exhibition showcasing innovations in diagnostics, pharmaceuticals, digital health and patient care.

Accredited for Continuing Medical Education (CME), it will



As Oman prepares to welcome the global cancer community in 2025, the World Cancer Congress stands as a testament to the nation's progress and compassion

offer valuable learning credits to medical professionals. This milestone event — the first of its kind in Oman — is a moment of pride for the nation and reflects the country's growing stature in global healthcare collaboration.

In Oman, breast cancer often affects women at a younger age compared to other regions. This makes early education and awareness critical. OCA's initiatives extend to high schools, where girls are encouraged to learn about the three "P"s — Prevention, Protection and Periodic Examination.

International guidelines recommend that breast health awareness begin with a monthly self-breast examination from the time a girl begins menstruating. From age 35, women should undergo annual clinical breast examinations, possibly including ultrasound, and from age 40, annual mammograms are advised.

While countries such as the US, the UK, Canada and Australia offer government-led mammogram programmes for women above 40, many Asian nations, including Oman, do not have such formal systems. However, OCA fills this gap through its dedicated MMU screenings conducted across the country year-round — a service that has proven life-saving for many women and their families. OCA's motto, 'Early Detection Saves Lives',

continues to inspire thousands to take proactive steps towards their health.

Beyond screenings, OCA offers several community services free of charge to both Omanis and expatriates. Among its most compassionate initiatives is Dar Al Hanan — a 'home away from home' for children with cancer who travel from distant regions for treatment at the National Cancer Centre in Muscat or the SQRCCC.

Each year, OCA also organises a Walkathon in October or November, an event that is both a fundraiser and a unifying call for awareness. It honours the memory of those who have lost their battle with cancer, supports those currently undergoing treatment and encourages everyone to take charge of their health.

Cancer awareness is not merely a campaign but a community responsibility.

The efforts of OCA, under the leadership of Dr Wahid Al Kharusi, Chairman of the Board, reflect Oman's unwavering commitment to this cause.

As Oman prepares to welcome the global cancer community in 2025, the World Cancer Congress stands as a testament to the nation's progress and compassion — a proud moment that reinforces the message: together, we can make a difference in the fight against cancer.



DR RAJYASHREE NARAYANKUTTY

The writer is a surgeon and cancer awareness advocate in Oman

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



OMAN GEAR UP FOR FIFA ARAB CUP QATAR

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

Oman national football team will take on Sudan in a preparatory match on November 14 in Muscat and it will be followed by another friendly match against Côte d'Ivoire on November 18 in Muscat. Both warm up matches are part of the team domestic camp which will take place from Saturday to gear up for the next participation at Fifa Arab Cup Qatar 2025 which will begin in Doha from December 1 to 18. Oman will meet Somalia team in a qualifier match on November 26. The victory will take Oman to group stage of the Arab tournament.

Oman head coach Carlos Queiroz is expected to announce the squad for the camp within this week. This will be the national team's first official appearance since their participation in the 2026 Fifa World Cup Asian Qualifiers Playoff stage, where the Red Warriors finished third in their group. Oman held hosts Qatar to a goalless draw in their opening fixture before suffering a 2-1 loss to the UAE in the decisive encounter. Qatar topped the group and advanced directly to the World Cup, while the UAE claimed the second spot to move into the next playoff stage.

Both upcoming friendlies will be crucial for Queiroz's men to test their strategy, fine-tune squad coordination and rebuild competitive rhythm following the recent qualifiers. The second friendly against Côte d'Ivoire will offer a significant challenge as the African powerhouse, ranked 42nd in the latest Fifa World Ranking, are three-time Africa Cup of Nations champions and recently sealed qualification for the 2026 Fifa World Cup after defeating Kenya 3-0. The match against Sudan will provide Oman with an opportunity to implement tactical approaches and assess new combinations before taking on the more formidable Ivorian side.

Oman will be aiming to replicate and surpass their previous achievement at the Fifa Arab Cup Qatar 2021, where they reached the quarterfinals before bowing out to Tunisia in a closely contested 2-1 encounter.

Al Shabab defeat Asyr to meet Kuwait in quarters



Al Shabab player in action.

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

AL SHABAB topped group A as they defeated Altyn Asyr FC from Turkmenistan by 3-1 to seal the direct spot of the group to the quarterfinals of the 2025/2026 AFC Challenge League (ACGL). Altyn Asyr took the lead through Zafar Babajanow who managed to break the deadlock and netted the first-half goal at the Changlimithang Stadium. Then, Kenean Maleko equalised before Hatim al Rushadi's brace confirmed the victory for Batinah Southern team. Al Shabab will meet Group B winners Kuwait SC in the quarterfinals on March 4, 2026 in Muscat while the second leg match will be scheduled on March 11, 2026 in Kuwait.

Altyn Asyr took the early lead through Zafar Babajanow, who broke the deadlock in the first half. However, Al Shabab

responded strongly, as Kenean Maleko equalised before Hatim al Rushadi's second-half brace sealed a well-deserved win and maintained Al Shabab's perfect record in the group. The victory capped off a brilliant group-stage campaign for Al Shabab, who began their continental journey with a 1-0 win over hosts Paro FC of Bhutan, followed by a 2-1 triumph against FC Abdysh-Ata of Kyrgyzstan, and finally the emphatic 3-1 win over Altyn Asyr FC.

Head coach Hassan Rustam praised his players for their determination and teamwork throughout the group stage. "This victory reflects the outstanding effort and spirit shown by our players in all three matches," Rustam said. "We faced tough opponents but the team showed consistency, focus, and great fighting spirit to finish top of the group. Special thanks to our players and technical staff for their hard work and to the club's management for their continuous support."

"We will now start preparing for the next stage. I am confident the team can go even further in this Asian competition," he added.

SEEB EXIST AFTER GROUP STAGE
Meanwhile, Oman's Seeb Club concluded their ACGL campaign at the group stage following a 2-1 defeat to Lebanon's Al Ansar FC in Group B. The result lifted Al Ansar to six points, finishing second behind Kuwait SC, who defeated Bashundhara Kings of Bangladesh 2-0 in the group's other fixture. Al Ansar advanced as the best second-placed team across the three West Zone groups and will face FC Muras United of Kyrgyzstan (Group C winners) in the quarterfinals.

Seeb's campaign began on a positive note with a thrilling 3-2 victory over Bashundhara Kings, followed by a 1-1 draw with hosts Kuwait SC. However, their narrow defeat to Al Ansar ended their hopes of progressing to the knockout stage.

Sohar extend lead as Majees secure valuable win in volleyball league

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

Majees and Sohar continued to strengthen their standings in the race for qualification in Group One of the First Division Volleyball League (2025-2026 season), after both teams earned well-deserved 3-0 victories on Friday, in a round that showcased strong offensive performances and clear technical dominance throughout the sets.

SOHAR SHINE AGAIN AND STRENGTHEN ITS LEAD
At the Sohar Sports Complex, the Sohar team delivered a complete performance both defensively and offensively, defeating Saham in straight sets (25-11, 25-16, 25-14) in a match that was controlled by the home side from the very start. Sohar players demonstrated high focus in serving and receiving, with clear superiority in powerful attacks from the wings and middle, securing the first set by a wide margin of 25-11.



Sohar players celebrate after scoring a point.

In the second set, Saham attempted to improve and managed to reduce the gap

halfway through the set, but Sohar's experience allowed them to regain control and close it out

25-16. Saham entered the third set with more determination to come back, but Sohar gave them no room to respond, maintaining control of the rhythm thanks to excellent ball distribution by the setter, making the team's attacks unpredictable. Effective blocking added valuable points for Sohar, along with a variety of attacking plays down the line and across the court, securing the set and the match for the hosts. Sohar now firmly leads the group with 18 points from 7 matches.

MAJEES REGAIN BALANCE WITH A VALUABLE WIN OVER AL SHABAB
At the Rustaq Sports Complex, Majees earned an important victory over Al Shabab in straight sets (25-13, 26-24, 25-13), collecting three new points that raised their tally to 13, strengthening their position among the top teams. Majees started the match strongly and comfortably won

the first set after an organised and cohesive team performance. The second set was the most exciting and closely contested between the two sides. Al Shabab entered this set with greater determination, managing to equalise several times with a clear improvement in reception and better attacking organisation through quick plays in the middle.

The pace of the match increased with both sides exchanging powerful spikes, and Al Shabab's blocking impressed with two critical points that brought them back into contention. However, Majees sealed the set with the experience of its players in the decisive moments, capitalising on a back-row spike followed by a direct serve ace to close the set 26-24. In the third set, Majees returned to its fast and effective playing style and wrapped up the match confidently with a 25-13 win, showing noticeable improvement in team chemistry and fitness.

SHORT TAKES



Villarreal's Spanish defender #24 Alfonso Pedraza (R) shoots the ball past Rayo Vallecano's French defender #24 Florian Lejeune. — AFP

VILLARREAL CRUSH RAYO TO MOVE SECOND IN LA LIGA

VILA-REAL, Spain: Villarreal continued their strong start to the season by thrashing Rayo Vallecano 4-0 to climb above Barcelona into second place in La Liga provisionally on Saturday.

Champions Barca host Elche on Sunday. La Liga leaders Real Madrid welcome Valencia to the Santiago Bernabeu later on Saturday.

Marcelino Garcia Toral's Villarreal moved within four points of Madrid with their emphatic home win over Rayo, 10th.

Villarreal's key man was playmaker Alberto Moleiro, who joined from Las Palmas in the summer. He scored a fine individual goal and set up another at the Estadio de la Ceramica.

"I'm very happy, I'm finding my form more and more, and my team-mates make things easy for me, adapting at the start was a little tricky," Moleiro told DAZN.

"We knew that (we could go second), we have to keep focussing on our next game."

Veteran striker Gerard Moreno opened the scoring after 22 minutes, netting for the second consecutive game.

The 33-year-old forward escaped Pep Chavarria in the box with some clever footwork and fired into the far corner.

Moleiro added a superb second after the break, driving forward from his own half, and as Rayo stood off him, he slotted home from outside the area.

The midfielder teed up Santi Comesana for the third two minutes later.

Ayoze Perez grabbed his first goal of the season for Villarreal's fourth, as he begins to find form after injury.

"We were not good in our defending, marking, it's a game where we can keep learning," said Rayo goalkeeper Augusto Batalla.

"We can't go crazy because of a bad afternoon, that's what today was and we have to continue."

— AFP

Thailand crowned 2025 Optimist Asian title

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSANNAH, NOV 1

THE curtain fell Friday on an exciting week of competition as the 2025 Optimist Asian and Oceanian Championship concluded in Al Musannah, Organised and hosted by Oman Sail in collaboration with the Oman Maritime Sports Committee and the International Optimist Dinghy Association IODA, the championship brought together more than 180 young sailors from 25 countries across Asia and Oceania for a spectacular showcase of skill, determination and sportsmanship.

Held at Oman Sail's Mussanah Sailing School, located at the Barcelo Mussanah Resort, the event reaffirmed the Sultanate of Oman's growing reputation as one of the world's leading venues for international sailing, the championship was supported by QNB Oman as Gold Partner, alongside Mazoon Dairy, Tanuf Water, Visit Oman and Barcelo Mussanah Resort as Bronze Partners.

The week long event featured close and thrilling races held in perfect weather and wind conditions, allowing participants to display outstanding talent and tactical precision, the championship concluded with a glittering closing ceremony held under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information, in the presence of ambassadors, dignitaries, IODA representatives, and team officials.

The ceremony celebrated the crowning of the 2025 champions across multiple divisions and included the official handover of the IODA flag to Team Sri Lanka, which will host the next edition in 2026.

CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

In the Team Racing Championship, Singapore Team 1 demonstrated remarkable teamwork and consistency to win the 2025 Optimist Asian and Oceanian Team Racing title, followed by Thailand in second place and Singapore Team 2 in third, Singapore was also named Top Asian Team, while New Zealand received the Top Oceanian Team award.

In the 2025 Optimist Nations Cup, Team USA claimed victory, ahead of Argentina 2 and Argentina 1, reflecting the depth of global youth sailing talent on display in Oman.

In the Individual Gold Fleet, Thailand's Sorawit Naksuk delivered a dominant performance throughout the week to win the overall 2025 Optimist Asian and Oceanian Championship title and the prestigious IODA Perpetual Trophy, was followed by Ethan Chia from Singapore in second place and Storm Husky Kim from



The closing ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information.



In the Gold Fleet, Sorawit Naksuk from Thailand secured the 2025 Optimist Asian and Oceanian Championship title and the IODA Perpetual Trophy. Ethan Chia from Singapore finished second, while Storm Husky Kim from the United States of America claimed third place.



In the Silver Fleet, Kornelia Pajak from the United Arab Emirates took first place, followed by Simon Katz from Argentina in second, and Roberta de Oliveira Horn from Brazil in third.

the United States in third.

Among the Top Asian Sailors, Naksuk took first, followed by Singapore's Ethan Chia and Anya Zahedi, In the Oceanian Division, William Harris from Australia claimed the top spot, ahead of compatriot Balthazar Roche in second and Jeffrey Du from New Zealand in third.

In the Girls' Division, Singapore's Anya Zahedi continued her exceptional form to be crowned Best Girl Sailor in Asia and Oceania 2025, ahead of Li Yuxuan from China and Shreya Lakshminarayanan from India.

The Silver Fleet was topped by Kornelia Pajak from the United Arab Emirates, with Simon Katz of Argentina finishing second and Roberta de Oliveira Horn from Brazil in third, in the Bronze Fleet, Japan's Soki Higuchi and Kaito Nakamura claimed first and second respectively, while Tarteel al Hasani from Oman achieved a remarkable third place finish an inspiring result highlighting the progress of Omani female sailors.

STRONG ORGANISATION AND OMANI PARTICIPATION

Commenting on the championship's success, Dr Khamis bin Salem al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, said

"We are proud to have hosted another exceptional week of sailing that brought together over 180 young sailors from 25 countries. This event showcased not only sporting excellence but also friendship, teamwork and cultural exchange, reflecting Oman's commitment to nurturing global talent."

added, "Thanks to the continued support of our partners, particularly QNB Oman and the dedication of all organisers, Oman once again proved its capability to deliver world class events, these achievements align with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to strengthen the nation's position on the global sporting map and promote sustainable tourism."

Dr Al Jabri also expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Information, the Royal Navy of Oman Medical Services, and the Royal Oman Police Coast Guard for their crucial roles in ensuring the success and safety of the event.

The evening concluded with the IODA flag handover ceremony, in which Ajay Narang, IODA Vice-President for Asia, Oceania and Africa, praised Oman's outstanding organisation and hospitality, describing the 2025 edition as a 'benchmark event in IODA history.'

Commemorative gifts were presented to IODA and QNB Oman in recognition of their support, followed by a group photo that marked the end of another world class championship one that once again confirmed Oman's standing as a global hub for sailing excellence.

Final stages of HM Cup Hockey with eight teams begin today

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT NOV 1

The final rounds of the 55th edition of the His Majesty the Sultan's Hockey Cup kick off this evening (Sunday), featuring eight clubs that qualified from the Elite and Challenge categories: Ahli Sidab, Seeb, Al Amerat, Salalah, Qurayat, Dhofar, Sohar and Masirah. All matches will be played at the Oman Hockey Stadium in Al Amerat, leading up to the semifinals and final scheduled to take place from November 9 to 12.

The opening day will see Ahli Sidab face Masirah at 6:00 pm on Sunday, followed by an anticipated clash between Salalah and Dhofar at 8:00 pm, promising an early, high-intensity encounter. The matches continue the next day, with Seeb meeting Sohar at 6:00 pm, before Al Amerat take on Qurayat at 8:00 pm in a match expected to be closely contested. On Tuesday, Ahli Sidab



This edition marks a historic milestone in terms of participation, as it is the first time that 20 clubs have taken part in the tournament.

will play Dhofar at 6:00 pm, followed by Masirah versus Salalah at 8:00 pm. Wednesday's fixtures will see Seeb face Qurayat at 6:00 pm, followed by Sohar meeting Al Amerat at 8:00 pm. The excitement carries

into Thursday, with Dhofar playing Masirah at 6:00 pm, followed by Salalah versus Ahli Sidab at 8:00 pm. The final day of this stage will be on Friday, starting with a strong contest between Qurayat and Sohar at 6:00

pm, then Al Amerat versus Seeb at 8:00 pm, after which the picture of the four semifinalists will be determined.

This edition marks a historic milestone in terms of participation, as it is the first time that 20 clubs have taken part in the tournament. The teams were divided into two tiers: the Elite category, which included Ahli Sidab, Seeb, Al Amerat, and Salalah who qualified directly to the final rounds; while the remaining clubs competed in the Challenge category, split into four groups from which Qurayat, Dhofar, Sohar, and Masirah emerged after highly competitive qualifying rounds.

In line with the Oman Hockey Association's keenness to ensure top-quality officiating during this phase of the competition, three neutral international umpires from South Africa, Poland, and Kenya have been appointed, in addition to an Umpire Manager from Pakistan. This reflects

the Association's commitment to upholding the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in match officiating.

This edition will not only feature competitive sporting action but also a rich agenda of development programmes designed to enhance technical and umpiring capabilities within the sport. These include the National Umpiring Course (2-5 November 2025), as well as the FIH Academy Level 3 Coaching Course, with participation from 20 international coaches. Additionally, the tournament will host the FIH/AHF "Road to Los Angeles 2028" High-Performance Umpiring Course, jointly supervised by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF). This course represents a landmark initiative aimed at preparing promising Omani officials for major global events in the years ahead.

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



New Zealand’s Blair Tickner (L) celebrates with teammate Zak Foulkes after their win in the third one-day international (ODI) cricket match. — AFP

NEW ZEALAND SEAL ODI SERIES SWEEP

WELLINGTON: Blair Tickner and Zakary Foulkes made decisive contributions with bat and ball to secure a tense two-wicket win for New Zealand over England on Saturday and a clean sweep of the three-match ODI series.

The two tailenders put on an unbroken stand of 30 for the ninth wicket to lift the home side to 226-8 in the 45th over after England had once again struggled with the bat to be dismissed for 222.

Seamers Tickner and Foulkes took six wickets between them after England collapsed to 44-5, the visitors’ top-order failing once again.

The dismal form of Test batsmen Ben Duckett and Joe Root will be of concern less than three weeks from the start of the Ashes Test series in Australia.

England’s top four made a total of 84 runs across the three matches, the fewest by any team in a comparable men’s ODI series or tournament.

England were dismissed for 223 in the opening match and 175 in the second.

Captain Harry Brook said his players never adjusted to the movement extracted by New Zealand’s pace bowlers in seam-friendly conditions.

“We didn’t quite get big enough scores to be able to defend them and give the bowlers the best chance to win us the game,” Brook said.

“New Zealand are the second-best team in the world for a reason. They’ve outplayed us in this series. We just haven’t been good enough.”

Tickner (4-64) claimed four wickets for the second successive game, while Foulkes (2-27) removed Jamie Smith and Root inside the first four overs. Foulkes’ new-ball partner Jacob Duffy (3-56) then accounted for Duckett, Brook and Jacob Bethell.

Jamie Overton’s maiden ODI half-century was the foundation of an England recovery, with the all-rounder the last man out for 68 in the 41st over.

Brydon Carse also achieved a career-best score in the format, blasting four sixes on his way to 36.

New Zealand opener Rachin Ravindra scored a bright 46 and Daryl Mitchell continued his fine form with 44, but a steady loss of wickets set up an exciting finish. Overton and Sam Curran took two wickets each, while the home side lost two batsmen to the same unfortunate means of dismissal.

Devon Conway and Tom Latham were both run out, caught short of their crease at the bowler’s end following the deflection of straight drives from another batsman.

Foulkes was unbeaten on 14 and Tickner not out 18, with their late heroics extending New Zealand’s exceptional run of ODI results on home soil. — AFP



Canada’s Felix Auger Aliassime in action during his semifinal match against Kazakhstan’s Alexander Bublik. — Reuters

Aliassime downs Bublik to reach Paris final

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME held his nerve to beat in-form Kazakh Alexander Bublik on Saturday and reach the second Masters final of his career in Paris, where he will face either Jannik Sinner or Alexander Zverev.

The Canadian ninth seed clinched a 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 victory at the La Defense Arena, as Bublik crumbled from 4-1 up in the second set of his maiden Masters 1000 semifinal.

“It’s a pleasure. All finals of Masters 1000s are a dream, but (especially) in Paris, a tournament with so much history and important past champions,” said Auger-Aliassime.

“I hope I can get the support of the French crowd for one more day to push me to the end.”

Auger-Aliassime climbs above Lorenzo Musetti into the eighth and last qualifying spot for the ATP Finals in Turin later this month.

The 25-year-old can seal his second appearance in the season-ending tournament with victory in Sunday’s showpiece match.

Auger-Aliassime fell just short of a Masters title at the 2024 Madrid Open against Andrey Rublev.

Bublik, who made the French Open quarterfinals in Paris earlier this year, can no longer reach the Finals despite an excellent year in which he has won four ATP titles.

A tight first set flew by without a single



Kazakhstan’s Alexander Bublik in action during his semifinal match against Canada’s Felix Auger Aliassime. — Reuters

break-point opportunity, before two weak forehands into the net from Bublik allowed a rock-solid Auger-Aliassime to win the tie-break.

The match burst into life early in the second. Bublik seized a 2-0 lead only to give the break straight back.

He reacted by smashing his racquet, repeatedly, against the court, earning

himself a code violation.

Auger-Aliassime swept up some of the racquet remnants with a towel ahead of the next game, to the gratitude of his opponent.

The Canadian presented Bublik with another gift, firing a simple volley well wide as he slipped 3-1 behind.

World number 16 Bublik could not maintain his momentum. — AFP

Sixers suffer first loss as NBA Cup begins

LOS ANGELES: Jaylen Brown scored 32 points and the Boston Celtics knocked Philadelphia from the ranks of the unbeaten 109-108 on Friday as the NBA Cup in-season tournament began.

The Celtics avenged a 117-116 loss to the 76ers in their opener at Boston and improved to 3-3 while dropping the host Sixers to 4-1.

“Just grit. I think we just slugged it out,” said Brown, whose 13-of-19 shooting including 4-of-7 from three-point range.

“We made a bunch of mistakes but we found a way to win in the end.”

Tyrese Maxey, who led Philadelphia with 26 points and 14 assists, and VJ Edgecombe sank three-pointers to lift the 76ers within 108-106 with 51 seconds remaining.

Brown added what turned out to be the deciding free throw with 32.9 seconds remaining but Maxey sank a layup with 20.8 to play to lift the 76ers within the final margin.

Brown, who scored 16 points in the first quarter, committed a foul to turn the ball over with 11.6 seconds remaining but Maxey missed a short jumper.

After Boston’s Josh Minott missed two free throws, the hosts had a final chance but Joel Embiid, who had 20 points, missed a three-point shot at the buzzer.

Improving to 5-0 on the campaign were the Chicago Bulls, who were led by Josh Giddey’s 32 points and 26 from Nikola Vucevic in a 135-125 home victory over the New York Knicks.



Memphis Grizzlies forward Jaylen Wells (0) dunks during the fourth quarter against the Los Angeles Lakers. — Imagn Images

Jalen Brunson scored 29 points to lead the Knicks (2-3).

Chicago clung to a 120-116 lead when Vucevic went on a late 6-0 run and then assisted on a Giddey hoop to seal the victory.

The Atlanta Hawks, playing without star guard Trae Young due to a right knee sprain, improved to 3-3 by beating winless host Indiana 128-108.

Jalen Johnson led Atlanta with 22 points and 13 rebounds. The Pacers, who fell to 0-5, also learned on Friday that forward Obi Toppin is out for three months due to a broken right foot.

Toronto had 20 points each from Brandon Ingram, RJ Barrett and reserve Jamison Battle in a 112-101 victory at Cleveland.

Later NBA Cup openers had the Los Angeles Lakers at Memphis, Utah at Phoenix, Denver at Portland and New Orleans at the Los Angeles Clippers.

All 30 NBA teams were drawn into six five-team groups with each club playing four games through November 28 that will count in round-robin Cup play and the regular-season standings.

Eight teams will advance to the Cup quarter-finals, the six group winners and top runner-up in the Eastern and Western Conference.

Quarter-final matches will be played on December 9-10 with the last four going to Las Vegas for semi-finals on December 13 and the championship game December 16.

— AFP

BUSINESS



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2+2+1 model for future 5-year plans

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 1

OMAN'S Five-Year Plans — long the cornerstone of the Sultanate of Oman's development strategy — are being restructured into a 2+2+1-year configuration starting from the upcoming 11th Plan, which will span the 2026–2030 period.

The move, according to a senior official at the Ministry of Economy, is designed to prioritise both economic growth and development through distinct pathways.

Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Qasmi, Head of the 11th Five-Year Plan, announced the new approach during a panel discussion on the importance of agility in planning at the Duqm Economic Forum 2025 held last week.



Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Qasmi of the Ministry of Economy (extreme right) pictured with fellow panelists at the Duqm Economic Forum.

“The thinking around the methodology has changed for all future Five-Year Plans”, Dr Al Qasmi explained.

“For the coming 11th Plan, we

will have a government working plan for the first two years — 2026 and 2027 — followed by another for 2028 and 2029, with an evaluation phase in the final year,

2030”,

The underlying objective, he noted, is to integrate two complementary pathways — one focused on economic development, emphasising value addition across diverse projects and another addressing developmental priorities. Al Duqm, in particular, will be a key area of focus under the new model.

Highlighting the need to remain agile amidst rapid change and new challenges, he noted that future Five-Year Plans could potentially include annual planning components.

According to Dr Al Qasmi, Oman became the first Gulf nation to adopt Five-Year Plans in 1976 as a disciplined mechanism to achieve comprehensive development across key sectors.

“The first three Plans, from 1976 to 1990, were all infrastructure-focused — we needed hospitals,

schools, roads and so on — and that approach was very effective”, he said.

“After Covid-19, the government began rethinking the planning process to better adapt to emerging challenges. Accordingly, the 11th Plan reflects this renewed mindset”.

Also shaping this evolution in planning are two key frameworks — Oman Vision 2040 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — whose alignment with the Five-Year Plans is seen as essential.

The 11th Plan concludes in 2030, the midpoint in implementing Oman Vision 2040 and the target year for achieving the SDGs.

Given these shared milestones, Dr Al Qasmi stressed the need for close coordination to ensure that performance metrics across all three frameworks are consistent and achieved.

Al Wusta Governorate records strong economic growth

HAIMA: Al Wusta Governorate is emerging as a key driver of investment and economic expansion in the Sultanate of Oman, supported by major strategic projects across its wilayats, particularly Al Duqm, which has evolved into a global industrial and logistics hub.

Alongside this, the wilayats of Haima, Mahout and Al Jazir are witnessing rapid urban and service development, contributing to the governorate's overall progress.

Recent economic indicators for the second quarter of 2025 point to steady growth across commercial, industrial and investment sectors, reflecting the government's efforts to promote balanced development in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Abdoun bin Mohammed al Harsousi, Director of the Trade, Industry and Investment Promotion Department in Al Wusta Governorate, stated that the positive figures highlight growing investor confidence and strong economic potential. He attributed the progress to high-quality projects in Al Duqm and an increasingly attractive business environment.

Al Harsousi explained that the department continues to enhance digital services, streamline procedures and offer technical support to entrepreneurs, particularly



The number of automatic licences in the governorate reaches to 13,932.

in industrial, energy, tourism and logistics sectors. He emphasised that Al Wusta Governorate's promising potential will drive its growing role in Oman's economy, supported by private sector empowerment.

The number of new commercial registrations surged by 53 per cent to 153 during the second quarter of 2025, compared to 100 in the same period last year, bringing total active registrations to 6,455.

Haima led the growth with a 200 per cent rise in registered businesses, followed by Mahout with 123 per cent and Al Jazir with 80 per cent.

Construction contracting remained the most licensed activity, increasing by 300 per cent year-on-year. During the same period, 984 new business licences

were issued, alongside 1,074 automatic licences, bringing the total number of automatic licences in the governorate to about 13,932.

Industrial licences also grew by 3.92 per cent, reaching 212, which raised the cumulative total to 3,771 by mid-2025 — a clear reflection of the expansion of industrial and supporting projects around Al Duqm.

Al Harsousi added that one new foreign investor was registered in the second quarter, bringing the total to 121.

He noted that the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) continues to promote investment, enhance electronic services and foster SME participation to ensure balanced development across Oman's governorates. — ONA

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United Finance

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025

OVERVIEW AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

The third quarter of 2025 continued to reflect the strength and consistency of United Finance Company SAOG's growth trajectory, building on the solid performance achieved throughout the year.

For the nine months ended 30th September 2025, the Company recorded a net profit after tax of RO 2,042 million, marking a 29.6% increase compared to the corresponding period in 2024. Total assets grew to RO 123.2 million a 14.5% increase, while Gross Instalment Finance Receivables reached RO 129.4 million, underscoring the sustained demand for our financial solutions and our continued focus on operational excellence.

Oman's economic landscape remains stable, supported by consistent oil revenues and government-led diversification efforts under Vision 2040. Against this backdrop, United Finance continues to align its strategy with national priorities by focusing on responsible growth, enhanced customer experience, and expansion in key market segments.

During the quarter, the Company entered into two strategic partnerships — with OHL Marine and Gargash GAC Oman — expanding its presence in the marine and automotive financing segments. These collaborations demonstrate our commitment to creating value through strategic alliances that strengthen our market reach and product offerings.

Looking ahead, United Finance remains committed to responsible and sustainable growth, investing in modern systems, digital innovation, and customer engagement initiatives to ensure continued resilience and long-term value creation.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Net Profit After Tax:** RO 2,042 million, up 29.6% year-on-year
- **Total Assets:** RO 123.2 million, up 14.5%
- **Total Revenue:** RO 9,573 million, an increase of 19.3%
- **Gross Instalment Finance Receivables:** RO 129.4 million, up 13.8%
- Profitability and capital adequacy remain strong and stable

During the period, the Company continued to strengthen its internal improvement initiatives through the ongoing "Jawda" quality program, while also launching "Fikrati", an employee-driven suggestion initiative designed to foster creativity and continuous improvement across departments.

Additionally, the newly formed partnerships with OHL Marine and Gargash GAC Oman marked key milestones in broadening our portfolio and enhancing our engagement with customers and business partners in specialized market segments.

PROVISIONING POSITION

Our approach to risk management remains disciplined and prudent. Provisioning levels were maintained in line with portfolio performance, with credit quality indicators remaining stable across all segments. The Company continues to adhere fully to IFRS 9 and regulatory standards, ensuring a sound balance between growth and risk oversight.

FUNDING

United Finance maintained a stable liquidity position throughout the quarter, supported by a diversified funding base and efficient cash flow management. While no new funding instruments were introduced during Q3, the Company continues to benefit from a healthy capital structure and cost-efficient funding mix. Relationships with banking partners remain strong, ensuring readiness to support future growth opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Board of Directors extends its sincere appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tank Al Said — may Allah protect him — for his visionary leadership and continued efforts to advance Oman's sustainable growth and prosperity.

We also express our gratitude to the Central Bank of Oman and the Financial Services Authority for their ongoing guidance and regulatory support.

Our deepest thanks go to our shareholders, customers, dealers, and business partners for their enduring trust and confidence in United Finance. The Board further acknowledges the steadfast dedication and professionalism of our management and employees, whose collective commitment continues to drive our success and uphold our values.

Abdullah Salim Al Khayari
Chairman

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

	2025 RO	2024 RO
Interest income on instalment finance income	8,231,829	7,151,728
Interest expense	(2,789,432)	(2,380,670)
Net instalment finance income	5,442,397	4,771,058
Fee commission and other income	1,340,909	873,154
Net operating income	6,783,306	5,644,212
Operating expenses	(3,310,668)	(2,948,232)
Depreciation	(114,555)	(105,321)
Allowance for expected credit losses	(955,829)	(737,701)
Profit before tax	2,402,254	1,852,958
Income tax expense	(360,338)	(277,944)
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	2,041,916	1,575,014
Basic and Diluted earnings per share	0.008	0.006

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

	2025 RO	2024 RO
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,797,089	2,085,928
Deposit with the Central Bank of Oman	250,000	250,000
Other assets	992,668	620,922
Instalment finance debtors - net	116,565,804	101,065,069
Investment securities	831,356	714,791
Deferred tax asset	(114,555)	(16,923)
Property and equipment	2,294,824	2,350,153
Assets held for sale	511,210	544,655
TOTAL ASSETS	123,242,951	107,648,441
EQUITY		
Share capital	35,612,729	35,612,729
Legal reserve	5,843,489	5,588,672
Special reserve	2,368,989	2,368,989
Impairment reserve	1,307,187	1,600,127
Investment revaluation reserve	235,625	160,641
Retained earnings	4,116,701	4,048,235
Total equity	49,484,720	49,379,393
Liabilities		
Creditors and other payables	9,948,346	5,838,653
Borrowings	32,071,278	41,496,445
Unsecured Non-convertible Senior Bonds	15,000,000	-
Dividend bond	1,246,446	-
Current tax liabilities	370,462	290,495
Deferred tax liabilities	24,658	-
Corporate deposits	15,097,041	10,643,455
Total liabilities	73,758,231	58,269,048
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	123,242,951	107,648,441
NET ASSETS PER SHARE	0.139	0.139

The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English within 7 days of the receipt of such request addressed to:

Chief Executive Officer, United Finance Co. SAOG
P O Box 3652, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 24577300 Fax 24561557

E-mail: ufc@ufcoman.com, Website: www.ufcoman.com

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES

Sohar International launches goal-based savings account



Sohar International continues to blend innovation with financial empowerment.

MUSCAT: Driven by its commitment to advancing modern banking experiences, Sohar International has introduced the Goal Savings Account, offering flexible, goal-based saving entirely through the bank’s mobile app. Recognising that today’s customers seek to go beyond

basic saving and work towards defined financial objectives, the new feature transforms the conventional savings model into a dynamic, purpose-driven experience. By empowering customers to set, track and realise their financial goals, Sohar International continues to blend innovation with financial empowerment — delivering intelligent, human-centred digital solutions.

Commenting on the launch, Abdul Qadir al Sumali, Chief Retail and Premier Banking Officer at Sohar International, stated, “At Sohar International, we believe that meaningful financial progress stems from clarity, discipline and motivation. The Goal Savings Account is designed to transform the way people approach saving — shifting it from a passive act to a purposeful habit. By enabling customers to visualise their objectives, automate their savings and celebrate milestones along the way, we are fostering a culture of conscious financial planning and sustained achievement. This initiative reflects our broader philosophy of innovation with intent — creating solutions that not only simplify banking but inspire smarter, goal-oriented financial behaviour across every segment of society”.

Grand Millennium supports breast cancer awareness month



MUSCAT: Grand Millennium Muscat proudly reaffirmed its ongoing commitment to Breast Cancer Awareness Month by hosting a comprehensive awareness session in collaboration with the Oman Cancer Association (OCA). This annual initiative is part of the hotel’s CSR initiatives under Millennium’s Green Path commitment, globally. The initiative reflects the hotel’s dedication to supporting community health and wellbeing programmes. The Awareness Session was led by Dr Rajyashree from the Oman Cancer Association. A total of 32 attendee participated in the session.

GENETCO HONOURED WITH THREE PRESTIGIOUS GLOBAL AWARDS FROM GREE

MUSCAT: Genetco, one of Oman’s leading companies in consumer electronics, air conditioning and engineering solutions, has been recognised with three distinguished global awards by Gree Electric Appliances, the world’s largest and number one air conditioner manufacturer, at the 5th Gree Global Strategic Partners Conference held in Chengdu, China. The awards presented to Genetco for its exceptional performance and service excellence during 2025 include:



- Diamond Distributor Award — Global Best Growth Partner
- Global Excellent After-Sales

Provider Award • Global Best Brand Promotion Award The honours were received by Dr Ambuj Khare, Chief Operating Officer, Genetco, on behalf of the company. Dr Ambuj Khare expressed his gratitude, stating: “These awards are a true reflection of the dedication, teamwork and customer focus of the entire Genetco family. We extend our sincere thanks to all our trade and channel partners across Oman.”

NBO Global Equity Fund declares dividend of 6%

ON completion of its first year of operations, the Management Body of the National Bank of Oman (NBO) Global Equity Fund has approved the distribution of an interim cash dividend of six per cent (RO 0.060 per unit) for the period ended on September 30, 2025. The decision follows the recommendation of the Fund’s Investment Manager, NBO and is based on the reviewed financial statements for the period. The dividend will be distributed in the form of cash or reinvested units, in accordance with investor preferences. The record date for eligibility is November 10, 2025. Investors who wish to reinvest must submit a signed request to funds@nbo.co.om by November 17, 2025. Reinvestment will be processed on the next valuation day, which falls on November 18, 2025. The NBO Global Equity Fund is an open-ended fund registered under Administrative



The dividend will be distributed in the form of cash or reinvested units, in accordance with investor preferences.

Order 31/2024 with the Financial Services Authority (FSA). The Fund’s primary objective is to generate returns over the long term from an actively managed diversified portfolio of global listed equity and equity-oriented securities, including UCIT funds

and ETFs. As of September 30, 2025, the fund’s since inception return stands at 10.6% (inception date: August 27, 2024). The Fund’s investments are allocated across different geographies with exposure to emerging markets

ranging from 0% - 25% and developed markets from 75% - 100%. Investors can subscribe to and redeem units of the Fund on a daily basis, with its NAV published on MSX each day. The Fund is managed by National Bank of Oman SAOG and advised by Principal Global Investors, with Standard Chartered Bank serving as custodian and administrator. NBO’s Investment Banking Division (IBD) was established with approvals from the Central Bank of Oman and FSA in 1995. Among the local banks, NBO was the first bank to provide asset management, investment banking and brokerage services on the MSX. The Investment Banking Division has also introduced new instruments and solutions to the capital market, and continues to manage three other mutual funds the NBO GCC Fund, the NBO Money Market Fund and the NBO Global Fixed Income Fund.

MG Oman expands service footprint

MUSCAT: For more than 100 years, MG has built customer confidence on what happens after the sale as much as on the road. In Oman, that promise is delivered through a nationwide aftersales network designed for speed, quality and peace of mind. MG Oman now supports customers through 14 service branches across the Sultanate of Oman — Muscat, Al Maabala, Al Wadi Al Kabir, Suhar, Salalah, Al Buraimi, Bidiyah, Barka, Ibri, Nizwa, Sur, Al Maabala Bodyshop and Ghala Bodyshop, making professional care accessible whether drivers are in the capital or on the move across regions. The network continues to grow: a new mechanical facility in Al Maabala and a new Al Wadi Al Kabir facility covering both mechanical and body work have been added to boost capacity and turnaround times. Service quality is backed by process and people. From “Wait & Take” express service at select branches to discounted service contract packages, ownership is made simpler and more predictable



MG Oman now supports customers through 14 service branches across the Sultanate of Oman.

for customers and fleets alike. Behind the scenes, technicians are trained and certified to MG principal guidelines across Levels 1 to 4, following a structured schedule that keeps skills current and standards consistent. Availability of support remains a non-negotiable.

Through a partnership with AAA, MG customers in Oman have 24/7 roadside assistance for up to six years, ensuring help is always a call away. Parts sourcing and body shop capability are integrated into the network, reducing downtime and keeping vehicles on the road. This customer-first approach has been recognised regionally. MG Oman Aftersales earned prestigious awards for Best in Customer Satisfaction, reflecting consistent performance and leadership across the Middle East. Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, CEO, MHD ACERE remarked, “At MHD ACERE, our commitment to the MG brand goes beyond delivering exceptional vehicles — it’s about ensuring our customers experience confidence and care throughout their ownership journey. Expanding our service footprint reinforces that promise, bringing world-class support closer to every MG driver across Oman. This milestone reflects our dedication to accessibility, quality and the long-term trust our customers place in us”.

Unimoni Oman integrates MoneyGram for faster digital transfers

MUSCAT: Unimoni Exchange Oman, a prominent player in the remittance and foreign exchange sector, has announced a partnership with MoneyGram, a leading global payments network for consumers, businesses and communities. The strategic initiative marks a significant advancement in Unimoni Oman’s ongoing mission to provide convenient and efficient international money transfer solutions for its diverse customer base in Oman. The integration with MoneyGram offers customers a seamless



Unimoni Oman is one of the leading money exchange providers in the region.

approach to sending money across borders with secure, instant transfers from the convenience of their mobile devices. Recipients can access the transferred funds through a variety of omnichannel delivery options, including bank account and mobile wallets transfers and cash pickup at nearly 500,000 retail locations worldwide. Our mission has always been to innovate for our customers in the realm of remittance services, expressed Boban M P, CEO of Unimoni Oman. “The integration of MoneyGram

into our mobile application is not just a tactical decision; it symbolises our commitment to pioneering the digital transformation of financial services in Oman. We aim to make essential services like international remittances increasingly accessible, faster and more secure than ever before”. Unimoni Oman is one of the leading money exchange providers in the region. With 57 locations across Oman and with a leading mobile app, Unimoni Oman has established a longstanding, trusted presence for its diverse customer base in Oman.

“As people across Oman increasingly seek digital methods for sending cross-border payments, we’re proud to partner with Unimoni Oman and offer our globally trusted financial services within their user-friendly mobile app”, said Ahmed Aly, Head of Middle East, Asia Pacific and South Asia at MoneyGram. “Unimoni Oman’s strong market presence and commitment to innovation make them an ideal partner as we continue to expand access to fast, affordable and secure digital money transfers across Oman and the GCC region”.

SHORTTAKES



The CPA cited the possibility of battery overheating that could lead to fires or other safety hazards. Picture for illustration only.

CONSUMER
WATCHDOG WARNS
AGAINST UNSAFE
BATTERY CHARGERS

SAEED AL MASHARFI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

THE Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) has issued an official warning concerning certain portable (wireless) battery chargers found to be non-compliant with approved standards and specifications, warning that their use could pose serious risks to users’ health and safety.

The Authority said the warning covers two types of electronic chargers: one under the brand “Belkin XCITE” and the other “Baseus”, citing the possibility of battery overheating that could lead to fires or other safety hazards.

The CPA emphasised that this alert is part of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers from products that may endanger public safety, reaffirming that inspection teams continue to monitor local markets and e-commerce platforms to ensure compliance with approved standards and specifications.

The Authority also urged consumers to exercise caution when purchasing goods and electronic devices from online sales outlets and to verify that such products fully comply with approved safety and quality standards.

Both Belkin and Baseus have previously conducted voluntary international recalls of some portable charging devices in coordination with global safety regulators, after identifying potential issues related to overheating or electrical faults.

The Authority reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a safe consumer environment across the Sultanate of Oman through proactive market surveillance, quality inspections and awareness campaigns that educate consumers about safe purchasing practices and responsible product use.

Oman expands smart
factories initiative

THE Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), in partnership with the Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting, has launched the second phase of its “Smart Production Factories” project, reinforcing Oman’s industrial digital transformation journey.

The initiative, running until 2026, aims to integrate Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies into Omani factories, enhancing productivity, efficiency and competitiveness while supporting sustainable digital growth in the sector.

The first phase of the project focused on raising awareness about advanced industrial technologies, preparing a comprehensive “Smart Production Factories” guide based on the global SIRI assessment framework and conducting introductory



The Ministry plans to assess 60 additional factories during 2025.

workshops across Oman’s governorates.

Twenty factories were assessed and provided with digital transformation plans, while national assessors were trained and certified. The phase also included partnerships with international organisations such as the International Centre for Industrial Transformation and the launch of the Advanced Automation Centre.

In the newly launched second

phase, the Ministry plans to assess 60 additional factories during 2025 in cooperation with the International Centre for Industrial Transformation . The assessment process includes preliminary meetings, field visits in October and November; and the preparation of detailed reports with transformation recommendations.

The Ministry will also work to create an ecosystem that

encourages Omani companies to specialise in industrial assessments and provide digital manufacturing solutions. These efforts aim to boost industrial diversification and competitiveness in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Engineer Idris bin Hassan al Sinan, Head of the Knowledge-Based Industries Department at MoCIIP, said the second phase reaffirms the Ministry’s commitment to accelerating industrial digitalisation.

“Through this project, we seek to build specialised national capabilities, foster innovation and strengthen the readiness of Omani factories to compete on regional and global levels”, he said.

He added that the initiative will enable Omani factories to adopt smart technologies and align with international standards, paving the way for a more sustainable and knowledge-based industrial economy. — ONA

LOCAL CONTENT SYSTEM STRENGTHENS NATIONAL ECONOMY

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MoEM) continues to advance the “Majd” programme, one of its key strategic initiatives aimed at boosting local content and diversifying the national economy. The programme enhances SME participation, supports local products and strengthens national expertise in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

By the end of the first quarter of 2025, the local content rate had risen to 30.3 per cent, while SME procurement in the energy and minerals sector reached 16.3 per cent, demonstrating growing integration of local suppliers and contractors into sectoral operations.

Dr Ali bin Salem al Rajhi, Director General of the Planning Department at MoEM, described the Majd programme as “a cornerstone in the Ministry’s efforts to maximise in-country value”.



DR ALI BIN SALEM AL RAJHI
Director General of the Planning Department at MoEM.

system that will give preferential status to national companies in government tenders based

He revealed that local content labs have so far produced 13 investment opportunities, including the establishment of an oil and gas pipeline manufacturing plant and a marble waste recycling facility for precipitated calcium carbonate production. He said work is progressing on a local content certification

on their contribution to the economy.

The Ministry has also launched a Mandatory List of 38 locally made products and 63 services required in tenders, designed to encourage investment and create job opportunities for Omanis.

In partnership with the Industrial Innovation Academy, the Ministry has supported the establishment of a RO 10 million mortar factory in Sohar using local clay resources.

Dr Al Rajhi noted that the Ministry is committed to developing national talent, with 1.2 per cent of oil and gas contracts allocated to the Employment and Training Support Centre at the Ministry of Labour.

Contributions from 2024 reached RO 30.9 million, directed towards training Omani professionals to international standards. — ONA

Dome project eyes Oman as hub for gaming and creative industries

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, NOV 1

A PIONEERING architectural concept combining geodesic domes with digital creativity is set to make its debut in Oman, as a team of Iranian engineers behind the Hemiball initiative plan to bring their futuristic designs to Muscat and beyond.

After five years of engineering and producing advanced geodesic domes, the company’s founders have identified Oman as an ideal destination to launch their gaming and content creation hub, marking a major step in their regional expansion strategy.

In an exclusive interview with the *Observer*, Mohammad Amin Anvari, Co-founder and Chairman of Hemiball said: “After nearly five years of developing, engineering and producing geodesic domes, we decided to expand into areas where these structures could serve not only as highly efficient architectural solutions but also as iconic and forward-



Oman’s architectural heritage, modern aspirations make it a natural fit for dome-based designs.

looking landmarks”.

The decision to explore Oman follows extensive feasibility studies and collaborations with leading Iranian architects and engineers. The company’s executives view Oman as a stable, accessible and innovation-friendly environment — attributes that make it stand

out in the region.

As part of their first phase, the Hemiball team will visit Muscat from November 2 to 6 to attend the Project Oman Exhibition, a key platform for infrastructure and development ventures in the Sultanate of Oman.

The team also plans to explore desert camps already utilising dome structures and meet with investment firms interested in cutting-edge architectural projects.

“During our visit, we aim to understand the local market, meet potential investors and observe existing uses of geodesic domes in Oman’s tourism landscape”, said Amir Anvari, CEO of Hemiball.

“Our vision is to integrate this architectural form into creative industries such as gaming, which is growing rapidly worldwide”.

MERGING INNOVATION WITH CULTURE

According to the founders, Oman’s architectural heritage and modern aspirations make it a natural fit for dome-based designs.

The country’s luxury desert camps have long incorporated such structures, blending functionality with cultural familiarity.

“Oman has shown a strong affinity for geodesic structures.

These domes feel both familiar and innovative — reminiscent of the domes found in mosque architecture, yet reimagined in a modern and dynamic context”, said Abtin Shamsi, Business Manager.

The proposed gaming and content creation hub would not only serve as a venue for digital entertainment and production but also as a cultural landmark, merging technology with design inspired by the region’s architectural DNA.

Hemiball’s domes stand out for their energy efficiency, durability and adaptability. The company has engineered its designs to withstand extreme weather conditions while maintaining low energy consumption.

“Our structures are purpose-built to endure harsh climates”, explained Mohammad Amin.

PACKAGE DEAL

Japan: No plan to renegotiate with US



Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said on Saturday that she had no plans to renegotiate a \$550 billion investment package deal reached with the US.

“I believe that even if the prime minister changes, promises made between governments should not be altered”, Takaichi told reporters at the end of a week of diplomatic events including a summit with US President Donald Trump. — Reuters

POLITICAL AD

US, Canada will not restart trade talks



US President Donald Trump said on Friday the US and Canada will not restart trade talks but Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney apologised to him for an Ontario political ad using former President Ronald Reagan saying tariffs spell disaster.

“I like him a lot but what they did was wrong. He apologised for what they did with the commercial because it was a false commercial,” he said. — Reuters

EXCLUSIVE SHIPMENT

Russia’s soybeans exports to China safe



Russia’s non-genetically modified soybean exports to China are safe, a Russian government said on Saturday, despite a deal between China and US.

Russia ranked a distant fifth among the largest soybean exporters to China in 2024, but its shipments consist exclusively of non-genetically modified soybeans, used in the production of foods such as tofu, soy milk and soy sauce. — Reuters

OPINION

The role of IP in supporting the national economy



DR HILAL
AL SAWAI

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert.

IN today’s global economy, perhaps more than ever before, nations are learning to appreciate the value of intellectual property (IP). Specifically, the term intellectual property refers to exclusive rights to the intangible creations of the mind, including inventions, literary and artistic works, innovative designs, as well as trademarks, logos and commercial images. The legal protection of these “IP” assets (through patents, trademarks and copyright laws) motivates countries to stimulate innovation, attract potential investors and achieve economic development. The difficult balancing and strategic optimisation of the economic value and the protective value of the IP assets determines the economic competitiveness and sustained success of any nation.

ENCOURAGING INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY
Perhaps the most powerful force with respect to the value of IP to the national economy is the advancement of innovation. The law inspires innovation and creativity in the arts and entrepreneurship. It does this by assuring inventors and innovators legal protection of the economic rights to profit from their inventions and creations. If an entrepreneur holds a patent for a particular invention, he has the exclusive rights to profit from that invention for a period of time. This right fuels the creativity and improvement of existing inventions, a

necessary engine for an economy to grow and develop. Copyrights, patents and trademarks help to protect authors, musicians and filmmakers. This allows them to earn a profit and aids in the growth of the creative sector and other industries within the economy. The publishing, entertainment and software development industries help raise a significant amount of GDP and employment.

ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT
The strength of a country’s economy relies heavily on the strength of its foreign investment. Companies will easily invest in a country if they are guaranteed the protection of their patents, trademarks and trade secrets. This foreign direct investment will also create new technologies and jobs; and will improve the use and productivity of the industry in the country. For developing countries, strong IP laws demonstrate reliable economic growth, which encourages international business relationships. The strong IP laws of South Korea and Singapore have successfully transformed those countries into global innovation hubs.

HELPING SMES
Intellectual property protection benefits more than just large corporations. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of most economies and also gain from solid IP systems. By acquiring international trademarks and patents, SMEs can distinguish their offerings,

The legal protection of these “IP” assets (through patents, trademarks and copyright laws) motivates countries to stimulate innovation, attract potential investors and achieve economic development.

garner investment and tap into new market opportunities. IP can be used for business negotiations and obtain financing, making it easier for small businesses to expand and compete. Additionally, the government helps with IP awareness programmes. This lets entrepreneurs fully utilise their innovations. This makes the growth of innovation fully democratised.

ADVANCING CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY
IP aids in the advancement of culture and technology. The protection of copyright IP encourages the creation of books, movies, music and software, which enriches national culture and identity. On the other hand, patent systems ensure that technical innovations are openly shared and that other innovators are free to build upon them once the protection period ends. The system of patents promotes innovation in equal measure to the dissemination of knowledge to the public.

FINAL THOUGHTS
To sum up, IP goes beyond the legal definition and it is also an economic lever. Innovation, investment attraction, small business support and cultural growth are all drivers of economic growth and IP enables all of them. Economies that understand and protect their IP are leading nations in the knowledge economy. With the advancement of technology and the growth of creative industries, effective IP will continue to be the competitive edge of nations.

COUNTING
PROGRESS: OMAN’S
STORY TOLD
THROUGH STATISTICS



NAJAH
AL RIYAMI

The writer is a Media and Communication Master’s graduate.

WORLD Statistics Day returned on October 20, celebrated only once every five years under the United Nations theme “Quality statistics and data for everyone”. To mark the occasion, this article looks at some of Oman’s most recent figures that tell a story of steady growth, resilience and data-driven development. According to the National Centre for Statistics and

Information (NC SI), Oman’s population reached 5,327,000 as of August 2025, with Omanis accounting for around 58 per cent of the total. The country’s inflation rate stands at 0.9 per cent, among the lowest in the GCC region, reflecting careful fiscal control and stable consumer prices. In the labour market, unemployment among Omani nationals has decreased to 1.7 per cent, supported by employment and training programmes aligned with Oman Vision 2040. Economic performance indicators remain positive. Oman’s GDP growth rate for 2024–2025 is estimated at 2.4 per cent, driven largely by non-oil sectors such as logistics, tourism and manufacturing. The country’s public debt-to-GDP ratio has declined from 43 per cent in 2022 to around 35 per cent in 2025, demonstrating improved fiscal sustainability. These efforts were recognised when Moody’s Investors Service upgraded Oman’s sovereign credit rating to Baa3 (investment grade) in mid-2025, the first such upgrade in nearly a decade. Social and infrastructure statistics show measurable improvements. The education sector continues to expand, with the number of enrolled students surpassing 830,000 nationwide and the teacher-to-student ratio improving to 1:12. In public health, Oman recorded an average life expectancy of 78.3 years and universal access to primary healthcare. Road-safety data from NC SI indicate a 9 per cent reduction in road accidents between 2023 and 2024, a reflection of enhanced enforcement, road design improvements and awareness programmes. Environmental and energy statistics underscore the nation’s growing focus on sustainability.

What we leave behind:
Greatness beyond titles

THERE comes a point in every leader’s journey when titles start to lose their shine. The words printed on a doorplate or business card can open doors, but they can’t keep them open. What endures isn’t the title. It’s the impact left behind. Leadership thinker Michael Kouly wrote that titles can be assigned, but greatness must be earned; daily! That distinction feels especially true in the world of hospitality, where leadership is measured not by control, but by connection. In our region, hospitality, far more than a business, one dares to say: it’s a reflection of who we are. The Middle Eastern tradition of hosting “places great importance on generosity, warmth and respect, making guests feel welcome and honoured”. This tradition shapes how we treat visitors, how we lead teams and serve communities. It helps us refocus on the fact that leadership, at its core, is about the art of inclusion. It is the joyous journey of making people feel they belong in something larger than themselves. So, true hospitality leadership can be quiet. It doesn’t need to declare importance; it shows it through care, through how attentively it listens and through how consistently it delivers. Horst Schulze, co-founder of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, captured it well: “Leadership is creating an environment in which people want to be part of the organisation and not just work for the organisation”. That kind of environment cannot be ordered into existence. It’s built slowly, through empathy, patience and trust. When people feel they truly belong, they stop performing out of obligation and start creating out of pride. That’s when culture becomes real and when people carry your values



Hospitality teaches us that the truest form of power is influence without imposition.

Leadership thinker Michael Kouly wrote that titles can be assigned, but greatness must be earned; daily! That distinction feels especially true in the world of hospitality, where leadership is measured not by control, but by connection.



DR SALIM AL
FLAITHI

The writer is Group Head of Human Capital Business Partners at Omran Group, focusing on human-capital transformation and national talent development within Oman’s tourism and hospitality ecosystem.

even when you’re not in the room. In the heart of Middle Eastern hospitality lies another timeless lesson. As one reflection put it, “The host is always thinking about what else you might need and what else they can give. It’s never inconvenient. It’s never too much”. That instinct to anticipate rather than react defines great service. It also defines great leadership. I believe the best leaders respond to problems, true, but they preemptively remove friction before it appears. They sense where people struggle and quietly make it easier for them to succeed. This is why hospitality has always been a powerful teacher for leadership. It trains us to see people before processes, to listen before we fix and to recognise that strength often looks like kindness in motion. The tone of a team, the quality of a guest experience, even the rhythm of a workplace reflects the emotional footprint of the leader.

The poet Maya Angelou once wrote: “People will forget what you said, forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel”. In hospitality, this truth is almost sacred. Every detail, whether a smile, a gesture, a tone of voice shapes how someone feels. Leadership works the same way. People may forget the meetings and memos, but they never forget how a leader made them feel while working with them. They might forget your position, but they’ll remember your posture. As I’ve grown in this field, I’ve learned that the real test of leadership is not how much depends on you, but how much endures without you. Great leaders build systems that outlast their presence. They design processes that breathe without supervision and cultivate people who can lead with confidence, not dependence. That’s how legacy is built, both in how loudly you lead and even more in how quietly others continue the work. Hospitality teaches us that the truest form of power is influence without imposition. It’s the ability to inspire consistency without control, excellence without fear and pride without ego. You can sense when this kind of leadership exists as it shows in the small things: in the way teams greet guests, in how decisions are made with grace and in how people talk about their work with respect, not resignation. So perhaps the question every leader should ask isn’t “What’s my title?” but “What will remain because I was here?” Will the people I’ve led stand taller? Will the work continue to carry a sense of purpose? Will the culture keep welcoming, teaching and serving — even when I’ve stepped away? Because your greatness, in its purest form, shouldn’t be about you in the spotlight, but rather about the light you leave on for others.

BUSINESS

Firms urged to prepare for e-invoicing

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, NOV 1

WITH the Oman Tax Authority (OTA) announcement of the rollout starting August 2026, with Phase 1 covering large taxpayers, commercial entities have been asked to prepare themselves as further details and specifications are due to be announced later this year.

The OTA has earlier announced the implementation of e-invoicing, with large taxpayers in the initial stage beginning August 2026 and Phase 2 in early 2027. This automation and integration of the invoicing process mark a significant



standards by December 2025.

Oman will be adopting the 5-corner PEPPOL model, requiring all invoices to go through OTA-accredited ASPs. Businesses have been advised to assess their readiness, align their systems and act early to avoid disruptions.

“Businesses in Oman need to assess readiness, align systems and ensure smooth compliance and we are helping businesses

advancement towards a fully paperless and digitally streamlined economy.

Specifications are expected by November 2025 and accreditation

accordingly”, says Antony Kallukaran (pictured), Associate Partner — Tax Advisory Services at Crowe Oman.

The Tax Authority has identified the top 100 companies to participate in Phase 1 of the implementation. This selection has been made at their discretion. It has been noted that several of the businesses have received official communication from the OTA confirming their inclusion via email.

However, the OTA has also clarified that participation is not limited to these 100 companies, as other taxpayers are welcome to register voluntarily.

Has your organisation started preparing for e-invoicing? This information is an announcement about the rollout of e-invoicing by the Tax Authority of

Oman (OTA). It outlines the timeline for implementation and what businesses in Oman need to do to prepare.

How it works: The e-Invoicing system represents a modern digital framework through which a supplier’s ERP transmits invoice data directly to the buyer’s ERP via the PEPPOL (5 corner model) network.

Each transaction is simultaneously recorded within the PEPPOL database and the Tax Authority’s system. This integration provides a strong safeguard against tax leakages while creating a balanced playing field for all businesses and thereby enhancing the ease of doing business.

The connection between ERP systems and the PEPPOL network will be facilitated by Accredited Service Providers (ASPs).

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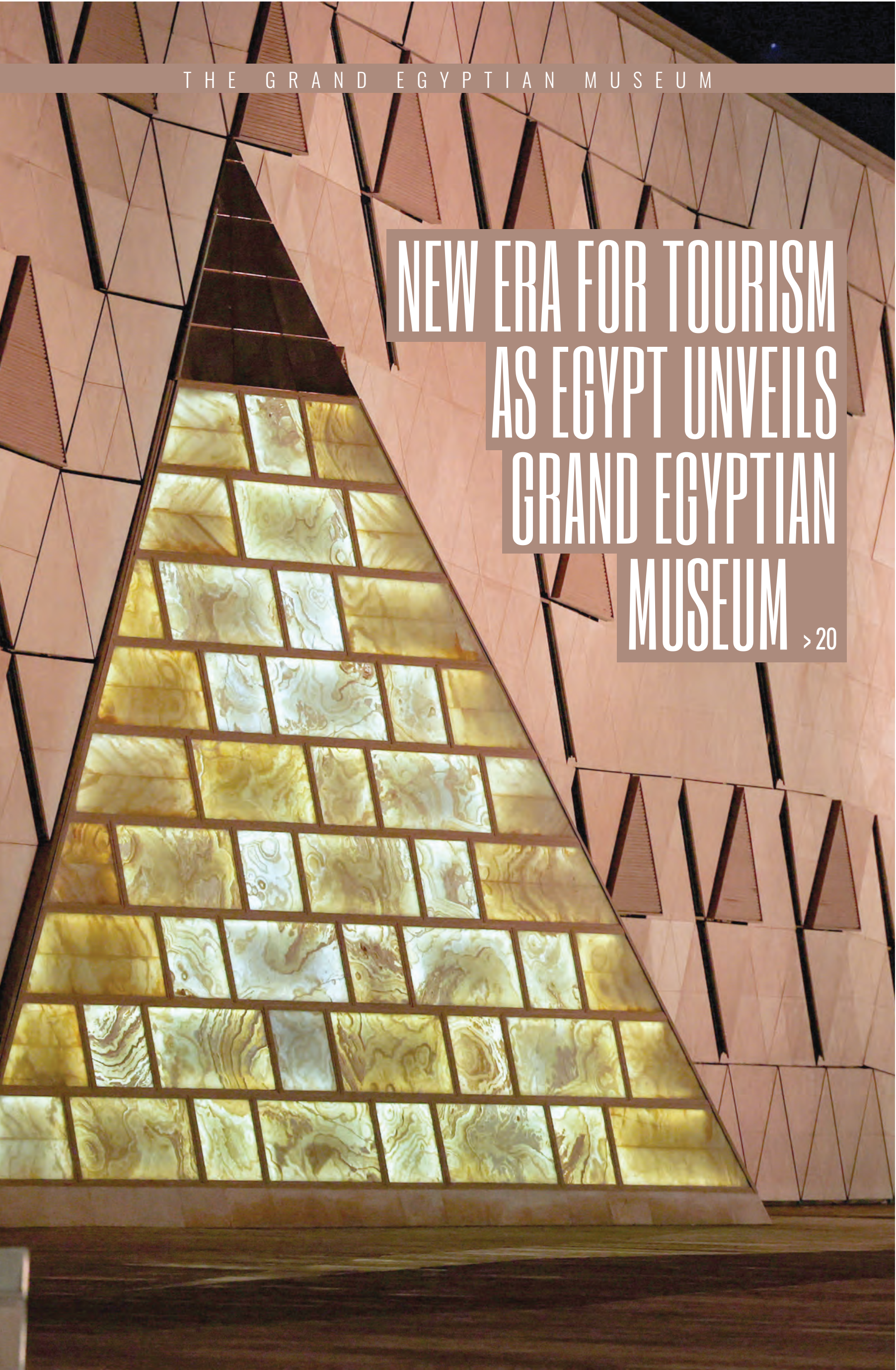


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THE GRAND EGYPTIAN MUSEUM

NEW ERA FOR TOURISM AS EGYPT UNVEILS GRAND EGYPTIAN MUSEUM > 20

FEAST OF WORLDS

Al Baleed Culinary Festival returns to Salalah



The Festival highlights include the Frankincense Experience, a guided farm tour and a harvest lunch crafted from the day's fresh produce

Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara has announced the return of the Al Baleed Culinary Festival 2025, a month-long celebration of gastronomy running throughout November. Building on the success of its previous editions, this year's festival introduces an exciting new format pairing the resort's in-house culinary masters with internationally acclaimed chefs from three-Michelin-starred restaurants.

Supported by Experience Oman, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Dhofar Municipality and Amouage, the festival blends world-class expertise with authentic Omani flavours, reaffirming Salalah's place on the global gourmet map.

Festival highlights include the Frankincense Experience — a journey through the resort's farm, spa and Al Mina restaurant — featuring a guided farm tour, frankincense-inspired spa ritual and a harvest lunch crafted from the day's fresh produce.

Two of Europe's celebrated Michelin-starred chefs headline the event: Jacob Jan Boerma from the Netherlands (Symphony of Taste, November 12) and Christian Jürgens from Germany (Pursuit of Excellence, November 15). Both will present exclusive four-course menus at Mekong, paired with live entertainment.

The resort's culinary talents also shine, with themed nights such as Taste of Mekong, Flavours of the Spice Route, Taste of the Arabian Ocean and Omani Nights, each offering immersive dining experiences led by chefs Raveevan Kahawan, Sufian Akhtar, Andrea Carrone and Ammar al Harthy. Head Pastry Chef Khin Hnin Aung will craft desserts that complete each evening with elegance.

Adding international flair, Executive Chef Marco Van Rutten from Anantara Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky Amsterdam joins the festival, highlighting cross-collaboration within the Anantara brand.

The festival's grand finale, the Al Baleed Kitchen Party on November 14, will unite all guest and resident chefs at Al Mina for an interactive evening of live stations, performances and culinary creativity.

Dining experiences range from RO 20 for themed nights to RO 69 for the Frankincense Experience, while Michelin-starred evenings are priced at RO 55 per person.

The Al Baleed Culinary Festival 2025 promises an unforgettable month of culinary artistry — a feast where every dish tells a story and every experience celebrates the essence of Oman.

QUICK FEATURES



HERITAGE

A cyclist rides past a tumulus tomb in Gyeongju, South Korea. — AFP



CULTURE

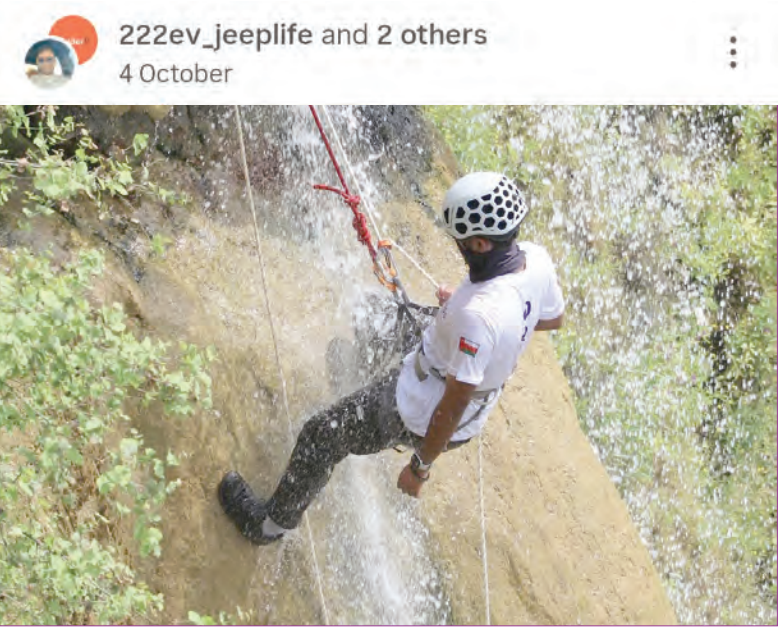
Brides pose as they wait for the procession at the Alawon palace during the Awon mass wedding in Shao, Kwara State, Nigeria. — AFP



SEASONScape

Autumn leaves are seen in front of the globe of Berlin's landmark Television Tower. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Balancing act



Lunar glow above peaks

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UK cake artist creates ‘Thriller’ tribute to Jackson

LONDON: A UK cake artist has thrilled Michael Jackson fans on Halloween after unveiling an edible 1.8-metre-tall creation celebrating one of his most famous looks.

Emma Jayne Morris, 55, from South Wales, spent six weeks making the intricate piece, which faithfully recreates the King of Pop’s get-up from the spooky 1983 smash hit — from his curls right down to his shoes — for the Cake International show at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham, which started on Friday and showcases the biggest and best of the baking world.

Mother-of-three Emma Jayne, who has previously created life-size cake figures such as King Charles III in 2023, the year of his coronation and Queen Elizabeth I in 2024, decided to mark the cake exhibition’s Halloween start date by recreating the pop star’s famous look from the horror-themed music video.

She said: “We’ve all grown up with the King of Pop and I thought it was just a lovely thing to do; and especially falling on Halloween. The first day of the show is Halloween and we’ve chosen the Thriller era, so everything just seemed to fit in”.

“It has an international appeal as well — most people that have walked up to us today have said, ‘oh, we love him’. It was a no brainer”.

“My husband Owain and I are dressed up as zombies, so we look totally ridiculous next to him, but we tried to get into the feel of it”.



Emma Jayne Morris, the UK cake artist at work

“I’ve been just walking back and forth; and all you can hear is people saying ‘Michael Jackson, Michael Jackson’. So it’s definitely making an impact and that goes a long way”.

The huge creation made the three-hour journey from her studio in Aberdare to Birmingham for the show and Emma Jayne also created tombstones to showcase in her booth alongside Jackson to create an eerie atmosphere.

His head, which took Emma Jayne a week to put together as she painstakingly recreated his likeness, is made of Rice Krispies, modelling chocolate and sugar paste.

Emma Jayne said she was thrilled that he made it to the show in one piece after a six-week process from research and planning to the final finish.

She said: “I made his head separately to the body, so the head we took off to travel with and it went on a board so it was quite safe”.

“The body, we had to hire a big van with a tail lift and it travelled on its back lying down because even though it’s got an armature — a framework in it — it wouldn’t take the rocking to get here. — dpa



Dr Nadine Mitschunas, an ecologist at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, inspects a crop of various rice species being grown on a trial site in rewetted peat soils on the Cambridgeshire Fens, in Pymoor, near Ely, eastern England. — AFP

MARIE HEUCLIN

WEARING large rubber boots, Nadine Mitschunas joyfully handled mature rice plants peeking through the water of her small plot growing in the fertile soil of eastern England.

Growing rice “has not been done before in the UK”, said Mitschunas, a field ecologist at the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH).

But as temperatures warm due to climate change, “it’s not such a crazy idea because it seems to work”, she added.

As rice grows in eastern England, lemons groves and chickpeas are also cropping up in the south.

A warmer climate and changing rainfall patterns have made planning ahead essential and British researchers are embarking on a journey of agricultural transformation.

Mitschunas is leading research with a project that tests new crops in the flat Fens of Cambridgeshire by rewetting peatlands.

Its rich soil has facilitated high production levels and the region now cultivates one third of England’s vegetables and 20 per cent of its potatoes and beetroots.

But soil drainage gradually impoverishes the land, posing a threat to local farmers and releasing the CO₂ captured by the peatland which are important carbon sinks.

Farming for the future Craig and Sarah-Jane Taylor, the landowners participating in the UKCEH scheme, are conscious of the issue.

“We recognise that our soils are depleting and that we need to change to secure the future”, said Sarah-Jane Taylor, underlining the question of “water availability... and that’s only going to get worse”.

The United Kingdom, like the rest of the world, is affected by climate change. It now has to contend with more frequent extreme weather, rising temperatures and drier soil in some areas.

A recent UKCEH study suggested that the growth of popular crops such as wheat and strawberries would become much more difficult over the coming decades if the climate warms by 2°C. If temperatures rise by 4°C, onion and oat crops would be hit.

GROWING RICE IN THE UK ‘NOT SO CRAZY’ AS CLIMATE WARMS



Dr Nadine Mitschunas inspects a crop of various rice species being grown on a trial site in rewetted peat soils in eastern England. — AFP

A warmer climate and changing rainfall patterns have made planning ahead essential and British researchers are embarking on a journey of agricultural transformation

On the other hand, crops such as sunflower, durum wheat, soybean, chickpeas, lemon and okra could become more viable, particularly in southwestern England or near the Scottish coast.

China and India are the world’s leading producers of rice.

And in the Fens, Mitschunas has tested nine rice varieties regularly grown in the US, the Philippines, Macedonia and Japan — four of them show promise, particularly one that originates from Colombia.

Once the grains germinated in a laboratory, the seedlings were planted in water in June and harvesting began in early October.

“I am not eating my own rice yet”, the ecologist joked. But such a scenario could become a reality within 10 years.

“The suitable climate for rice is moving more northwards” in Europe,

she said, pointing to successful initiatives in the Netherlands and Germany.

Mitschunas is also testing everything from lettuce and celery to pumpkins and strawberries — and even aromatic plants.

Along with crop experimentation, her project aims to regenerate peatlands and improve the country’s CO₂-capturing capacities.

No time to waste

She is not the only British researcher testing new crops. At the University of Southampton in southern England, professor of biological sciences Mark Chapman is leading a study on different crops, including chickpea cultivation.

“If we wait until 20 or 30 years and then realise that we can’t grow wheat... like we always have done, we’ve then got (a) problem”, he said.

He emphasised the need to “smooth the transition” by prioritising which future crops to grow and ensuring consumers are ready to change their habits.

“I think we’re at that point where we just need to try more things”, he said. “We need to get farmers involved, who are actually going to plant the crops”.

The pioneers in the Fens, Sarah-Jane and Craig Taylor, have noted other farmers’ growing interest in the project following their initial surprise.

“Once upon a time potatoes and sugar beet weren’t grown here and now they’re one of the main crops in the area”, said Sarah-Jane Taylor. “So why couldn’t rice potentially be an option here? And why shouldn’t we look at it?”.

— AFP

FEATURES



A general view before the official opening ceremony of the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) in Giza.



People wearing costumes walk before the official opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), near great Giza Pyramids, in Giza, Egypt. — Reuters

THE GRAND EGYPTIAN MUSEUM WAS PART OF A BROADER PLAN TO TRANSFORM THE ENTIRE GIZA PLATEAU

NEW ERA FOR TOURISM AS EGYPT UNVEILS GRAND EGYPTIAN MUSEUM

LOBNA MONIEB

AFTER years of delays, Cairo has finally opened the Grand Egyptian Museum on Saturday — a long-awaited, billion-dollar showcase of pharaonic grandeur that Egypt hopes will help revive tourism and boost its troubled economy.

“This is the dream that all of us imagined. We all dreamed that this project would be realised,” Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly told a press conference in Cairo on Saturday.

Seventy-nine delegations, including 39 heads of state and government, are expected at the ceremony, which began at 7:30 pm local time.

Germany, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, Spain and Denmark will be among those sending representatives, according to a statement from the Egyptian presidency.

On Saturday morning, roads around the museum were cordoned off and security tightened ahead of the opening, with giant banners draped from buildings and strung across streets — advertising the launch.

In the nights leading up to the opening, shafts of light have illuminated both the pyramids and the museum’s colossal facade — a prelude to Saturday’s spectacle.

Set on a gentle slope overlooking the Giza Plateau, just beyond the shadow of the pyramids, the museum was built with major financial and technical support from Japan, and spreads across nearly half a million square metres.

Madbouly said that the “largest part of construction, finishing and bringing this global landmark to its current form occurred during the past seven to eight years”.



A general view of an artistic decoration near the Great Pyramids, along the route to the Grand Egyptian Museum, ahead of its official opening in Giza. — Reuters

More than two decades in the making, the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) faced multiple delays due to setbacks related to political unrest, regional conflicts and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The museum houses more than 100,000 artefacts, half of which will be on display, making it the world’s largest collection devoted to a single civilisation, according to Egyptian officials.

Inside, visitors will enter vast, light-filled halls with soaring ceilings and sand-coloured stone walls that echo the surrounding desert.

At the centre of the main atrium stands an 83-tonne statue of Ramses II, the pharaoh who ruled Egypt for 66 years and presided over its golden age.

Unlike the cramped, century-old Egyptian Museum in central Cairo, the GEM features immersive galleries, precision lighting, virtual-reality exhibits and even a children’s museum.

One highlight is a live conservation lab, visible through floor-to-ceiling glass, where visitors can watch restorers assembling a 4,500-year-old solar boat buried near Khufu’s pyramid, built to carry his soul across the sky with the sun god Ra.

The undisputed star of the show, however, is King Tutankhamun’s collection of more than 5,000 objects, many displayed together for the first time.

Details of the boy pharaoh’s gold mask display remain under wraps.

The museum opens to the public on Tuesday, showcasing thousands of funerary artefacts previously scattered across Egypt.

Egypt’s tourism sector, a vital source of foreign currency and jobs, has been repeatedly shaken over the past decade and a half.

In recent years, tourism has shown signs of recovery, with 15 million visitors travelling to Egypt in the first nine months of 2025 and generating \$12.5 billion, up 21 per cent from a year earlier.

Egyptian tourism minister Sherif Fathy expected on Saturday total tourist arrivals to stand at 18 million by the end of this year. He told reporters the government expects the museum to draw five million visitors annually, adding that it currently welcomes 5,000 to 6,000 visitors each day.

“We hope to increase that to 15,000 daily,” said Fathy.

Elhamy al Zayat, former head of the Egyptian Tourism Federation, said the museum was part of a broader plan to transform the entire Giza Plateau.

“Egypt has created an entirely new cultural and tourist zone” at the plateau, with a nearby airport and upgraded visitor facilities at the pyramids, he said.

Roads leading to the plateau have been refurbished, digital ticketing introduced and air-conditioned electric buses now glide past the pyramids.

— AFP