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LEAGUE

HM gives audience to Iraqi PM



HM AND IRAQI PM
HOLD OFFICIAL
SESSION OF TALKS

LEADERS REVIEW
COOPERATION AND
PARTNERSHIP

TALKS TOUCH ON
MEANS OF PROMOTING
COOPERATION

OMAN, IRAQ SIGN
TWO AGREEMENTS
AND 24 MOUS

His Majesty and Iraqi Prime Minister hold official talks

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK gave an audience at Al Hosn Palace in Salalah on Wednesday to Mohammed Shia' al Sudani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq.

The audience took place within the context of the Iraqi PM's current two-day official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. His Majesty the Sultan and the guest also held an official session of talks.

The session reviewed aspects of cooperation and partnership between the two countries in various spheres, particularly in the fields of energy and investment. It also touched on means of promoting cooperation in a manner that serves the interests of the Omani and Iraqi peoples.

The talks session was attended from the Omani side by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq 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 Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidy, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance, 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, Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (Head of the Mission of Honour), Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, and Shaikh Mahmoud bin Muhanna al Kharousi, Charge d'Affaires of the Sultanate of Oman's Embassy in the Republic of Iraq.

Meanwhile, it was attended from

SIGN 2 AGREEMENTS, 24 MOUS

*The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Iraq signed 2 agreements and 24 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to enhance cooperation between the two countries across various sectors. The signing ceremony took place at Al Hosn Palace in the Wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar Governorate, in the presence of Mohammed Shia' al Sudani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, and HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs. The two agreements signed by both parties pertain to the mutual visa waiver for holders of diplomatic, special, and service passports. **DETAILS ON P3***

the Iraqi side by Dr Fuad Hussein, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Eng Hayan Abdul Ghani, Minister of Oil, Atheer Dawood al Ghurairi, Minister of Trade, Ali Mohsen al Alaq, Governor of the Central Bank, Hamid al Shatri, Head of the National Intelligence Service, Qais Saad al Amri, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Sultanate of Oman, Dr Mohammed al Najjar, CEO of Iraq Fund for Development, and Eng Nassif Jassim al Khattabi, Governor of Karbala.

It is worth mentioning that the Prime Minister of Iraq arrived in Oman on Wednesday. He and his accompanying delegation were received at the private airport in Salalah by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs.

Upon his arrival, the guest was escorted by HH Sayyid Shihab to the dais of honour, where the national anthem of Iraq was played.

The guest and his accompanying delegation were also received by HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance, Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (Head of the Mission of Honour), Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Qais Saad al Amri, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Sultanate of Oman, and Shaikh Mahmoud bin Muhanna al Kharousi, Charge d'Affaires of the Sultanate of Oman's Embassy in the Republic of Iraq. — **ONA**

SEE ALSO P2 & 3

Royal grant for zakat-eligible patients' treatment

MUSCAT: Within the context of the Royal attention to reinforcing social solidarity, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq gave his Royal directives to allocate RO 1 million to the Ministry of Health through the Waqf Health Foundation 'Athar' to facilitate treatment for zakat-eligible individuals in private healthcare institutions.

These directives aim to support those eligible for zakat, strengthen the spirit of communal participation — a deeply rooted value in Omani society — and

emphasise the importance of solidarity, generosity, and enhancing quality of life. The initiative also seeks to bridge healthcare gaps and expedite access to medical services across all segments of society.

Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, expressed profound gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for the unwavering support and care accorded to the healthcare sector in the Sultanate of Oman. He emphasised that these wise directives reflect His

Majesty's insightful vision and steadfast dedication to achieving sustainable development across all fields.

He noted that the Royal directives will enable zakat-eligible individuals to receive guaranteed treatment in private healthcare facilities, opening doors to medical care and offering them hope and reassurance for recovery. He stressed the commitment to ensuring that this aid reaches its beneficiaries with fairness and transparency, restoring health.

DETAILS ON P4



HM HOSTS DINNER

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq hosted a dinner at Al Hosn Palace in the Wilayat of Salalah in honour of Mohammed Shia' al Sudani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, marking his official visit to Oman. The banquet was attended by some officials from both sides. Prior to the dinner, His Majesty and the Prime Minister exchanged commemorative gifts in a manifestation of the fraternal relations binding Oman and Iraq.

HM, IRAQI PRIME MINISTER HOLD OFFICIAL TALKS



HIS MAJESTY HOSTS DINNER IN HONOUR OF IRAQI PRIME MINISTER



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik hosted a dinner at Al Hosn Palace in the Wilayat of Salalah in honour of Mohammed Shia' al Sudani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, marking his official visit to Oman. The banquet was attended by some officials from both sides. Prior to the dinner, His Majesty and the Prime Minister exchanged commemorative gifts in a manifestation of the fraternal relations binding Oman and Iraq.



Bilateral, educational and socio-cultural ties in focus

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabiyousef

The high-level visit of the Iraqi Prime Minister to the Sultanate of Oman will help promote better educational and socio-cultural relations between the two countries through cultural, educational and scientific exchanges, promoting the unique tradition and culture that the two brotherly countries are proud of.

In a statement, Shaikh Mahmoud bin Muhanna al Kharousi, Chargé d'affaires of the Sultanate of Oman's Embassy to the Republic of Iraq, said that educational and cultural aspects are among the most significant elements in enhancing bilateral relationships.

"The long-standing relations between Oman and Iraq have linked the two countries since ancient times. The foundations of these relations were laid in the Umayyad era, and friendly ties between the two countries continued to grow over time, especially during the era of Imam Said and his son Ahmed, when commercial transactions between Muscat and Basra witnessed spectacular growth," he said.

The Omani Embassy in Iraq resumed its services on October 15, 2019, and political consultations were held in Muscat following the opening. There have been many

exchange visits and invitations to participate in exhibitions, music and arts festivals, as well as exchanges in the field of literary and artistic translation.

The ambassador said that the Omani Embassy in Baghdad focuses on enhancing cooperation in trade and investment. It seeks to increase the volume of commercial exchanges between the two countries to the highest possible level. Officials of the two countries have since exchanged visits, with the two sides discussing and signing numerous agreements and memoranda of understanding in various fields, according to the embassy.

A statement from the Iraqi Embassy in Muscat said that the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Iraq enjoy strong relations characterised by cooperation in all important interests.

"This leads to the exchange of viewpoints, bilateral support in different fields and coordination and consultation on international and regional matters. The two sides further aim at enhancing cooperation in various areas, including the diplomatic and political arena, security, investment, economic, and commercial areas, and further augment the bilateral balance of trade in the fields of tourism, science, education and culture," it said.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave an audience at Al Hosn Palace in Salalah on Wednesday to Mohammed Shia' al Sudani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq. The audience took place within the context of the Iraqi PM's current two-day official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. His Majesty the Sultan and the guest also held an official session of talks. — ONA



Oman, Iraq sign two agreements, 24 MoUs across sectors

SALALAH: The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Iraq signed 2 agreements and 24 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to enhance cooperation between the two countries across various sectors.

The signing ceremony took place at Al Hosn Palace in the Wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar Governorate, in the presence of Mohammed Shia' al Sudani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, and HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs.

The two agreements signed by both parties pertain to the mutual visa waiver for holders of diplomatic, special, and service passports, as well as the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion on income and capital.

The MoUs cover a wide range of areas, including youth and sports; judicial and legal affairs; tourism; historical documentation and records management; information exchange and cooperation in the capital market sector; communications; radio and television broadcasting; implementation of training programs in management and leadership development; banking oversight and financial stability; housing and urban planning; higher education and research; educational fields; exchange of expertise and promotion of competition and anti-monopoly measures; development of trade exchanges and export promotion.

Additionally, the MoUs encompass intellectual property, industry, energy, localisation of defence industries, transport and logistics, stock exchange, oil storage, marketing of Iraqi crude oil, and chambers of commerce, as well as an MoU in the field of planning, development and implementation of



smart cities.

The agreements and MoUs were signed on behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, (Head of the Omani side in the Omani-Iraqi Joint Committee), Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Rear Admiral Ali bin Abdullah al Shidi, Commandant of the National Defence College, Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman

of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Eng Abdulrahman bin Salim al Hatmi, CEO of ASYAD Group, Wail bin Zuhair al Jamali, Chief Executive Officer of OQ Trading, Eng Salem bin Marhoon al Hashmi, Managing Director of Oman Tank Terminal Company, Mohsin bin Abduredha al Lawati, Senior Director of Systems and Development Department at Muscat Stock Exchange, Ali bin Hassan al Lawati, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Badr Group (Sultanate of Oman) and Sadiq bin Salem al Firoz, Chairman of the Board of

Directors of the National Refineries and Storage Company. On the Iraqi side, the signatories included Dr Fuad Hussein, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (Head of the Iraqi side in the Omani-Iraqi Joint Committee), Ali Mohsen al Alaq, Governor of the Central Bank, Eng Hayan Abdul Ghani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil, Atheer Dawood al Ghurairi, Minister of Trade, Mustafa Ati, Adviser to the Prime Minister for Military Industries, Dr Farhan Muhaisen al Fartoosy, Director-General of the General Company



for Ports of Iraq, Ali Nizar Fayeef, Director-General of SOMO Oil Company, Riyadh Fakher, Director-General of Foreign Economic Relations at the Ministry of Trade, Abdul Razzaq al Zuhairi, Chairman of the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce, and Nassif Jassim al Khattabi, Governor of Karbala.

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, expressed his pride in the distinguished Omani-Iraqi relations across various levels and domains. He added that the Iraqi Prime Minister's visit to the Sultanate of Oman is the first of its kind during the prosperous reign of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and marks the beginning of a new phase of strategic relations between the two countries.

He noted that Oman looks forward to implementing the outcomes achieved today through the valuable discussions held at the leadership level and through the signing of two agreements and a large number of memoranda of understanding across various fields. These agreements and memoranda, he affirmed, will be followed up by both countries through existing frameworks, most importantly the Omani-Iraqi Joint Committee, as well as through the embassies of both countries in Baghdad and Muscat and the various relevant entities responsible for their implementation.

On his turn, Dr Fuad Hussein, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, stated that this visit is historic by all standards, culminating in the signing of two agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two sides across various fields. He emphasised that Omani-Iraqi relations are evolving toward a strategic partnership between the two countries. — ONA

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



The exhibition showcased most notable Bronze Age discoveries

SYMPOSIUM
HIGHLIGHTS BRONZE
AGE DISCOVERIES

IBRI: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in Al Dhahirah Governorate organised a symposium on Tuesday at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Ibri, focusing on the governorate’s antiquities and the results of rescue excavations at Al Subaikhi archaeological site.

Waleed bin Hamad al Ghafri, Director of the Heritage and Tourism Department in Al Dhahirah, highlighted that the symposium aligns with ongoing efforts to preserve cultural heritage, safeguard historical memory and showcase findings from local archaeological missions.

He noted that discoveries at Al Subaikhi were made in collaboration with specialists from Tokyo University of Japanese Studies.

The symposium featured presentations by experts from Sultan Qaboos University and Tokyo University of Japanese Studies, exploring the historical eras of the finds and emphasising the role of archaeology in understanding past communities, lifestyles and cultural practices.

A specialised exhibition showcased the most notable Bronze Age discoveries, reflecting the rich historical and cultural diversity. — ONA

OMAN AT GCC
ISLAMIC AFFAIRS
MEETING



Oman was represented by Ahmed bin Saleh al Rashdi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs. — ONA

KUWAIT: Represented by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, the Sultanate of Oman took part in the 10th meeting of assistants to ministers of Islamic/religious affairs in GCC states.

At the meeting, held in Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman was represented by Ahmed bin Saleh al Rashdi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs.

The meeting discussed the exchange of research and experiences in the field of endowments, the accomplishments made during the “GCC Endowment Week”, proposals to leverage artificial intelligence in Islamic affairs and activities of the “GCC week for the protection of religious and moral values of the family”.

The meeting discussed the significance of exchanging research in the field of endowments and Islamic/religious affairs and the need to share expertise in a manner that would advance relations among GCC states in all fields. — ONA

MoI, digital media outlets chart future collaboration

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

The Ministry of Information (MoI) held its second meeting with representatives of private digital media outlets to address sector challenges and outline future plans for Oman’s evolving media landscape.

The session, chaired by Dr Mohammed al Hinai, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Publications and Artistic Works, reaffirmed the ministry’s commitment to strengthening



Dr Mohammed al Hinai chaired the Ministry of Information meeting

partnerships with private institutions.

He stressed adherence to content standards, administrative frameworks and legal guidelines,

while emphasising the media’s responsibility to embody national values, uphold accuracy and combat misinformation through fact-checking.

Royal grant of RO 1m for
zakat-eligible patients

WITHIN the context of the Royal attention to reinforcing social solidarity, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave his Royal directives to allocate RO 1 million to the Ministry of Health through the Waqf Health Foundation ‘Athar’ to facilitate treatment for zakat-eligible individuals in private healthcare institutions.

These directives aim to support those eligible for zakat, strengthen the spirit of communal participation — a deeply rooted value in Omani society — and emphasise the importance of solidarity, generosity, and enhancing quality of life. The initiative also seeks to bridge healthcare gaps and expedite access to medical services across all segments of society.

Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, expressed profound gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for the unwavering support and care accorded to the healthcare sector in the Sultanate of Oman. He emphasised that these wise directives reflect His Majesty’s insightful vision and steadfast dedication to achieving sustainable development across all fields.

He noted that the Royal directives will enable zakat-eligible individuals to receive guaranteed treatment in private healthcare facilities, opening doors to medical care and offering them hope and reassurance for recovery. He stressed the commitment to ensuring that this aid reaches its beneficiaries with fairness and transparency, restoring health, renewing hope and fostering family well-being. He described the initiative as a humanitarian message that embodies the true essence of zakat — a support system for people, an extended hand of mercy, and a bridge between generosity and healing.

On his turn, Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, expressed appreciation for the Royal directives, stating that the ‘Treatment for Zakat-Eligible Individuals’ initiative — providing healthcare to zakat-eligible groups through the private sector in coordination between the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Health — represents a noble gesture embodying His Majesty’s continuous care and generosity towards the citizens of Oman. This initiative elevates social solidarity and prioritises citizen health as a key focus of development and community building.

He highlighted that safeguarding human dignity is among the greatest objectives of Islam, and the duty of zakat is intrinsically linked to this noble purpose. Zakat, he said, has always been and will remain a bridge of solidarity, a source of care, and an embodiment of compassion and mercy among people.

The minister called on society, including institutions and individuals, to support these blessed efforts and contribute to their sustainability, ensuring that the initiative remains a renewed source of giving in the community and a pillar of social solidarity.

Meanwhile, Dr Sami bin Sulaiman al Farsi, Director-General of the National Centre for Women and Children’s Health, stated that the Royal directives reflect a forward-looking vision that impacts family

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The Royal
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vision that impacts
family stability by
supporting zakat-
eligible individuals

Allocating RO 1
million to this
humanitarian
initiative represents
an innovative
model for utilising
zakat resources

Registration will
begin on September
10 through zakat
committees in the
governorates and
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two weeks

stability by supporting zakat-eligible individuals in accessing appropriate treatment. This initiative, he affirmed, enhances societal welfare, improves quality of life, provides necessary healthcare, and builds bridges of trust between community members and institutions committed to service delivery.

On her turn, Dr Abeer al Maamari, Director of the Treatment for Zakat-Eligible Individuals Project, emphasised that the Royal directives reinforce the core principles of Oman Vision 2040, safeguarding human dignity and expanding service distribution while addressing the needs of zakat-eligible individuals. This aligns with the profound humanitarian values in Omani culture and religious teachings, where zakat serves as a vital tool for achieving societal balance.

She added that allocating RO 1 million to this humanitarian initiative represents an innovative model for utilising zakat resources to build an integrated healthcare system through a strategic partnership between the public and private sectors, under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs. The initiative focuses on providing specialised healthcare in private institutions for zakat-eligible cases requiring surgeries or radiological services, thereby reducing waiting lists.

Regarding regulations and registration procedures, she clarified that applicants must be listed in zakat-eligible records and possess a medical report from a government healthcare institution. Registration will begin on September 10 through zakat committees in the governorates and will continue for two weeks to ensure the highest standards of transparency and accuracy in selecting beneficiaries and directing resources to achieve the desired positive impact.

Hilal bin Hamad al Sarimi, Executive Director of the Waqf Health Foundation ‘Athar’, stated that the Royal directives reflect the wise leadership’s dedication to fulfilling the highest requirements of social development and enhancing partnerships between the public and private sectors and zakat institutions.

This, he said, contributes to achieving developmental sustainability, ensuring the continuity of healthcare services and guaranteeing their reach to all segments, particularly those eligible for humanitarian support. It also stimulates growth in the private healthcare sector by directing certain cases to it, ensuring complementarity between public and private health institutions.

For his part, Dr Mohammed bin Salim al Kharusi, Director of the Zakat Department at the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, highlighted that the Royal directives embody His Majesty’s care for Omani citizens, especially zakat-eligible groups. He described the initiative as a pioneering step in cementing the principles of social solidarity and promoting religious and humanitarian values.

He added that it will cover treatment costs for many needy patients who meet zakat eligibility criteria, alleviating their financial burdens and health struggles.

— ONA

the ministry’s support, calling it a catalyst for innovation and sustainability. The ministry announced plans to host a major media gathering that will unite all Omani digital platforms alongside international media entrepreneurs, creating opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange and regional partnerships.

Officials stressed that these regular meetings are part of broader efforts to align with Oman’s Renewed Renaissance, reinforcing media as a cornerstone of sustainable national development.

SHORT TAKES



The award aimed at nurturing emerging talents

Literary Creativity Award for School Students launched

MUSCAT: The Omani Society for Writers and Literati (OSWL) launched the third edition of its Literary Creativity Award for School Students (2025-2026).

Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, emphasised that the award reflects the effective partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Omani Society for Writers and Literati. He noted that such cultural initiatives enrich the educational environment and broaden horizons for creativity and critical thinking.

He explained that the previous two editions witnessed remarkable growth, with participant numbers increasing from around 1,500 to over 3,000 across the award’s various categories.

This reflects both the high level of student engagement and the award’s role in stimulating creativity.

Said bin Mohammed al Saqlawi, Chairman of OSWL Board of Directors, highlighted that the award represents a sustainable cultural initiative aimed at nurturing emerging literary talents in Omani schools and providing a stimulating environment for creative expression.

He added that the success of the first two editions, evidenced by high participation across the governorates, has encouraged the association to continue organising the competition and establishing its cultural, media and societal foundations. — ONA

National Livestock Vaccination Project in Al Batinah South



In 2024, approximately 315,804 goats, sheep and cattle were vaccinated

AL RUSTAQ: The National Livestock Vaccination Campaign for the 2025-2026 season has been launched in Al Batinah South Governorate.

The campaign, implemented by the Directorate-General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, will run for eight consecutive months across all wilayats of the governorate.

The campaign aims to vaccinate various animals against priority epidemic and infectious diseases. This will contribute to prevention, reduce infection rates and curb their spread. It is a fundamental pillar of the national strategy to combat animal epidemics and a key support for enhancing biosecurity and maintaining the health of animal herds.

The vaccinations will cover goats, sheep and cattle against diseases such as Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), pox, enterotoxemia, foot-and-mouth disease, lumpy skin disease and rabies.

Eng Younis bin Khamis al Saadi, Director of the Animal Wealth Department in Al Batinah South, stated that the campaign is a continuation of efforts from previous seasons. He noted that in 2024, approximately 315,804 goats, sheep and cattle were vaccinated, with a total of 518,187 vaccine doses.

He added that through these campaigns, the directorate seeks to increase the number of vaccinated animals annually, limit the spread of animal diseases, and enhance diagnostic and treatment programmes. — ONA

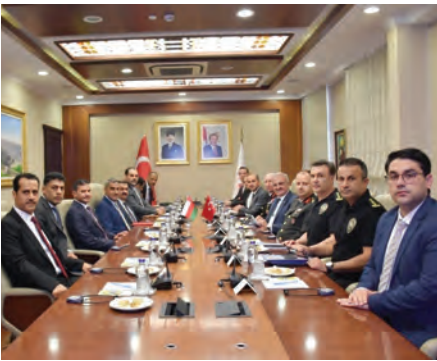
OMAN, TÜRKİYE HOLD DISCUSSION SESSION

ANKARA: The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Türkiye held a joint discussion session in Ankara.

The Omani side was headed by Major General Idris bin Abdulrahman al Kindi, Secretary-General of the National Security Council.

Meanwhile, the Turkish side was headed by Okay Memiş, Secretary-General of the National Security Council.

During the discussion session, both sides affirmed their commitment to the close strategic partnership between the



Discussions touched upon a range of issues of mutual interest

two countries.

They also highlighted the emphasis placed by their respective leaderships on strengthening bilateral relations, which are based on trust and mutual respect.

Discussions also touched upon a range of issues of mutual interest, with an emphasis on the importance of maintaining security and stability in the region.

Major General Idris bin alfo held several bilateral meetings with officials in the Republic of Türkiye. — ONA

Oman vows to strengthen partnership with Unicef

OMAN has reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to supporting children’s issues and strengthening its partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef).

In its statement during the opening session of the Executive Board of Unicef, Oman emphasised the importance of continuing close cooperation to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and enhancing the protection and well-being of children worldwide.

Oman clarified that this cooperation is embodied in the implementation of the Country Programme for the period (2026–2030), which reflects the priorities of the upcoming phase within the framework of Oman Vision 2040 and the 11th Five-Year Development Plan. The programme is grounded in Oman’s commitments to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The programme places special emphasis on expanding early childhood services and education, supporting adolescents and youth by enhancing their skills and broadening opportunities for their active participation in society, as well as focusing on social inclusion and the protection of vulnerable

Oman expressed deep concern regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the severe famine and acute shortage of basic needs faced by children



Oman stressed the importance of enhancing protection of children in conflict zones

groups, particularly children with disabilities.

Additionally, it aims to improve the quality of health and educational services and entrench the principles of justice and equality.

Oman also welcomed Unicef’s Strategic Plan for the period (2026–2029), which places children at the heart of the United Nations’ work.

Oman stressed the importance of enhancing their protection in conflict zones and expanding the scope of effective partnerships to contribute to sustainable

development and ensure a fairer and safer future for children worldwide.

In conclusion, Oman expressed deep concern regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the severe famine and acute shortage of basic needs faced by children.

It called on the international community to take urgent measures to ensure the protection of civilians, especially children, and to uphold the principles of international law. — ONA

Rymani’s return a triumph of conservation

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

After more than a decade of roaming the vast waters of the Indian Ocean, Rymani the turtle has returned to the shores of Oman.

Tagged over 10 years ago as part of a nationwide conservation programme, the turtle’s comeback is not only a remarkable natural event but also a powerful testament to the success of Oman’s long-term efforts to protect marine life.

Rymani’s journey began when it was first tagged by the Environment Authority (EA) during a turtle monitoring campaign. Since then, it has traversed thousands of kilometres across regional and international waters before returning to the very beach where the journey started.

Scientists note that this behaviour is typical of sea turtles, which often return to their natal nesting grounds even after years at sea.

For Oman, Rymani’s homecoming provides crucial data that reaffirms the effectiveness of its turtle protection initiatives.

Oman is globally recognised as one of the most important habitats for sea turtles, hosting five of the seven known species.



Rymani’s homecoming provides crucial data that reaffirms the effectiveness of its turtle protection initiatives

Masirah Island, in particular, serves as one of the largest nesting sites for green turtles worldwide. Other species, including loggerhead, olive ridley and hawksbill turtles, also frequent Omani shores to nest.

The EA, in collaboration with local and international partners, continues to implement robust conservation strategies. These include tagging and tracking turtles, safeguarding nesting beaches, raising public awareness and engaging communities in preservation efforts. Such initiatives have positioned Oman as a key player

in global marine conservation.

Rymani’s return is not only a scientific milestone but also a reminder of the interconnectedness of marine ecosystems.

Sea turtles traverse international waters, making their protection a shared responsibility. Oman’s success in preserving these species demonstrates how local conservation initiatives can have a global impact.

The journey of the turtle highlights the long-term rewards of environmental stewardship. What began as a

tagging project years ago has become a story of resilience and return - proof that sustained policies and careful management can yield lasting results.

Turtle conservation in Oman also plays a vital role in sustainable tourism. Beaches such as Ras Al Jinz and Ras Al Hadd attract thousands of visitors annually, eager to witness turtles nesting or hatchlings making their way to the sea.

This eco-tourism supports local economies while promoting awareness about conservation.

Visitors are encouraged to follow strict guidelines - avoiding artificial lights, refraining from disturbing turtles and leaving nesting sites untouched - ensuring the delicate balance of these habitats is preserved for future generations.

Rymani’s return is a compelling endorsement of Oman’s environmental policies. The story of Rymani blends science, resilience and symbolism: a turtle that has crossed oceans yet remains tied to its birthplace. It serves as a reminder that Oman’s commitment to biodiversity conservation is producing tangible results.

WORLD

MONSOONRAGE



People wade through a flooded road after a rise in the water level of Yamuna River due to heavy rains in New Delhi on Wednesday. — Reuters

Heavy rain lashes India, Yamuna River breaches danger mark in capital Delhi

NEW DELHI: Flooding across northern India killed at least five people on Wednesday, officials said, with more thunderstorms expected and local media reporting that 10,000 people have been evacuated from the river banks in capital Delhi. The monsoon season in India has been particularly intense this year, killing at least 130 people in August alone in north India, wiping out villages and destroying infrastructure.

The latest round of flooding has hit northern Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab, where the Chenab and Tawi rivers have risen above the danger mark at several spots.

The swollen rivers have triggered landslides and damaged many roads, disconnecting parts of the mountainous regions of Jammu and Himachal from the rest of India. At least five people were killed on Wednesday after landslides battered Rajouri and Mandi districts in Jammu and Himachal Pradesh, respectively, officials said.

The India Meteorological Department warned of heavy to very heavy rain in the region on Wednesday, with more downpours expected in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

The Central Water Commission said the swollen Yamuna had breached its danger mark on Tuesday in Delhi.

Local media reported that nearly 10,000 people had been evacuated to relief camps set up by the government along the main highways as a precautionary measure for those living in low-lying areas. Residents living along the Yamuna in Delhi were evacuated in 2023 as well after floodwaters entered their homes and the river hit its highest level in 45 years.

Many tourist spots in Himachal Pradesh have been hit by landslides in recent weeks, as raging rivers damaged infrastructure.

Educational institutions were ordered shut, authorities said, asking people to remain indoors due to flood warnings.

In neighbouring Punjab, the government said 30 people have been killed and nearly 20,000 evacuated since August 1.

Water gushing through the plains in India's breadbasket Punjab state has destroyed 150,000 hectares of crops, the government said on Tuesday. Continuous rain prompted authorities to release water from dams, which has caused flooding in plains in India and Pakistan in recent days.

On the other side of the border, Pakistani authorities issued an alert for more floods in the eastern heartland province of Punjab on Wednesday, after India warned it would release water downstream from its dams, officials said.

New Delhi has previously given four such warnings to Islamabad, the officials said.

The worst floods in four decades have killed at least 43 people in Punjab, with more than 3.3 million affected since August 26, the provincial disaster management authority said. — AFP

FAR-RIGHT ISRAELI MINISTER URGES WEST BANK ANNEXATION

JERUSALEM: Israel's far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called on Wednesday for the annexation of swathes of the occupied West Bank after a series of governments signalled their intention to recognise a Palestinian state. Belgium on Tuesday became the latest Western country to say it will recognise the State of Palestine at the UN General Assembly this month, following similar announcements by Australia, Canada and France.

"The time has come to apply Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria," Smotrich said, using the name Israel applies to the West Bank, which it has occupied since 1967. He said the move would "take the idea of dividing our tiny land and establishing a terrorist state at its centre off the agenda once and for all".

The Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited control over Palestinian urban areas in the West Bank, swiftly condemned the Israeli

minister's annexation call.

The Palestinian foreign ministry said it "condemns in the strongest terms the statements and positions made by the extremist minister Smotrich, particularly with regard to his inflammatory calls to deepen settlement activity." Smotrich called for Israeli annexation of "all open areas" of the territory, saying "the supreme principle of applying sovereignty... is the slogan: maximum land with minimum (Palestinian) population". — AFP

Hope dwindles for Afghan earthquake survivors

HOPE was quickly fading of finding survivors in the rubble of homes devastated by the weekend's powerful earthquake in eastern Afghanistan, as emergency services struggled to reach remote villages on Wednesday.

A shallow magnitude-6.0 earthquake hit the mountainous region bordering Pakistan late on Sunday, collapsing mud-brick homes on families as they slept.

Fearful of the near-constant aftershocks rattling the area, people huddled in the open air while rescuers struggled to unearth those trapped under the heaps of flattened buildings.



A man sits amid the remains of a damaged house in the aftermath of an earthquake at the Darai Nur district of Nangarhar province on Wednesday. — AFP

The earthquake killed more than 1,400 people and injured over 3,300, Taliban authorities said, making it one of the deadliest in decades to hit the impoverished

community members". The World Health Organization warned the number of casualties from the earthquake was expected to rise, "as many remain trapped in destroyed buildings".

More than 12,000 people have been directly affected by the earthquake, according to ActionAid, noting women and girls were particularly vulnerable in emergencies as they face steep restrictions under the Taliban authorities.

An AFP journalist in Mazar Dara village in Kunar said a small mobile clinic was deployed to provide emergency care but people were still in desperate need of emergency food, water and shelter. One family of 10 shared a meagre meal of just two pieces of bread, he said.

The World Food Programme said

its teams were working to provide provisions but "the reality is brutal" Retouc in a country where many already go hungry.

This is the third major earthquake since the Taliban took power in 2021, but there are even fewer resources for the cash-strapped government's response after the United States slashed assistance to the country when President Donald Trump took office in January.

Even before the earthquake, the United Nations estimated it had obtained less than a third of the funding required for operations countrywide.

Multiple countries have pledged assistance but NGOs and the UN have voiced alarm that dwindling aid could hamper relief efforts in one of the poorest countries in the world.



21,000 CHILDREN DISABLED IN GAZA WAR

At least 21,000 children in Gaza have been disabled since the war between Israel and Hamas began on October 7, 2023, a United Nations committee said on Wednesday.

Around 40,500 children have suffered "new war-related injuries" in the nearly two years since the war erupted, with more than half of them left disabled, said the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Reviewing the situation in the Palestinian territories, it said Israeli evacuation orders during the army's offensive in Gaza were "often inaccessible" to people with hearing or visual impairments, "rendering evacuation impossible".

FRESH POLLS SOON

Vote on new Thai PM on Friday



BANGKOK: Thailand's parliament will hold a special session on September 5 to vote on a new prime minister, the secretary-general of the lower house said on Wednesday. The decision — a potentially legally fraught one — could see the kingdom hold fresh elections before the year's end, just two years after it last went to the polls in May 2023. The People's Party instead declared its support for conservative tycoon Anutin Charnvirakul (pictured).

COVERT REACTOR

IAEA finds uranium particles at Syria site



VIENNA: The UN atomic watchdog has discovered uranium particles in Syria during a probe into a site it suspects once housed a nuclear reactor, according to a confidential report.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has urged Syria to cooperate fully over allegations that it had been building a covert nuclear reactor at a remote desert site called Deir Ezzor — which Israel destroyed in a bombing raid in 2007.

BROOM SHOW

Indonesian women join Jakarta protests



JAKARTA: Hundreds of women dressed in pink joined protests in Indonesia's capital against lawmakers' perks and police brutality, waving brooms as a symbol of their calls for reform. The Alliance of Indonesian Women said symbolised a need to "sweep (away) the state's dirt... and the repressiveness of security forces." Protests involving students, workers and rights groups that began in Jakarta last week have rocked the world's third-largest democracy.

SHORT TAKES



A bust of Alfred Nobel stands outside the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo, Norway. — Reuters

LOST FOR 50 YEARS, NOBEL PATENTS FOUND IN SWEDISH SUMMER HOME

STOCKHOLM: A dozen patents belonging to Swedish inventor and philanthropist Alfred Nobel and lost for almost 50 years were recently found in a Swedish couple’s summer house, the Nobel Foundation said.

Nobel — who discovered dynamite in 1867 and created the Nobel Prizes in his 1895 will — had hundreds of patents in several countries, most of them concerning production methods and uses for explosives using nitroglycerin. “We got a call from a person working at an auction place,” the head of the Nobel Foundation, Hanna Stjarne, said.

“He had these documents that came to him from a couple in the southern part of Sweden, in Blekinge, who found those documents in their summer home.

“We looked into it and saw that these are really documents of great importance that we want to keep for future generations.”

It is not known how the patents ended up there, but they provide a unique glimpse into Nobel’s life, Stjarne said. “It was stunning to open these documents, to look at them, to get that feeling about what life must have been like 150 years ago, and how he travelled in Europe, how he worked in Europe.” — AFP

GAME FOR A RIDE



Pope Leo XIV sits on a BMW motorbike on the day of his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican on Wednesday. — Reuters

PUTIN: READY TO MEET ZELENSKY IF HE COMES TO MOSCOW

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that he was ready to hold talks with Volodymyr Zelensky if the Ukrainian president came to Moscow, but said it remained to be seen whether such a meeting was worthwhile.

Zelensky has been pressing to meet Putin to discuss the terms of a possible deal and US President Donald Trump - who has been trying to broker a peace

settlement - has said he wants the two leaders to meet.

Speaking in China at the end of a visit there, Putin said he had always been open to meeting Zelensky but reiterated the Kremlin’s oft-repeated stance that such a meeting had to be well prepared in advance and lead to tangible results.

“As for a meeting with Zelensky I have never ruled out the possibility of such a meeting. But is there any point? Let’s see,”

said Putin.

The Russian leader said that in his view Ukraine needed to cancel martial law, hold elections, and hold a referendum about territorial questions if progress was to be made.

Russia claimed to have annexed four Ukrainian regions in 2022, a claim Kyiv and most Western countries rejected as an attempted illegal land grab backed by a colonial-style war of conquest. — Reuters

China’s Xi projects power at parade with Putin, Kim

BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping warned the world was facing a choice between peace or war at a massive military parade in Beijing on Wednesday, flanked by Russia’s Vladimir Putin and North Korea’s Kim Jong Un in an unprecedented show of force.



Russia’s President Vladimir Putin walks with China’s President Xi Jinping and North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un before a military parade in Beijing on Wednesday. — AFP

The event to mark 80 years since Japan’s defeat at the end of World War Two was largely shunned by Western leaders, with Putin and Kim - pariahs in the West due to the Ukraine war and Kim’s nuclear ambitions - the guests of honour.

Designed to project China’s military might and diplomatic clout, it also comes as US President Donald Trump’s tariffs and volatile policymaking strain its relations with allies and rivals alike.

“Today, mankind is faced with the choice of peace or war, dialogue or confrontation, win-win or zero-sum,” Xi told a crowd of more than 50,000 spectators at Tiananmen Square, adding that the Chinese people “firmly stand on the right side of history”.

Riding in an open-top limousine, Xi then inspected the troops and cutting-edge military equipment such as hypersonic missiles, underwater drones and a weaponised ‘robot wolf’.

Helicopters trailing large banners and fighter jets flew in formation during a 70-minute showcase that culminated in the release of 80,000 ‘peace’ birds.

Donning a tunic suit in the style worn by former leader Mao Zedong, Xi earlier greeted more than 25 leaders on the red carpet, including Indonesia’s Prabowo Subianto who made a surprise appearance despite widespread protests at home.

Seated between Putin and Kim in the viewing gallery, Xi repeatedly

President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he thought the military parade in China was a “beautiful ceremony” but added that the U.S. should have been mentioned during a speech.

“I thought it was a beautiful ceremony. I thought it was very, very impressive,” Trump said in the Oval office

engaged in conversations with both leaders as thousands of troops and materiel passed before them. It marked the first time the trio have appeared together in public.

Putin later thanked Kim for his soldiers’ courageous fighting in the war in Ukraine during a bilateral meeting at China’s State Guesthouse. The North Korean leader said he was willing to do everything he can to help Russia.

In a post directed at Xi on Truth Social as the parade kicked off, Trump highlighted the US role in helping China secure its freedom from Japan during World War Two.

“Please give my warmest regards to Vladimir Putin, and Kim Jong Un, as you conspire against the United States of America,” Trump added.

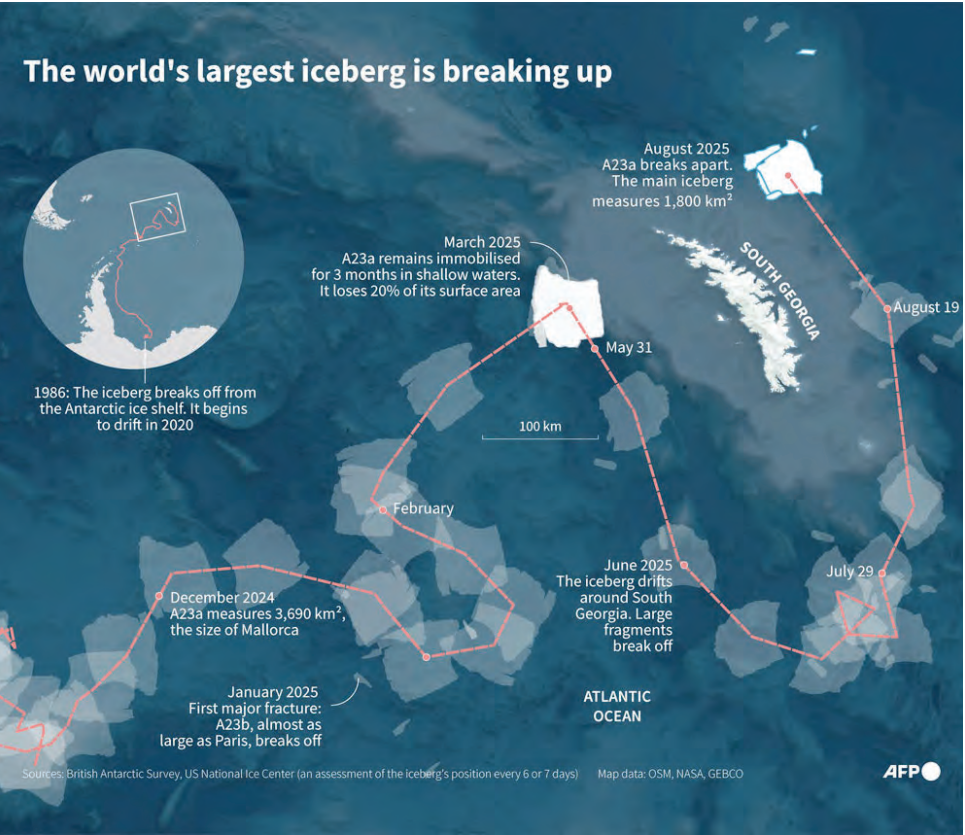
The Kremlin said Putin was not conspiring against the United States

and suggested Trump was being ironic in his remarks.

Xi has cast World War Two as a major turning point in the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”, in which it overcame the humiliation of Japan’s invasion to become a global powerhouse.

President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he thought the military parade in China was a “beautiful ceremony” but added that the U.S. should have been mentioned during a speech. “I thought it was a beautiful ceremony. I thought it was very, very impressive,” Trump said in the Oval office. “I watched the speech last night. President Xi is a friend of mine, but I thought that the United States should have been mentioned last night during that speech, because we helped China very, very much.” — AFP

UN pushes nations to submit overdue climate plans



PARIS: The United Nations on Wednesday urged nations late in turning in their climate plans to do so quickly, with major polluters among dozens of countries still to unveil new commitments.

The nearly 200 countries under the Paris Agreement were supposed to put forward updated policies in February, providing a tougher 2035 emissions reduction target and a detailed blueprint for achieving it.

But only a handful made the deadline, and six months later, China, India and the European Union are among the biggest names still to submit their revised plans.

In a letter, UN climate chief Simon Stiell called on laggards to get their plans in “as soon as possible”.

“These national climate plans are much more than words on paper; they are among this century’s most powerful engines of economic growth and rising living standards, and the cornerstone of humanity’s

fight against the global climate crisis,” he wrote. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is supposed to conduct its much-anticipated review of new commitments in a report to be ready by COP30, the annual UN climate summit in Brazil in November.

Plans submitted by the end of September would make the cut for this “important update” on global climate action, said Stiell, the executive secretary of the UNFCCC.

He encouraged world leaders to use the opportunity of a special climate event being hosted on September 24 during the UN General Assembly in New York to announce their new policies.

Around 190 countries have indicated they intend to submit their revisions this year, a spokesperson for the UNFCCC said.

Roughly 30 — including major economies Brazil, the United Kingdom, Japan and Canada — have

already done so, according to a UN database tracking the submissions.

The United States has also put forward a plan, but it is considered largely symbolic, made before President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 Paris deal. The sluggish global response has hinted at a waning appetite for climate action, with nations distracted by mounting security crises and international trade tension. Taken together, national climate plans represent the collective effort to meet the Paris Agreement goal of holding global temperature rises well below two degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels.

The world is currently tracking closer to 3°C of warming.

Global emissions have been rising but need to almost halve by the end of the decade to limit global warming to safer levels agreed under the Paris deal. — AFP

OPINION

On truth, power and the climate we share



RUMAITHA AL BUSAIDI

The writer is environmental strategist and advocate for sustainable development. Follow her on LinkedIn@rumaithaalbusaidi

I woke today to a sky the colour of pewter, the kind that makes the sea pause. In Oman, we read the weather like a familiar poem. The shamal, the slow build of heat over the Gulf, the khareef mist that greens Dhofar Governorate, and rain that leaves frankincense trees shining. The patterns comfort us as they tell the truth. Climate science has done the same for decades. It has captured the pulse of oceans and deserts, revealing what is happening to our planet.

This week shows how truth can be bullied. In Washington, a controversy erupted over a climate report issued by the Department of Energy. More than eighty-five scientists filed a rebuttal over four hundred pages, arguing the report misrepresents evidence and cherry-picks. Their filing comes as the report is discussed in the context of moves to reconsider the EPA's endangerment finding, the legal bedrock for many emission standards.

Why should we care from here? Because power travels. Narratives born in one capital do not stay. They cross borders through media, markets, and law. When the most powerful governments toy with the frame of reality, they embolden delay everywhere.

They give cover to those who profit from confusion. They slow adaptation in coastal villages and hinder innovation in our ports and factories. They make it harder for a young engineer to convince her company to invest in clean heat or for a mayor to defend seawalls and stronger building codes.

I have sat in rooms where data is invited and then set aside when it does not serve the preferred answer. The tone cools. Eyes move to the clock. The meeting shifts to what can be said so that nothing changes. Leadership, the real kind, asks us to do the opposite. It is the discipline of staying with facts long enough to let them change us. It is courageous to say we were wrong yesterday and we will do better tomorrow.

There is a term in public leadership that helps here. Productive disequilibrium is the stretch a system needs to learn without breaking. We are in that stretch on climate. The science is clear, solutions are within reach, and politics are turbulent. Disequilibrium helps when it is held with integrity and directed toward problem-solving. It becomes dangerous when it is engineered to exhaust citizens and erode trust. Then noise replaces knowledge, and fatigue replaces debate.

We need institutions that hold tension without turning it into theatre. We need leaders who treat facts as a common good and policy as a long river rather than a headline.

Oman has chosen a more grounded path. We are building a future industry around green molecules and careful stewardship of water and land. We learn in public. We plan, we build, and we keep learning. We convene, we test, and we adjust. It is not perfect, yet it rests on a simple respect for reality. The atmosphere does not negotiate. The thermometer is not partisan. The sea level does not take a position.

So this is a small appeal across borders and our institutions. Keep your hands on the evidence. Read widely. Ask the plain questions that keep the lights on in the lab and the pumps running in the field. Challenge the claim that feels easy. When power asks you to pretend that the tide is moving in the opposite direction, remember the map of your coastline and the farmers who observe the sky as if it were a ledger.

We do not need certainty to move. We need honesty and stamina. We need institutions that hold tension without turning it into theatre. We need leaders who treat facts as a common good and policy as a long river rather than a headline. We require a compass that remains accurate, as seasonal as the khareef in Dhofar Governorate and the shamal over the Gulf.

Bangladesh eyes end to treasure trove bank vault mystery

SHEIKH SABIHA ALAM

For more than a century, the fate of the dazzling Darya-e-Noor diamond has been sealed inside a bank vault — a mystery that haunts Khawaja Naim Murad, great-grandson of the last prince, or Nawab, of Dhaka.

Locked away in 1908, were the family's heirlooms lost during the violence at the end of British rule in 1947? Did they survive Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971 and the string of coups that followed, or are they still safe, dusty but untouched? Many suspect the jewels are long gone, and officials at the state-run bank hesitate to simply open the vault, fearing they'd carry the cost if it is empty. But the cash-strapped South Asian government has now ordered a committee to unseal the vault — and Murad clings to hope. "This is not a fairytale," said Murad, 55, recounting a story passed down from his father about the giant diamond dubbed the "River of Light", the centrepiece of a glittering armband.

It was part of a trove of 108 treasures. According to original court documents, they include a gold-and-silver sword encrusted with diamonds, a bejewelled fez with cascading pearls, and a fabulous star brooch once owned by a French empress. The nawab's riverside pink palace of Ahsan Manzil is now a government museum.

Murad, a former popular film star, lives in a sprawling villa in a wealthy Dhaka suburb.

"It is one of the most famous diamonds in the world, and its history is closely associated with that of the Koh-i-Noor," the book reports, referring to the shining centrepiece of Britain's crown jewels — a gem also claimed by Afghanistan, India, Iran and Pakistan. Another diamond of the same name, the pink-hued Daria-i-Noor, is in Tehran as part of Iran's former royal jewels. Murad maintains that the family's diamond, too, was once owned by Persia's shahs, then worn by Sikh warrior-leader Ranjit Singh in 19th-century Punjab. It was later seized by the British and eventually acquired by his ancestors. But fortunes shifted. In 1908, the then-nawab faced financial trouble. Sir Salimullah Bahadur borrowed from British colonial powers — mortgaging his vast Dhaka estates and placing the treasures in a vault as collateral.

That was their last confirmed sighting. Since then, myth and history have merged. The 1908 court papers did not specify the diamond's carat weight but valued it at 500,000 rupees — part of a hoard worth 1.8 million rupees. By today's conversion, that equals roughly \$13 million, though experts say the market value of such rare and large jewels has sometimes soared many times higher. — AFP

Governance as a culture of building institutions

GOOD governance is often spoken of in terms of structure — policies, procedures, roles, and reporting lines. However, beneath these formal elements lies a more elusive, often underappreciated force: institutional culture. This culture — the norms, behaviours, and informal expectations that guide how people act — can either reinforce governance or quietly undermine it. And in moments of crisis, it is culture, not just compliance, that determines whether an institution weathers the storm or collapses under pressure.

As Oman deepens its reform agenda across both the public and private sectors, a central question emerges: how can governance foster an institutional culture that is not only efficient but also resilient? It is easy to mistake governance for a rulebook. But governance, at its core, is a system of incentives and accountability that shapes how people within an organisation behave.

A well-governed entity is not simply one that follows procedures; it is one in which people make the right decisions even when no one is watching. This is especially critical in the public sector, where continuity, institutional memory, and value-for-money must endure beyond any single minister or official. In the corporate world, boards have long recognised that culture is a driver of both performance and risk. Global cases — from the collapse of Enron to the rogue trading scandals at Barings Bank or Société Générale, or Volkswagen's "Dieselgate" or the UK Post Horizon Scandal — demonstrate that poor culture can subvert even the most sophisticated governance frameworks.

Oman is not immune. Whether in government institutions,



A national governance blueprint for public institutions would articulate the expected cultural norms — such as openness, integrity, and evidence-based decision-making — while embedding structures for internal reflection and learning.



AHMED AL MUKHAINI

The author is a policy analyst

regulators, or large state-owned enterprises, risks emerge not only from gaps in procedures but also from cultures that tolerate opacity, discourage open dialogue, or reward short-termism. Resilience — the ability to absorb shocks and adapt to change — is as much about mindset as it is about structure. Institutions that cultivate a culture of learning, psychological safety, and transparent escalation are more likely to identify risks early and adapt swiftly. For instance, a regulatory body that values internal challenge and open communication is better positioned to detect systemic risks in the market. A hospital whose staff feel empowered to report near-misses without fear is safer for patients. A ministry that encourages reflective reviews of past programmes, not just celebratory reporting, is more capable of reform.

But this kind of culture does not arise spontaneously. It must be intentionally designed and reinforced by governance mechanisms — including leadership tone, performance

incentives, training programmes, whistleblower protections, and post-mortem learning reviews. While corporate governance has matured significantly in recent decades — with codified principles, audit committees, and board evaluation standards— the public sector in many countries often lacks similarly robust models. Some jurisdictions have begun to adopt public sector governance codes that outline the expectations of stewardship, transparency, integrity, and organisational behaviour. Oman could benefit from the same, and should not confine itself to the civil service code of conduct, or post facto financial and admin audit.

A national governance blueprint for public institutions would articulate the expected cultural norms — such as openness, integrity, and evidence-based decision-making — while embedding structures for internal reflection and learning. It would also incorporate mechanisms for learning from failure, encouraging accountability without fear, and developing leadership talent that upholds values-based management. These are not peripheral features of governance — they are the heart of an institution's ability to govern itself wisely and withstand external pressures.

Ultimately, governance must evolve from a static set of controls into a living system, one that interacts dynamically with people, decisions, and the social context in which it operates. The true test of governance is not how well an institution functions in times of stability, but how wisely it behaves in moments of uncertainty. To pass that test, we must see governance not merely as oversight, but as behavioural architecture. Only when culture and structure align can institutions endure risk and earn public trust.

Can you listen twice as much as you talk?



SONIA AMBROSIO

The writer is journalist, academic and researcher in media studies

LISTENING IS a fundamental communication skill, although it is often ignored in both practice and research. Academic research predominantly focuses on language and discourse, and people are more focused on talking than on listening.

Modern life has consequences in an increasingly interconnected world. There is a rush to speak and argue rather than listen. Have you ever paid attention to how organisers of press conferences manipulate the question-and-answer sections?

Unless it is a win-win discussion with concessions, dialogue is dying. This vanishing process is related to technological advancements that encourage rapid and fragmented communication.

Les Back argues in his book *The Art of Listening* (2007) that our culture is more inclined to talk than to listen. From reality TV to political rallies, there is a clamour to be heard, to narrate, and to receive attention. A rise in narcissism and entitlement is vastly changing society. There is an erosion of civility, writes Les Back.

Listening theory can be traced back to *Listen to People*, written in 1957 by Ralph Nichols and Leonard Stevens. In this work, the authors assert that immediately after listening to an audio piece, a person remembers about half of what was heard. However, two weeks later, this recall diminishes to around 25 per cent or less.

For the authors, students should take listening training to improve their ability to understand spoken words.

One significant issue arising from inadequate listening skills is that individuals may recognise the words spoken but fail to grasp their underlying meaning. They may rapidly forget what they have heard or apply selective hearing, hindering their ability to form a mental representation of the words. Most people listen with the intent to reply, not understand. We skim, react, and move on without absorbing anything, and social media amplifies this situation.

There is a need to attune our listening skills to the nuances of society. I don't mean focusing on the noise of social media. Many people on social platforms are posting shallow opinions, biased narratives, and disinformation in an attempt to gain popularity or to do a disservice. But what made us stop listening? Perhaps there is an overwhelming influx of information coupled with a decline in civility.

People spend shockingly little time listening to others, particularly political leaders, whether elected or appointed. Signs indicate a fractured relationship between citizens and their representatives. Those in positions of authority need to assess their performance based on clear societal expectations.

Genuine listening is rare these days, mainly in the diplomatic, international

Unless it is a win-win discussion with concessions, dialogue is dying. This vanishing process is related to technological advancements that encourage rapid and fragmented communication

relations, and governance spheres. Not understanding or accepting the views and concerns of others can lead to unsuccessful consequences.

The deliberate act of not listening to someone or something is called disregard; however, it can also be called ostracism, a manipulative tactic of ignoring or not listening to people in social and work environments. Ostracism, the act of ignoring or excluding a person or group from society, has its roots in ancient Greek political practices. In a trial of talking and listening interactions with random individuals, I've found that most of them have deep-seated opinions and seldom read anything other than amusing social media posts or topics related to their interests. This highlights the societal reality of a significant decline in empathy, which can be linked to the impact of technology and the desensitisation caused by the media.

We exist at a superficial level, hastily adopting and discarding ideas and trends. Our lives are characterised by a constant state of distraction, where listening is neither valued nor practised effectively. Our emotions are often our worst enemies. They can cloud judgement, leading to reactive responses rather than attentive listening.

Among so many facets of communication, listening is our weakest quality. According to Les Back, we need to repair our capacity to listen to people.

FROST, HAIL, HEAT SOUR SEASON FOR TÜRKIYE'S LEMON GROWERS

CAN EROK AND HAZEL WARD

“At first, there was the frost and we lost a lot of blossoms. Then we had a very severe hailstorm when the fruits were small,” grimaces Turkish citrus farmer Aleaddin Cogal.

“Then we were hit by a heatwave and the sun was so intense that it literally boiled the fruit, killing it,” says the 42-year-old, describing a string of extreme weather events that have ravaged his lemon plantation in the southern Adana region, one of Türkiye’s most important agricultural areas. “We lost nearly 40 per cent of our produce due to these three disasters,” he says, his trees laden with green fruits, their skin split open or showing ugly brown blisters from August’s withering heatwave. Kemal Siga, one of the workers who was working when temperatures peaked last month, said it was as if the crop had been ravaged by fire.

“I’ve never experienced a day like this - it felt like there was a wildfire. It ruined the groves,” he said.

Like many of its Mediterranean neighbours, Türkiye has seen a growing number of extreme weather events in recent years as the effects of global warming gather pace, with rural farming communities particularly vulnerable.

Mehmet Akin Dogan, head of the Yuregir chamber of agriculture, said farmers were under increasing pressure in the fertile Cukurova valley around Adana, which produces about 40 per cent of Türkiye’s citrus crops.

“Cukurova is one of Türkiye’s most important agricultural regions which makes a significant contribution to food production and food security. But in recent years, the growing effect of climate change has started threatening our agricultural activities,” he said. “We have been exposed to very strong frosts and very powerful heatwaves the likes of which we’ve never seen before.” The severe frost in late February saw temperatures plummet to -8 °C, with another frost hitting in April.

Then in early August, Adana saw its “hottest day in the last 95 years” clocking up a record 47.5 °C, Dogan explained, saying farmers also experienced hailstorms and even tornadoes.

Temperatures the world over have soared in recent years as human-induced climate change creates ever more erratic weather patterns, with Türkiye seeing its average July temperature of 25 °C - a constant between 1991-2020 - rising to 26.9 °C this year, the MGM weather service said.

The extreme weather also impacted other crops, with apricot farmers despairing over the damage in a country that is the world’s top exporter of dried apricots. “I’ve been growing apricots for 40 years, and I’ve never seen anything like this. Farmers are no longer trying to save their harvest but their trees,” said Orhan Karaca, who heads a chamber of agriculture in eastern Anatolia’s Malatya region, describing the effects of the frost as “harsher for us than the earthquake” of February 2023. — AFP

Europe needs a stablecoin

EUROPE HAS high hopes for the “digital euro” now in development. Cash has long

served as the ultimate anchor for commercial bank deposits – direct claims on the central bank – thereby underpinning trust in the financial system as a whole. In the digital age, when cash’s share of even small retail transactions is dwindling fast, the European Central Bank hopes that the digital euro can fill that role.

But ambitions for the digital euro extend further. Europe also hopes that the currency can bolster its strategic autonomy, in a world where the US dollar is the preeminent international reserve currency, and payment systems, international and domestic, are dominated by private US companies, such as Visa, Mastercard, and PayPal. According to this vision, the digital euro would safeguard the euro’s international role and support challengers to US payment hegemony. On its own, however, the digital euro is unlikely to fulfil these expectations.

The digital euro has been conceived as a complement to physical cash – not as an alternative to bank deposits, which comprise the vast majority of the money supply. Like cash, digital euros would be distributed by commercial banks but redeemable by the central bank. Like cash, they would be legal tender, so Europeans could use them to pay for purchases online and in shops (using their phones), and to send money to one another quickly and efficiently. And like cash, they would offer no yield. Though digital-wallet holdings will be capped at €3,000 (\$3,500), they can be freely topped up.

One can imagine that, as people hold less physical cash, they may take comfort from the fact that they can easily convert bank deposits into digital euros that function almost exactly like cash. But, as envisioned, the digital euro will be useless for corporate transactions, and it will probably not play a significant role in liquidity management or wholesale payments. And these transactions, not retail payments, are the ones that will make a difference in strengthening Europe’s strategic autonomy, including in payments.



Europe also hopes that the currency can bolster its strategic autonomy.

The ECB has a plan to expand the digital euro’s role in wholesale payments by linking its central ledger system to the wholesale-payments systems of the future, which will probably be underpinned by distributed ledger technology (DLT). To this end, two programmes have been announced. The Pontes programme is a shorter-term initiative, focused on creating a bridge between private DLT platforms and the ECB’s existing centralised-ledger system, TARGET Services. The more ambitious Appia programme aims to create a “future-ready” integrated financial ecosystem, based on DLT.

These initiatives will enable the ECB to act as the main counterparty for a range of exchanges, including inter-bank money-market transactions, in a world where banks and other market participants have embraced DLT. But since all they will really do is make it as quick and efficient to use euros for wholesale transactions as it is to use US dollars or other currencies, Pontes and Appia are unlikely to bring about a substantial increase in the euro’s share of international transactions or foreign reserves.

There is, however, a potential game-changer: stablecoins (digital assets that are pegged to traditional fiat currencies or commodities). Whereas the digital euro is supposed to function much like cash, stablecoins could act as an alternative to deposits. While the Appia programme does not commit the ECB to creating a euro stablecoin, it will create the

infrastructure for a stablecoin’s development. And with supportive regulations, stablecoins could combine the speed and efficiency of digital payments with the security of bank deposits.

Recent legislation on both sides of the Atlantic goes some way towards this goal. The Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for US Stablecoins (GENIUS) Act in the United States and the Markets in Crypto-Assets (MiCA) regulation in Europe, require that issuing institutions hold sufficient high-quality, highly liquid assets to back stablecoins fully. But this requirement alone is not enough, because in times of crisis, the value of the supporting assets may fall, triggering a run on the stablecoin, akin to a run on bank deposits, only with no central bank to act as a lender of last resort.

So far, neither the ECB nor the US Federal Reserve has expressed any intention of assuming that role. But US President Donald Trump is committed to supporting the crypto industry’s development, and seems to view stablecoin issuers as an important source of future demand for US Treasuries.

This suggests that the Trump administration may take whatever regulatory steps are needed to allow stablecoins to flourish, including offering assurances that the Fed will provide issuers with liquidity support. If the Fed takes that step, and the ECB does not, US dollar stablecoins will eclipse euro stablecoins, further strengthening the US dollar’s dominance.

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SPORTS

SWISSCAMP



Oman Sail team during SSL training in 2023.

TEAM OMAN SAIL BEGIN PREPARATION FOR STAR SAILORS LEAGUE GOLD CUP

MUSCAT: Oman Sail’s Star Sailors League team have begun preparations for the upcoming SSL Gold Cup Circuit 2025-2026 with a training camp in Grandson, Switzerland, on the shores of Lac de Neuchatel. The team will train alongside sailors from Greece and Switzerland ahead of the new season, with Asian Qualifiers set for December 2025 ahead of the finals in July 2026.

The team comprises ten sailors, skippered by Nasser al Mashari, alongside Ali al Balushi, Yasser al Rahbi, Raed al Hadi, Haitham al Wahaibi, Akram al Wahaibi, Hussain al Jabri and Abdulrahman al Mashari, in addition to two female sailors, Ibtisam al Salmi and Marwa al Khaifi, from the women’s team.

The training camp from September 1-10 will see the team use SSL47 boats to get a feel for the demands of the SSL Gold Cup through a series of technical drills and tactical exercises. Several teams, including SSL Australia, SSL Ecuador, SSL Colombia, SSL United Arab Emirates and many more, have already embarked upon training camps also on Lac de Neuchâtel as part of a 60-nation event, featuring many newcomers to the competition. The fleet will be narrowed down to 40 for the finals.

Abdulaziz al Shidi, Acting Director of Sailing at Oman Sail, said, “Building the international presence of Oman Sail’s team reflects the organisation’s commitment to promoting the Sultanate of Oman on the global stage by participating in major sporting events. The event also has the potential to empower Omani youth and inspire further development of their skills in sailing to compete at the highest levels. We are delighted to join so many sailing nations in the Star Sailors League Gold Cup and have the opportunity to highlight Oman’s rich maritime heritage and showcase our nation in the international sporting arena.”

The Star Sailors League Gold Cup is a biennial international sailing competition where nations — rather than individual sailors — compete for sailing supremacy aboard identical one-design yachts. It’s often described as the ‘Football World Cup in Sailing’. Racing is done in fleets of four boats in windward-leeward courses using SSL47 yachts, delivering thrilling and accessible inshore racing for spectators.

The inaugural edition of the Star Sailors League Gold Cup was ultimately won by Hungary, who were crowned the first-ever sailing world champion nation at final on December 3, 2023 in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.



Oman strikes 5-year sports tourism deal with Ironman

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

THE MINISTRY OF HERITAGE and Tourism (MoHT) has signed a five-year partnership agreement with the Ironman Group, a global leader in organising world-class sporting events and races in sports tourism. The signing took place on Wednesday morning at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, under the auspices of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism.

The agreement aims to highlight Oman’s unique tourism assets, merge sports challenges with tourism experiences, and solidify Oman’s position on the global sports tourism map. At the launch of the conference, a video presentation was screened showcasing the anticipated partnership between the Ministry and the Ironman Group.

Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism, stressed that this partnership marks a milestone in Oman’s tourism journey, affirming that Oman will serve as the global partner and official destination for the Ironman Group. He said this agreement is an extension of the Ministry’s efforts to achieve the targets of Oman Vision 2040, positioning the Sultanate of Oman as a world-class destination for sports tourism and adventure, thereby contributing to the diversification of national income sources.

He pointed out that sports tourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors worldwide, with a market size of around \$560 billion in 2023 and projections to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2032.

He emphasised that the partnership will showcase Oman’s breathtaking natural landscapes, cultural and environmental diversity, offering athletes and visitors extraordinary experiences that blend sporting challenges with the charm of Omani tourism, while also creating direct and indirect economic returns by stimulating supporting sectors and providing job opportunities for Omani youth.

IDEAL CHOICE

Scott DeRue, CEO of the Ironman Group, said that Oman, with its rich natural and human resources, was the ideal choice for



Oman will be a major global sponsor for all Ironman races held in 60 countries, covering nearly 150 events annually. — Hussein al Muqbali

this partnership, stressing that the spirit of Ironman is about challenge and the belief that anything is possible. “Oman is an inspiring and unique destination. We are proud of this partnership that allows us to welcome thousands of athletes from all over the world, reflecting a shared vision rooted in dedication and commitment.”

Haitham al Ghassani, Director-General of Tourism Promotion at the MoHT, revealed that the agreement stipulates Oman will be a major global sponsor for all Ironman races held in 60 countries, covering nearly 150 events annually. He also announced that starting in November 2026, Oman will host the full Ironman Championship for the first time in the Middle East, for five consecutive years, in addition to hosting the Ironman 70.3 Middle East Championship.

He noted that two additional races are under discussion and will be announced on the 12th of this month in Nice, France, during the Ministry’s presence there, marking an ideal opportunity to promote Oman as a global tourism destination.

GROWING GLOBAL PRESENCE

Mohammed al Obaidani, Founder and CEO of Middle East International Events, affirmed that Oman has now become a strategic global partner, with the ‘Visit Oman’ brand present in more than 170 international events. He added in 2013, we

started with just 170 participants. “Today, we have surpassed 1,100 participants in Muscat and over 460 in Salalah, with the number of participants increasing year after year. The championship now includes athletes from 81 countries worldwide, placing Oman at the heart of the global sports tourism and endurance map, and making it a prominent destination for international events,” Al Obaidani said.

He also highlighted that more than 15 Omanis are part of the organising team, supported by over 30 specialised international event management leaders and more than 3,000 volunteers, who carried Oman’s message of hospitality and warmth, embodying the bright face of the nation.

The conference concluded with a panel discussion in which the Ministry confirmed that the ‘Visit Oman’ brand will be present across global platforms through these events.

The session also discussed the challenges faced by volunteers and the aspirations to increase the number of Omani athletes participating in the future.

Participants emphasised that this new partnership represents a transformative step that will open wide horizons for sports tourism in Oman and strengthen its position as a leading destination for world-class sporting events.

ENPPI, Petrojet, Al Ittihad and Bahrain Club in semis

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

The 2025 Arab Clubs Table Tennis Championship will conclude on Thursday following five days of high-level competition. The finals of both men’s and women’s team sections will take place at the main hall of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. The women’s final will begin at 3 pm, followed by the highly anticipated men’s title clash.

After five days of intense action, the championship has witnessed thrilling contests and strong performances from across the Arab region. Four teams secured their spots in the men’s semifinals: Egypt’s ENPPI and Petrojet, Saudi Arabia’s Al Ittihad and Bahrain Club.

On the women’s side, ENPPI (Egypt), Al Kahraba (Iraq), Al Fata (Kuwait), and Petrojet (Egypt) advanced to the semifinals.

Sayyid Said bin Sultan al



The 2025 Arab Clubs Table Tennis Championship will conclude on Thursday.

Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, will be the chief guest for the concluding ceremony in presence of Khalil Ahmed al

Mohannadi, President of the Arab Table Tennis Federation and Abdullah bin Mohammed Bamakhalaf, Chairman of Oman Table Tennis Association, besides senior

sports officials, dignitaries and invited guests.

QUARTERFINAL DRAMA

The quarterfinal matches, which lasted over three hours, delivered gripping encounters as ENPPI overcame Bahrain’s Saar Club in a tense 3–2 match to set up a semifinal clash with fellow Egyptians Petrojet, who defeated Iraq’s South Gas Club 3–1. The quarterfinal matches lasted over three hours.

Bahrain Club earned their semifinal ticket after edging Qatar Club 3–2 in another marathon showdown that went to the decisive fifth game. They will face Al Ittihad of Saudi Arabia, who dispatched Iraq’s Naft Al Shamal SC 3–1 in a high-quality quarterfinal.

In classification matches, Oman’s Ibri Club claimed a 3–2 victory over Morocco’s Wydad to secure a stronger position in the 17th–24th bracket, while Salalah Club suffered a 3–0 loss against Jordan’s Al Karak in their placement match.

DOMINANTSHOW



Majees Titans players pose with the trophy.

MAJEES TITANS
EMERGE OMAN D20
CHAMPIONS

MUSCAT: The Majees Titans showcased a commanding performance to lift the Oman D20 League 2025 trophy, defeating the Royal Oman Stallions by 9 wickets in a one-sided final on August 30 at Al Amerat Cricket Ground.

The Stallions struggled from the outset, being bowled out for just 75 runs in 15.3 overs. Titans' bowlers Ubaid Ullah and Abid Khan were unplayable, taking four and three wickets respectively, dismantling the opposition with precision and restricting them to a modest total.

Chasing a paltry target, the Majees Titans chased down the total swiftly, finishing at 76-1 in 12.3 overs. Aamir Kaleem led the charge with a composed unbeaten 50 off 41 balls, anchoring the chase and guiding the Titans to a comfortable victory. Ubaid Ullah's 4-13 and Abid Khan's 3-13 were standout bowling performances that set the tone for the final.

Over the course of the league, Majees Titans had been equally impressive, with Amir Kaleem emerging as their leading run-scorer with 233 runs, while Abid Khan led the bowling charts with 17 wickets. The Titans finished atop the points table after the league stages, entering the final in commanding form, having won their last league match against Yalla Shabab Giants by four wickets.

Delighted on the victory for the second time in the tournament's history, Ishrath Habibulla, Team Owner, Majees Titans said: "We at Majees are proud of the fantastic effort of the team. It was a complete dominant performance winning 9 out of 11 matches and claiming the trophy. I am extremely impressed by the effort and dedication put in by the players, coach and the support staff. Majees has always stood to support the development of cricket in Oman and we express our gratitude and dedication for continued progress under the wings of Oman Cricket."

Majees Cricket Team is owned by Majees Technical Services LLC and have been associated with Oman Cricket for over an decade participating and supporting at various domestic and international levels to Oman Cricket.



Denis Bouanga celebrates after scoring a goal.

BOUANGA SHINES
AS GABON BOOST
WORLD CUP HOPES

SAINT PIERRE: In-form striker Denis Bouanga hit a first-half hat-trick as Gabon swept past Seychelles 4-0 on Wednesday in Saint Pierre to go top of Group F of their 2026 World Cup qualifier.

The match, played at the neutral venue of the Cote d Or Sports Complex in the Mauritian city of Saint Pierre, saw the Panthers dominating the exchance from the start of the game.

The Los Angeles FC forward struck in the 4th, 34th and 38th minutes before substitute Yannis M'Bemba added a late fourth to round off an emphatic win.The result moves the Panthers to 18 points from seven games, two clear of Côte d'Ivoire — who have a game in hand — before the pair meet in a potential group decider later in the window.

Bouanga's treble also lifts him to the top of the qualifiers' scoring chart on eight goals, ahead of Egypt's Mohamed Salah. Gabon now host Côte d'Ivoire next, knowing victory would keep qualification in their own hands. — CAF



South Africa's Keshav Maharaj in action during the first ODI against England at Headingley. — Reuters

Maharaj, Markram punish
England in 7-wicket win

KESHAV MAHARAJ took 4-22 as South Africa thrashed a woeful England side by seven wickets after dismissing the hosts for just 131 runs in the first one-day international at Headingley on Tuesday.

South Africa sent England into bat and the home side made a bright start as they reached 82-2 in the 14th over, before losing their last eight wickets for just 49 runs following an innings peppered with poor shot selections.

Only Jamie Smith put up any sort of resistance with a fine 54 from 48 balls, but South African opener Aiden Markram smashed 86 in 55 balls to show the pitch was a good one as he shared a first wicket partnership of 121 in 18.1 overs with Ryan Rickelton (31 not out from 59 balls).

The second match in the three-game series will be played at Lord's on Thursday. The teams will also contest three Twenty Internationals starting on September 10.

"It was not a great start to the series, just one of those bad days and we will move on as soon as possible," England captain Harry Brook said.

"Everyone will hold their hand up and say we had a bad day. We could not get a partnership together. The ball held in the pitch a little, but they bowled really nicely.

"We need to put that performance behind us now and get down to London."

England started brightly with successive fours in the opening over from Smith and despite Ben Duckett's early dismissal, they appeared to be heading towards setting an imposing target.

However, a tired-looking shot from Joe Root, after a long summer of cricket, saw him edge the ball for wicket keeper Rickelton

to hang onto a juggling catch, signalling the start of a dramatic slump.

Spinner Maharaj's varying pace then bamboozled the batters as England were dismissed three balls shy of half of their allotted 50 overs.

England's debutant seamer Sonny Baker opened the bowling but finished with figures of 0-76 off seven overs.

Markram was particularly brutal on him before he was the first of three wickets late in the chase for spinner Adil Rashid, who took 3-26.

"It was important to start well," South Africa captain Temba Bavuma said. "We were clinical with the ball, we were under pressure in the powerplay but still managed to get wickets. "With the bat, we could have been more clinical at the end but it should not take anything away from the chase, led brilliantly by Aiden." — Reuters

Galatasaray sign Gundogan from
Man City on free transfer

ISTANBUL: German midfielder Ilkay Gundogan on Tuesday signed for Galatasaray from Manchester City on a free transfer, both teams announced.

The 34-year-old has agreed a deal until the end of the 2026-27 season with the Turkish champions.

"Manchester City will always hold a special place in my heart," said Gundogan, who played 358 games in two spells at City, scoring 65 goals.

"We have enjoyed so much success in our time together and there have been so many unforgettable moments, not least being captain for the Treble-winning season.

"To win the Premier League and FA Cup trophies meant so much to me, but to then be afforded the opportunity of lifting the Champions League trophy for this club for the first time, especially in Istanbul, will live with me forever.

"I have no doubts Manchester City will enjoy much more success in the future and I will certainly be watching on from afar as I continue my career in



Ilkay Gundogan poses with his Galatasaray jersey.

Turkey, a country that means ever such a lot to me."

Gundogan, who was born in Germany to Turkish parents, was Pep Guardiola's first signing for City in 2016 and spent seven years there before joining Barcelona on a free transfer in 2023.

He rejoined City in August

2024 and made 33 appearances in the Premier League last season as Guardiola's side finished third.

Gundogan won the Premier League five times at City as well as the Champions League in 2022-23.

He previously played for Bochum, Nuremberg and Borussia Dortmund. He won the Bundesliga title in 2012 with Dortmund.

"Ilkay Gundogan is a name synonymous with success at Manchester City," said City director of football Hugo Viana.

"We will never forget his legacy here."

Galatasaray, who have qualified for the Champions League, said no transfer fee will be paid.

"A contract has been signed with the player, valid until the end of the 2026/27 season," Galatasaray said in a statement.

The 82-time capped former Germany international and captain will play alongside former German national teammate Leroy Sane in Turkey. — AFP



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz reacts after defeating Czech Republic's Jiri Lehecka in their quarterfinal match on day 10 of the US Open tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City. — AFP



Belarus's Aryna Sabalenka in action. — AFP



Serbia's Novak Djokovic serves to USA's Taylor Fritz during their quarterfinal match on day 10 of the US Open tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City. — AFP

Djokovic to play Alcaraz in semis

CARLOS ALCARAZ dazzled at the US Open to make the semifinals on Tuesday before Novak Djokovic danced his way through to book a New York showdown with the Spaniard that will mark the latest chapter in their generational rivalry.

Former champion Alcaraz produced yet another entertaining display at Flushing Meadows to dismantle 20th seed Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 at a sunbathed Arthur Ashe Stadium, securing his place in the last four without dropping a set this year.

“Sometimes I play a shot that I should not play in that moment but it’s the way I love playing tennis,” Alcaraz, who is two wins away from

taking the world number one spot from Italian rival Jannik Sinner, told Sky Sports.

“I want to play solid, play well and play smart but at the same time when I have the opportunity to play a great shot — or a hot shot let’s say — why not? “I’m here to entertain the people, myself and the team.”

Djokovic topped the bill in a truncated evening session after women’s champion Aryna Sabalenka received a walkover when Marketa Vondrousova withdrew due to a knee injury.

The Belarusian will face Jessica Pegula in the semifinals.

Djokovic, chasing a 25th Grand Slam title to move above Margaret Court in the all-time list, beat

American Taylor Fritz 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 and celebrated the win by performing a dance for his daughter on her birthday.

Fritz has now lost 11 straight to the 38-year old Serb, who became the oldest player in the professional era — since 1968 — to reach the semis of all four Grand Slams in a single season.

TOUGH TEST

Alcaraz is 16 years Djokovic’s junior but could face a tough test in his pursuit of a sixth Grand Slam title having lost five of his eight matches against the Serb.

The Spaniard has lost his last two to Djokovic - in the Australian Open quarterfinals this year and in last year’s Paris Olympics final, a clash

that left both players in tears for different reasons.

“I’d love to be fit enough to play and to play potentially five sets with Carlos. I know that my best tennis is going to be required, but I’d rise to the occasion,” Djokovic said.

“Normally I like to play the big matches on a big stage. It’s just that I’m not really sure how the body is going to feel in the next few days. But I’m going to do my best with my team to be fit for that.”

The top ranking is also on the line for Alcaraz at the end of the tournament but he was trying not to dwell on it. “If I think about the world number one spot too much, I’m going to put pressure on myself and I don’t want to do that,” Alcaraz said.

“I just want to step on court, try to do my things, follow my goals and try to enjoy as much as I can.”

Sabalenka moved ahead as Vondrousova was forced to withdraw after sparkling with upset victories over seventh seed Jasmine Paolini and ninth seed Elena Rybakina.

Sabalenka now meets Pegula in a rematch of last year’s final. The American dispatched Czech twice Grand Slam champion Barbora Krejckikova 6-3, 6-3. Her compatriot Venus Williams bowed out of the tournament after she and Canadian partner Leylah Fernandez were outclassed by top seeds Taylor Townsend and Katerina Siniakova 6-1 6-2 in the women’s doubles quarterfinals. — Reuters

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Al Harthy relishing racing return as FIA WEC resumes stateside

Circuit of the Americas to host Rd6 of the FIA WEC season this weekend

ALMOST two months since he was last in race action in the FIA World Endurance Championship, Oman's Ahmad al Harthy is raring to go for the resumption of the season this weekend, September 6/7, at the Circuit of the Americas (Cota) in the USA.

Criss-crossing the globe once more, the previous round having been at Interlagos in Brazil, Al Harthy is very much looking forward to only his second ever visit to the Texan track where he has unfinished business from last year in the six-hour 'Lone Star Le Mans'.

On his maiden visit to Cota in 2024, the Omani and fellow Team WRT racer Valentino Rossi – plus then team-mate Maxime Martin – were cruelly denied a possible podium, and certain top four finish in LMGT3, just a quarter of an hour before the chequered flag. After battling through into contention for deserved silverware from 15th on the grid, power steering failure ended the bid.

Knowing how strong the squad's competitiveness and team performance was last season in the USA, the current No 46 BMW M4 LMGT3 line-up of Al Harthy, Rossi and Kelvin van der Linde is taking a good level of optimism into round six of the FIA WEC campaign.

Al Harthy looking forward to second ever outing in 'Lone Star Le Mans'



The trio is more determined than ever to get back to podium ways after a challenging run of late, with difficulties out of the squad's control impacting recent races. At the blue riband Le Mans 24 Hours in June, where the team had run inside the LMGT3 top two for the first half of the race, an electrical fault ultimately led to retirement to steal the chance of possible victory.

Now the focus is on this weekend's race in Austin, Texas, where Al Harthy – supported as always by key partners OQ Group, Sohar International, Omantel, Oman LNG, BMW Oman, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Experience Oman – hopes the team can begin on the front foot and ultimately produce the goods. One thing is for sure, there is certainly no lack of determination.

Omani, Valentino Rossi, Kelvin van der Linde hungry for success in USA

AHMAD AL HARTHY: “It’s great to be back in America and we’ve come here with a positive frame of mind. We’ve had some disappointments recently and a few things out of our control so we are all very determined to get back in among the fight for the podium at Cota. Last year’s race went incredibly well, up until the steering issue right at the end, so we’re focused on trying to fight for the podium once again.

“From a personal perspective, I was very happy with my driving, pace and performance on my debut at Cota last season. All things being equal, I think we have a very good chance to do well in Sunday’s race and I know all of the guys at WRT will do everything they can to give us the package we need. It’s a great track, very unique, and I hope we can deliver a result for everyone back home in Oman.”

Opening free practice takes place on September 5, with two 90-minute sessions ahead of a further practice hour on September 6. Qualifying then follows in afternoon, Central time in America, at 15.00 with Hyperpole straight after. The race itself, the six-hour Lone Star Le Mans, will begin at 13.00 local time on September 7. The action can be followed through [www.fiawec.com](#)



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SHOWCASE GLOBAL
TECH INNOVATIONS
IN MUSCAT

MUSCAT: The 34th edition of the International Technology Exhibition, Comex 2025, will open on September 8 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs.

The four-day event is organised by Arabian Data Analytics in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

Comex is the Sultanate of Oman’s leading annual platform for showcasing the latest global innovations in digital transformation, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and cloud technologies.

The exhibition also highlights pioneering national projects that reflect Oman’s strategic vision of building a sustainable digital economy.

This year’s edition will bring together international, regional and local companies, entrepreneurs and innovators to exchange expertise and present smart solutions, strengthening Oman’s role as a regional hub for digital innovation.

Key sections of the exhibition include the e-Government Pavilion, Business Pavilion, Tech Startups Pavilion, Banking, FinTech and Insurance Pavilion, E-Sports and Games Section and the International Delegations Pavilion.

Accompanying events feature the Comex Awards, Comex Summit, specialised workshops, a VIP Majlis, interactive experiences, e-gaming competitions and the Comex Hackathon. Visitors will also have the chance to explore the latest technology products and services.

As a key event for investors, Comex 2025 connects tech startups with funding opportunities and fosters international partnerships to advance Oman’s digital transformation journey. — ONA

New plan to unlock Ibri’s
economic potential

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

A strategic framework for the sustainable development of the Wilayat of Ibri in Al Dhahirah Governorate into a regional economic and logistics hub has been completed, according to the project’s lead urban planner, Broadway Malyan.

Commissioned by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the UK-based architecture and urban design firm said the Ibri Structure Plan builds on the city’s strategic location, heritage value and mountain landscape context.

“The Ibri Structure Plan outlines a long-term vision for Ibri’s transformation into a connected, resilient and economically diverse city. It identifies clear priorities for future government investment across infrastructure, social amenities and environmental enhancement, ensuring alignment with evolving local needs and Oman Vision 2040”, Broadway Malyan said in a post.

Phil Bonds, Director of Masterplanning, added: “We led a team of specialists to develop an integrated plan that will unlock Ibri’s potential, transforming it into a centre for manufacturing, trade, logistics and agro-industries, while celebrating its unique heritage and dramatic natural setting to enhance its tourism appeal”.

Collaborating with Broadway Malyan in the delivery of the structure plan were: F&M Middle East (Project Management), Pegasys (Socio-Economics, Investment & Governance), PAL (Economy), Cundall (Infrastructure, Environment, Sustainability & Smart City), Systematica (Transport and Mobility), Chronicle Heritage (Heritage-led Regeneration), Oman Think Urban (Stakeholder &



The Ibri Structure Plan builds on the city’s strategic location, heritage value and mountain landscape context

The blueprint for Ibri’s sustainable growth strategy seeks to address several existing challenges mainly its unplanned urban sprawl

Community Engagement), SKIFT (Strategic Tourism Advice), TRM (Traffic Surveys & Assessments), Green Mawared (Agronomy & Food Security) and DG Jones (Cost Planning).

The blueprint for Ibri’s sustainable growth strategy seeks to address several existing challenges, notably its unplanned urban sprawl, which undermines its aesthetic appeal.

Owing to housing allocation policies over the past decades, the city has expanded some 30 kilometres beyond its historic walled origins into the mountain and desert hinterland.

A structured approach is therefore imperative, especially in light of the local population’s projected growth from around 71,000 in 2024 to about 120,000 by 2040. Other challenges targeted by the plan include Ibri’s car-dependent transport system, the impacts of climate change and largely unsustainable traditional agricultural practices. Moreover,

with limited diversity in employment opportunities, many qualified Omanis continue to leave Ibri in search of jobs in major Omani cities or neighbouring countries.

According to Broadway Malyan, the new Ibri Structure Plan centres on six key initiatives: the creation of a new transport loop to support a more human-centric urban structure; the regeneration of the historic city centre; the protection of the natural skyline and mountain ridges; the establishment of a central green heart; and the integration of surrounding villages.

Leveraging its strategic location near Oman’s western border with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, Ibri will also be positioned to attract foreign direct investment into dedicated clusters for light industry and logistics, energy services and solutions, and food manufacturing. Investments in tourism, education and agro-food clusters are also proposed.

Logistics future hinges on AI, digitalisation and green fuel readiness

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, SEPT 3

The future of logistics and energy competitiveness in Oman will depend on how quickly companies adapt to artificial intelligence, digitalisation and green fuel technologies, stressed Ahmed al Burami, Chief Financial Officer — OQ Base Industries (OQBI).

Speaking during a session at the Middle East Transport Forum in Salalah, Al Burami emphasised that access to data is no longer the challenge — rather, the decisive factor is how fast and effectively organisations adopt and apply it.

“Knowledge is available everywhere at zero cost. The real question is how to utilise it and



Ahmed al Burami, Chief Financial Officer — OQ Base Industries, speaking at the the Middle East Transport Forum in Salalah

which systems we choose to adopt faster than others”, Al Burami told delegates.

He noted that OQBI and the Port of Salalah have already implemented multiple operational and maintenance systems, but further integration, quantification and automation are needed to meet future demand.

Cybersecurity, he added, must be at the core of this digital transformation.

“Cybersecurity is critical when sharing information across partners. No one can predict tomorrow’s risks, so flexibility and readiness are essential”, he said.

Looking ahead, Al Burami pointed to the growing role of green hydrogen and ammonia

in the shipping and energy sectors. He revealed that parent group OQ and its partners are exploring how Salalah’s logistics infrastructure can be upgraded to handle alternative fuels, in line with global moves towards decarbonisation.

He stressed that OQ aims to ensure that when hydrogen- and ammonia-fuelled vessels enter regional shipping lanes, Oman’s ports will be ready to accommodate them.

The remarks reflect Oman’s wider Oman Vision 2040 strategy to enhance logistics competitiveness, diversify the economy and position the Sultanate of Oman as a hub for sustainable energy and trade.

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SHORTTAKES

SOHAR INTL BANK
LAUNCHES HOUSING
FINANCE FOR INVESTORS

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to providing affordable and accessible financial solutions, Sohar International and its Islamic banking Window — Sohar Islamic are pleased to announce a new Housing Finance product.

This initiative is designed to facilitate home ownership and investment opportunities in Oman, making it easier for expatriates — whether purchasing a house to live in or as an investment — to achieve their goals with confidence.

The product extends housing finance services to GCC nationals and expatriates, both residents and non-residents, looking to invest in properties within Integrated Tourism Complexes (ITCs).

Offering financing of up to 50% of the property, the new loan product ensures customers have access to practical, tailored solutions for purchasing completed or off-plan units in Ministry-approved ITC projects.

With affordability and flexibility at its core, the product provides financing of up to RO 250,000 with a tenor of up to 10 years, including a grace period of 18 months for under-construction properties.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds
to launch 48 showrooms

MALABAR Gold & Diamonds, the fifth largest jewellery retailer globally with over 400 showrooms across 13 countries, announced a landmark phase in its global growth strategy. The brand is set to launch 48 showrooms — 27 new showrooms & 21 revamped showrooms by December 2025, further reinforcing its position as one of the most trusted and expansive jewellery retail chains in the world.

The expansion is geographically diverse, with 14 new showrooms in India, 3 showrooms in the UAE & the USA, 2 showrooms in the UK and 1 showroom each in Australia, KSA, Canada and Malaysia. The brand is also set to launch its inaugural showroom in New



The launch of 48 showrooms is a significant milestone in our journey to become the world's no 1 jewellery retailer.

Zealand, marking its entry into the 14th country of operation. This expansion is part of the brand's target to drive an exponential increase in revenue to \$8.85 billion and to open 60 showrooms expanding its presence to 15 countries and 22 States and 3 Union Territories in India in the current fiscal year. In addition to the new showrooms, the brand will also launch revamped showrooms across India, UAE, KSA, Oman and Malaysia, offering customers a refreshed, luxury-

driven shopping experience. The expansion aligns with the brand's long-term strategy to scale responsibly, strengthen core markets and enter or deepen presence in high-potential regions through thoughtfully curated product lines and world-class services. Commenting on the expansion, Mr M P Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group, said: "The launch of 48 showrooms is a significant milestone in our journey to become the world's no 1 jewellery retailer. But for us, growth is not just about numbers — it's about setting new benchmarks in responsible business. Each new showroom embodies our commitment to ethical sourcing, sustainability and giving back to society.

Celebrating 50 Years of Customer Happiness
Saud Bahwan Automotive & Toyota Mark
50 Years Partnership with Biggest Ever Campaign



Saud Bahwan Automotive is making history in Oman's automotive market with an extraordinary celebration of its 50-year journey with Toyota. For five decades, SBA has been at the heart of Oman's roads, spreading happiness, trust and world-class mobility solutions. Now, in the biggest ever campaign, Saud Bahwan Automotive is giving customers an unmissable opportunity to be part of this golden milestone, with spectacular customer benefits, exciting rewards and the chance to win 50 brand-new Toyota Yaris cars as raffle.

An Offer Like Never Before – Because You Deserve It

Customers purchasing a new Toyota during this campaign will enjoy a host of remarkable benefits, including:

- **50 Yaris on Raffle** – drive home happiness with one of 50 stylish Yaris cars.
- **5 Years / 50,000 Kms Service** – enjoy worry-free driving
- **50% VAT on Us** – more savings, more value.
- **50% Insurance on Us** – added peace of mind
- **RO 50 worth of Thiqah Loyalty Points** – more value with every purchase

This biggest ever offer is valid from 1st September to 29th December 2025. So head to your nearest Toyota showroom today. (Benefits may vary across model variants, model years, and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Customers are advised to visit the nearest Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for full details.)

A Legacy of Trust & Excellence

Sharing his thoughts about this exclusive offer, a senior representative from Saud Bahwan Automotive said, "For 50 years, Saud Bahwan Automotive and Toyota

have gone beyond simply offering cars. We have built journeys of quality, reliability and unmatched peace-of-mind. From our modern showrooms and expansive service centres to the easy availability of genuine spare parts across Oman and the dedication of our skilled teams, every step has been designed and implemented to ensure that owning a Toyota is a truly rewarding experience. Today, as we celebrate 50 years of happiness, we invite customers to join us in this historic moment and start their own Journey of customer happiness with a Toyota."

Speaking about Toyota's distinctive attributes he said, "Toyota is not just about driving. It is about living with confidence, safety and joy. When you choose Toyota, you choose a lifetime of quality, durability and reliability. We welcome all new buyers to visit our showrooms and discover why Toyota continues to be Oman's most trusted companion on the road."

Discover the Toyota Range – Something for Every Journey

Toyota vehicles in Oman bring together cutting-edge technology, powerful performance and everyday comfort, ensuring there is a perfect Toyota for every lifestyle.

Yaris – Young, Stylish and Full of Energy

The Toyota Yaris is the star of this campaign and for good reason. Sleek, dynamic and efficient, the Yaris is designed for those who live life on the move. With a fuel-efficient 1.5L engine delivering 105 HP, CVT transmission for smooth performance and a stylish interior featuring an 8-inch multimedia screen, Apple CarPlay®, Android Auto™ and rear USB ports, it makes every drive fun and connected. Add in practical comfort like automatic air conditioning with rear vents and the Yaris is your perfect everyday companion.

Corolla – The Global Icon

The Corolla has been winning hearts for generations and in Oman, it continues to inspire trust and admiration. Stylish yet practical, it is available with two engine options – a spirited 2.0L engine producing 168 HP and a 1.6L engine delivering efficient everyday performance. With Toyota's hallmark reliability and refined comfort, the Corolla is more than a car. It is a global symbol of driving confidence.

Urban Cruiser – The Stylish Compact SUV

The Urban Cruiser brings together the confidence of an SUV with the agility of a city car. Designed for today's urban explorers, it offers a responsive 1.5L engine that delivers smooth, efficient performance while maintaining Toyota's legendary reliability. With its elevated driving position, spacious cabin and modern connectivity features, the Urban Cruiser makes every journey effortless, whether navigating busy streets or heading out for a weekend escape.

Raize – Compact in Size, Big on Possibilities

The Toyota Raize is proof that great things come in small packages. Built on an advanced platform for superior handling and safety, it is powered by an efficient 1.0L turbocharged engine delivering lively performance and excellent fuel economy. Its bold SUV styling, versatile cargo space and smart technology make it perfect for those who demand flexibility without compromise. With the Raize, every drive is an opportunity to explore more.

Hilux – Built Tough, Built for Adventure

When the road gets tough, the Toyota Hilux is tougher. Whether it is the robust Hilux Adventure with its powerful 4.0L V6 engine producing 235 HP, or the dependable Hilux 4x4 with a 2.7L engine and multiple transmission choices, this pickup is engineered to

thrill while offering unmatched reliability. From city streets to rugged trails, Hilux never backs down.

Fortuner – Power Meets Prestige

Bold, spacious and designed for adventure, the Toyota Fortuner offers a commanding presence on the road. Choose between the efficient 2.7L engine (164 HP) or the exhilarating 4.0L V6 (235 HP). With 6-speed automatic transmission and advanced engineering, the Fortuner is perfect for families and adventurers who want power with comfort.

Prado – A Trusted Legend Reimagined

The Toyota Prado has always stood for strength and dependability. Now, it returns more stylish and capable than ever with two powerful options – a 2.4L Turbo Petrol and a 2.8L Turbo Diesel, both paired to an 8-speed automatic transmission. Strong yet refined, Prado is the perfect partner for family journeys and off-road adventures alike.

Land Cruiser – The King of All Terrains

For decades, the Land Cruiser has defined ultimate capability and today it continues that proud legacy with powerful new V6 twin-turbo engines. The 3.5L petrol engine delivers 409 HP, while the 3.3L diesel (launching soon in the region) pushes 302 HP with exceptional torque. A 4.0L V6 variant is also available. With 10-speed and 6-speed transmission options, the Land Cruiser blends raw strength with refined control, ready for any journey, anywhere.

Join the Celebration. Begin Your Journey of Happiness Today.

This golden jubilee celebration is more than an offer. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With 50 Toyota Yaris cars to be won, unmatched customer benefits and Toyota's legendary range waiting for you, there is never been a better time to own a Toyota.

Visit your nearest Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom today and take the first step towards your own journey of happiness with Toyota.

Specifications of vehicle imported from Toyota Motor Corporation are as per the GSO Conformity Certificate applicable to the model/grade. Parameters such as vehicle weight, dimensions & fuel economy could vary from the GSO Conformity Certificate due to fitment of dealer installed accessories. Pictures and colours shown may differ from actual specifications.

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SHORT TAKES



The event attracted entrepreneurs and tech enthusiasts focused on digital solutions.

DHOFAR HOSTS ‘GOVERN IT SMART’ HACKATHON FINALE

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, SEPT 3

The State Audit Institution (SAI), in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality, concluded the ‘Govern It Smart’ hackathon on Wednesday, following 48 hours of intensive competition at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah.

The event attracted young Omanis, entrepreneurs, and tech enthusiasts focused on digital solutions to enhance governance and transparency in managing governorate-level investments.

The closing ceremony was held under the auspices of Mahmoud bin Abdullah al Owaini, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Finance, in the presence of Zahra bint Mohammed Redha al Lawatiyah, Deputy President for Oversight of Authorities, Investments and Companies at SAI, alongside officials and specialists.

The hackathon received around 360 applications, with 65 participants forming 14 teams to develop practical, scalable tools supporting the governance of investment projects across Oman’s governorates. Teams worked under close mentorship while a specialist jury evaluated projects against clear and transparent criteria.

At the finale, the top prizes were awarded to: First Place: Yadoom, Second Place: Maddad and Third Place: Nafithoon. Two special awards were also announced: Best Programmer went to Shihab al Jabri, and Most Innovative Idea went to Maak.

Commenting on the outcomes, Salem bin Mohsin al Ghassani, Director of the Training & Development Centre at SAI, said:

“Governance of investments is a pivotal agenda, and we hope these outcomes will translate into achievements that match the nation’s ambitions. We have witnessed genuine passion and commitment from participants and tireless efforts to deliver work that rises to our aspirations. Everyone present today is a winner; giving does not end. This is not a finish line but a launchpad for the next stages.”

New Golden Residency to strengthen business ties

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

THE 10-Year Golden Residency programme launched earlier this week is a transformative national initiative that enhances Oman’s stature as a premier long-term investment hub in the Gulf and beyond.

This major national programme, spearheaded by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), aligns with Oman Vision 2040 and grants a renewable 10-year residency to international investors, entrepreneurs and high-net-worth individuals who aspire to build a long-term presence and contribute meaningfully to Oman’s diversified economy.

Designed as a catalyst for stronger global economic ties, the Golden Residency initiative builds a foundation for durable partnerships between Oman and the world’s business leaders. The programme offers investors and their families the opportunity to enjoy a secure and high-quality lifestyle in one of the region’s most politically stable and economically promising countries. Long-term residency empowers participants to establish permanent roots while supporting Oman’s long-term development priorities.

As global mobility and migration trends shift in the wake of economic volatility, high inflation and oversaturation in traditional markets, Oman is fast emerging as a competitive alternative. According to global insights, over 10% of global migrants now target the Gulf and Oman stands out as a rare convergence of opportunity and livability.

The country ranks 4th globally in the 2024 Quality of Life Index (Numbeo) — and offers one of the world’s top three strongest currencies, world-class healthcare and education; and a regulatory environment that supports 100%



Residency holders are welcomed into a nation widely recognised for its neutrality, personal safety and authentic hospitality

As part of its wider Oman Vision 2040 agenda, Oman is expanding its global economic footprint. The Golden Residency initiative marks a defining step in this journey

foreign ownership in key sectors.

Oman is internationally respected for its neutrality, safety and genuine hospitality. Positioned at the junction of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Oman offers access to over 2.6 billion consumers — making it a natural gateway for regional and international investment expansion.

Residency holders are welcomed into a nation widely recognised for its neutrality, personal safety and authentic hospitality. Positioned at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Oman offers seamless access to over 2.6 billion consumers — making it a natural gateway for regional and international investment expansion.

The programme provides seven investment-based routes to residency. These include real estate purchases in Integrated Tourism Complexes (residential, commercial, or hospitality), company formation within Oman, acquisition of Government Development Bonds, or shares traded on the Muscat Stock Exchange.

Other routes include maintaining a fixed-term deposit with a licensed bank in Oman, operating a

business that employs a minimum of 50 Omani citizens, or receiving a nomination by a company regulated under the Foreign Capital Investment Law for key personnel or partners.

Applicants must meet a minimum capital threshold of RO 200,000 (approximately \$520,000). In exchange, they receive full foreign ownership of their investments, direct access to essential government services and customised support via the Invest Oman platform — the official one-stop shop for strategic investments.

To further streamline the process, Oman has appointed Migrate World as the programme’s operational partner. As a global leader in investment migration, Migrate World offers comprehensive application support, eligibility screening and relocation advisory to ensure a smooth and transparent investor experience. Their involvement adds technical expertise, global reach and operational excellence to the programme’s rollout.

Eligible investors will find a wealth of opportunities across Oman’s future-facing sectors. These include sustainable tourism, digital technology, logistics, renewable energy, mining, fisheries and real estate.

Underpinned by a stable political system, long-range infrastructure planning and policy frameworks that prioritise sustainability and innovation, Oman’s investment landscape is as dynamic as it is dependable.

As part of its wider Oman Vision 2040 agenda, Oman is expanding its global economic footprint. The Golden Residency initiative marks a defining step in this journey — one that combines forward-thinking policy, practical investor incentives and a clear invitation to live, grow and thrive in one of the Middle East’s most future-ready nations.

For more information and to apply, visit: <https://omanresidence.gov.om/en-us/>

Yanqul, Dhank ‘View’ projects boost tourism and sustainability in Al Dhahirah

IBRI: In line with the national approach to promote sustainable development and enhance quality of life across governorates, the ‘View’ projects in the Wilayats of Yanqul and Dhank in Al Dhahirah Governorate stand out as promising models integrating tourism infrastructure, public services and a comprehensive environmental vision.

The governorate has witnessed a qualitative leap in the development of public spaces through the establishment of two modern recreational destinations, providing an attractive environment for residents and visitors while balancing urban growth with the preservation of natural resources.

These development views



represent not only architectural projects but also a practical commitment to sustainability principles. The designs respect the geographical character of the region

and offer integrated service facilities that enhance local investment opportunities and support tourism.

The total cost of the two projects amounts to nearly RO 4 million, encompassing a range of facilities catering to all age groups. These include green spaces, an open-air theatre, cafés, sports fields, water fountains, walking and barbecue areas, prayer facilities and other amenities.

Eng Nasser bin Ali al Siyabi, Director General of Al Dhahirah Municipality, said that the governorate aims, through these view projects, to provide advanced municipal services and modern infrastructure leveraging technology and smart applications. This contributes to enhancing quality of

life, promoting community well-being and supporting economic growth and local investment.

He added that these projects align with the government’s approach to improve service efficiency and enhance competitiveness at local, regional and international levels.

Eng Shaikha bint Ahmed al Wahshiyah, Supervisor of the Dhank View Project, stated that the project is one of the pioneering tourism and development initiatives being implemented by Al Dhahirah Municipality.

She added that the project’s location was chosen adjacent to the main road linking Ibri and Hafeet, offering a distinctive viewpoint that enhances the governorate’s tourism and economic appeal. — ONA

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Britain’s economy is not broken: Reeves



British finance minister Rachel Reeves said the country’s economy was not broken, but acknowledged there were still challenges to solve, highlighting a need to keep inflation and borrowing costs down.

“Britain’s economy isn’t broken”, she said. “But I’m not satisfied. There’s more to do. Cost of living pressures are still real. — Reuters

MOVING UP

OPEC+ mulls further oil output hike



OPEC+ will discuss a possible increase in oil production at its Sunday meeting, sources said, as the group seeks to recover market share.

The move could accelerate the unwinding of an additional 1.65 million barrels per day of output cuts — about 1.6% of global demand — more than a year earlier than planned. — Reuters

NEW AMENDMENTS

Germany eases supply chain for large firms



Germany’s cabinet approved amendments to the national supply chain law on Wednesday, easing documentation requirements for larger companies.

The law, in effect since January 2023, obliges firms with over 1,000 employees to ensure their suppliers comply with human rights and environmental standards. — Reuters

OPINION

Exercise caution when lured into get-rich-quick schemes



HAIDER AL LAWATI
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The writer is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for CBO and OCCI

THE recent unfortunate instance of a scam that left a number of people defrauded of their investments continues to spark much discussion on social media, as well as in community gatherings. While the fraudsters disappeared without a trace, the victims are left lamenting their dubious investment decisions and their naivet  in falling prey to the lofty promises of the scammers.

These cases of embezzlement and other types of fraud are being reported from time to time in the wider region and indeed across the world. Invariably, the victims are ordinary people seeking quick returns, while blissful about the real intentions of the corrupt individuals or entities behind such scams.

Defrauding people of their money over the internet is not a new issue. Rather, it falls under the category of electronic fraud or financial cybercrime. It encompasses a range of illegal activities aimed at stealing people's money through fraudulent means, including phishing, where fake emails and websites ask you to enter your banking information. These platforms are often fake and

designed to scam people of their funds.

Fraud also occurs through the misuse of payment cards (credit or debit cards), notably by copying card data and using it later without the owner's knowledge. Likewise, fraud can be perpetrated through fake shopping websites, where products are offered at attractive prices and after payment is paid, nothing is shipped.

Legally, stealing money by any means is prohibited and criminalised, as such activities fall under the category of unlawful consumption of people's money, punishable by imprisonment and fines in most countries.

Accordingly, greater awareness and caution are imperative before engaging with suspicious sites, online entities and get-rich-quick type offers.

Additionally, it's important to avoid sharing banking information online and to verify the credibility of websites before purchasing from them, or investing in their products or services.

In a recent real-life example reported in Oman, investors lost their funds when they unwittingly participated in a fake investment scheme.

It's important to avoid sharing banking information online and to verify the credibility of websites before purchasing from them, or investing in their products or services

Modelled as a multilevel marketing scheme, the investors were incentivised to bring on board new customers for better earnings. As their earnings grew, they ploughed in more funds into the scheme hoping to cash in on the promise of greater rewards. But the fraudsters behind the scheme simply transferred the accumulated funds to an overseas account, leaving their victims high and dry.

Today, many people fall victim to scams often because they share their banking information, which enables fraudsters to access their accounts and transfer funds.

Those who suspect that their banking or card information is compromise should immediately change their passwords and take other precautions. At the same time, it is imperative that victims report the crimes to the relevant authorities.

Local authorities continue to issue advisories to the general public urging them to stay away from unlicensed online stores and companies. Customers are also encouraged to use approved platforms for payment, while strictly avoiding suspicious ones.

TRUMP’S TARIFFS
THREATEN TO
CHOKe EUROPEAN
CHEMICALS RECOVERY

Europe’s chemical producers are facing fresh turmoil as US import tariffs disrupt global trade, prompting customers to delay orders and hitting demand in a sector struggling to recover from the region’s 2022 energy crisis.

The European Union’s fourth-biggest exporting sector after machinery, automotive and pharmaceuticals, has been grappling in recent years with high production costs after gas and power prices soared following Russia’s war in Ukraine. That and slowing demand due to struggles in key industries have led some companies in the 655-billion euro (\$767 billion) sector to close sites and cut jobs to save costs.

US import tariffs of at least 15% on goods from the EU have hit many of the industry’s main customers, including in the automotive, machinery and consumer goods sectors. Global automakers have booked billions of dollars of losses due to the damage done by President Donald Trump’s trade war.

Third-quarter earnings at European chemical companies are expected to fall 5%, following a 22% drop in the second-quarter, according to LSEG data. “Since the energy crisis we’ve been hoping for a sustained recovery in volumes and margins in the European chemical sector”, said Thomas Schulte-Vorwick, an analyst at Metzler Research.

He said the tariffs and price and margin pressure due to stiff Asian competition at home and elsewhere made “a pretty toxic combination at the moment”.

The industry’s biggest players — notably BASF, Brenntag and Lanxess — are somewhat protected from the direct import levies due to their strong US presence but are still affected by cautious customer behaviour.

Customers are delaying orders, causing the companies which make chemicals used in everything from mattresses and car parts to chewing gum to cut or adjust annual outlooks in recent weeks.

BASF, the world’s largest chemicals maker, lowered its full-year outlook in July.

The German group said some customers were placing orders only weeks in advance — down from the usual three to four months — due to caution over the global economy in the short term.

Others, like Brenntag CEO Christian Kohlpaintner, warn that cheaper chemicals from China could flood the European market if competitors there divert exports from the US, as they face a possible surge in levies if Beijing and Washington fail to reach a deal before their tariff truce expires on November 10. — Reuters

Construction sector sees
steepest drop in 5 years

SINCE the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, work in the UK’s construction industry is contracting at a fast rate with high costs and tax rises. The sector is vital for the Labour government’s plans for a house building boom and improvements in infrastructure, with the private sector expected to boost the UK’s economic growth.

But S&P Global’s latest purchasing manager’s index (PMI) release suggests construction is suffering from a fall in residential building and civil engineering projects. The survey of about 150 companies showed another contraction in output as the PMI reading fell from 48.8 in June to 44.3 the following month. A reading of over 50 shows expansion, anything below is contraction.

Firms said site delays, lower volumes of business orders and weaker consumer confidence had dampened activity. Respondents also said there was less work being undertaken on public sector projects, which is a worrying sign for the Labour government as its committed to build motorways, power plants and railways.

S&P Global said expectations for the next year were below long-term averages, in signs the bleakness surrounding UK economic prospects was weighing on businesses.

Layoffs and drop in recruitment also saw payroll numbers continue to drop for the seventh consecutive month, though the decline in headcount was softer than in previous months.

The data follows an update from the Minerals Product Association (MPA) last month showing that demand for concrete has dropped to its lowest level since 1963, with sales down nearly 12 per cent in the three months to June. The MPA also warned that demand for other building materials such as mortar and sand also dropped to “historically low levels”.

The number of new home registrations in London has more than halved as firms shy away from building in the capital.

Just 904 new homes were registered in the second quarter of this year, down from 2,191 in the second quarter of 2024, according to the National House Building Council (NHBC). London continues to be affected by the new building safety



Respondents said there was less work being undertaken on public sector projects.



ANDY JALIL
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The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

regime for high rise buildings and low building rates from housing associations. London is “by some accounts” the most expensive city in the world to build in, according to the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Head of financial analysis at AJ Bell, Danni Hewson, said: “The news won’t be welcomed by either Rachel Reeves (Chancellor) or Angela Rayner (deputy prime minister and minister for housing and communities), both of whom want to see more houses built to alleviate affordability problems”.

He added: “Indeed, Labour are targeting 1.5 million new homes over the course of this Parliament, which might be starting to look overly ambitious.

Weak construction activity will also feed into the broader economic growth figures which determine how much wiggle room the Chancellor has come the Budget

in the autumn”. However, there are some signs the beleaguered construction industry might well be turning a corner as higher demand, higher government investment and lower interest rates could be in the offing.

Early trading updates from housebuilders Bellway and brick-maker Ibstock, plus a new report from construction firm McBains, suggest the industry is probably entering a period of recovery.

In fact, medium-term confidence is “buoyant”, according to director at McBains, Colin McCaffrey, with growth to be found in private housing, infrastructure and industrial work. Industrial and infrastructure output is set to rise by around one per cent next year, while private housing output is expected to rebound with four per cent growth in 2025 and seven per cent in 2026, according to McBains’ report.

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- Dealing with clients, managing, and monitoring of Facility management project(s)
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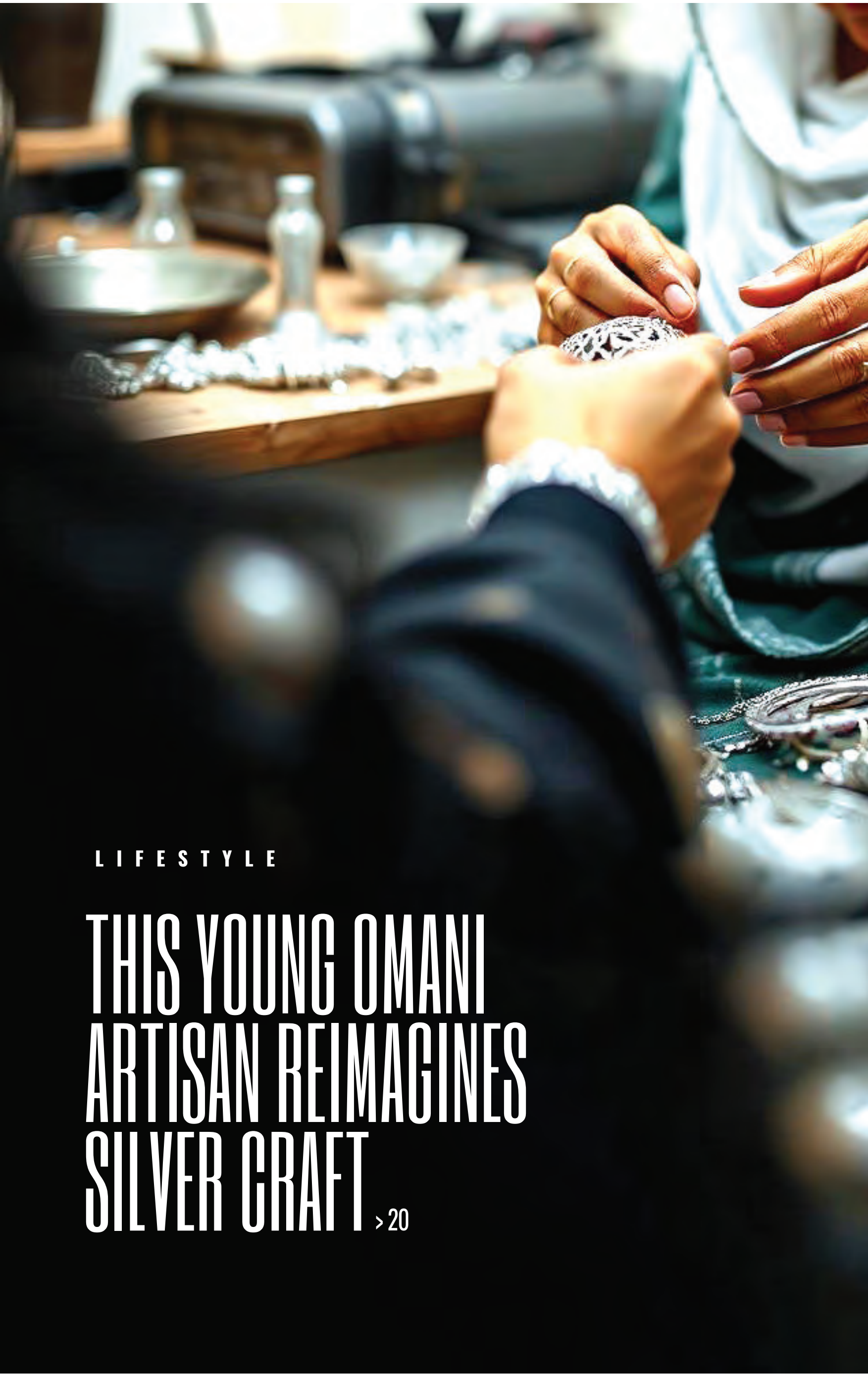
SRI LANKAN Male – (CGMA ACMA+ CPA+BBA) Asst. Finance Manager/ Chief Accountant, 12+ Experience in Oman & GCC, Expert in Finan. Reporting (MIS), VAT, Audit, Cashflow, Budget, AR AP Recon, IFRS, Payroll, Banking. Contact: 78773250. Email: [ali.mohamedown@gmail.com](#)

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L I F E S T Y L E

THIS YOUNG OMANI ARTISAN REIMAGINES SILVER CRAFT > 20

CHANGING WORLD

‘Back to School’ season is a blend of excitement and a fresh start



SHADDAD AL MUSALMY
The writer is a Senior Editor at the Oman Daily Observer.

THE START of a new school year, often referred to as the ‘Back to School’ season, is a period marked by a blend of excitement, a fresh start and renewed focus on education for pupils, teachers and families alike. It signifies the winding down of the summer break and the anticipation of new academic challenges and opportunities for growth.

The new school year is widely seen as a time of promise and new beginnings for all involved in the educational process. It offers pupils new coursework, challenges and opportunities to expand their minds and abilities.

However, the return to school also brings practical considerations and potential anxieties. There is a significant focus on safety, with reminders for pupils, parents and motorists to be mindful of increased traffic, school buses and pedestrian activity.

For pupils, key advice for a successful academic year centres on time management, discipline and embracing challenges. Effective time management, a balanced schedule and commitment to priorities can reduce stress and improve performance, helping to build healthy habits for life. During this time, many pupils struggle with schoolwork because of poor time management, underlining the need to balance academic and social activities.

The Ministry of Education continues to implement significant changes to the educational system. Qualitative shifts in curricula are underway to align with Oman Vision 2040 and the goals of digital transformation.

Oman’s educational journey has been remarkable, evolving from a limited system before 1970 — with only three formal schools and fewer than 1,000 pupils — to a comprehensive and modern educational landscape. Since then, education was declared a fundamental right, prompting a rapid expansion of schools across the country.

Today, Oman’s education system incorporates modern public and private international institutions, equipped with digital tools, science laboratories and innovative teaching methods. Oman has also invested heavily in higher education, with institutions offering programmes aligned with international standards.

The education sector is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by the nation’s Oman Vision 2040 and a strategic focus centred on economic diversification. This evolution presents substantial opportunities for investment and development, particularly in private education, digital skills and vocational training.

The new academic year in Oman is characterised by a multi-faceted approach to education, focusing on academic rigour, pupil well-being and continuous adaptation to modern educational standards and future demands.

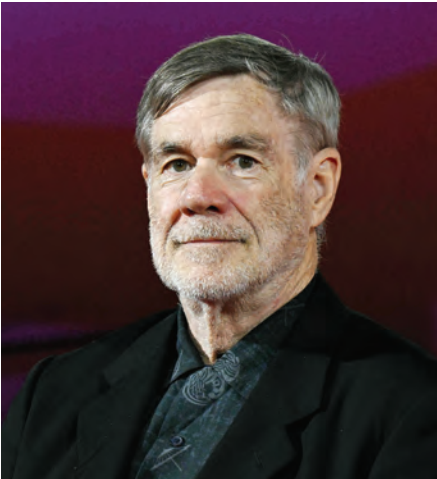
The ‘Back to School’ period in Oman signifies an important annual event, reflecting the nation’s profound educational transformation and its forward-looking vision. It is not merely about pupils returning to classrooms but embodies Oman’s commitment to educational advancement, addressing both historical challenges and contemporary needs.

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



ENTERTAINMENT

Argentine Micaela Garcia performs in the Stage Tango Style category during the World Tango Championship Final in Buenos Aires. — AFP



FILM

US film director Gus Van Sant attends the red carpet for the movie “Dead Man’s Wire” presented out of competition at the 82nd International Venice Film Festival. — AFP



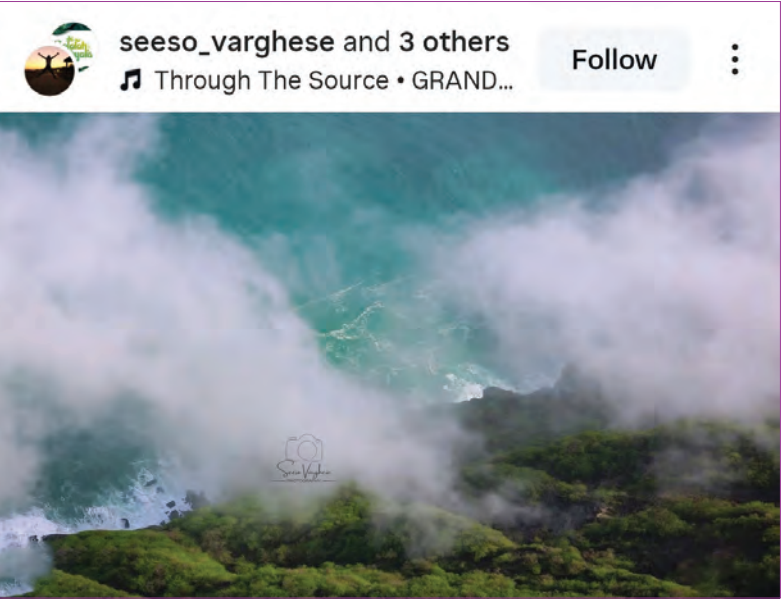
LIFESTYLE

81-year-old Madelein Mansson, aka “DJ Gloria”, performs at Josefina, an outdoor summer Lounge and Restaurant in Stockholm, Sweden. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



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Paramount to make live-action ‘Call of Duty’ movie



PARAMOUNT, the renowned Hollywood studio recently acquired by the Ellison family, a wealthy software dynasty, announced plans to develop a film based on the hugely popular “Call of Duty” video game franchise.

The announcement marks a significant step as the studio, under new leadership, aims to revitalise its storied legacy. David Ellison, son of Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison, assumed control of Paramount last month and is leading an effort to breathe new life into the historic studio, which has produced iconic films like “Top Gun” and “The Godfather”. He expressed personal excitement about the project, stating, “As a lifelong fan of ‘Call of Duty’, this is truly a dream come true”.

The “Call of Duty” series is one of the most successful gaming franchises globally, with over 500 million copies sold since its debut in 2003. The games are played monthly by more than 100 million gamers worldwide, making it a cultural

phenomenon. The franchise has released more than 30 titles, including the latest major release, “Call of Duty: Black Ops 6”, set in the 1990s, involving a mission targeting a US senator and gaining access to a secret Washington site.

The deal with Activision-Blizzard, which owns “Call of Duty”, will see Paramount “develop, produce and distribute a live-action feature film based on the franchise”, according to the studio’s statement. Specific details of the project, including its valuation, remain undisclosed. Industry sources have also suggested that this partnership could expand into more “Call of Duty” movies and television series, although nothing has been officially confirmed.

Ellison himself shared his enthusiasm, stating that his love for the franchise spans from its early “Allied campaigns” to “Black Ops” and he considers it an honour to bring this storytelling universe to the big screen. — AFP



Docu-drama gives ‘voice’ to Gaza victims at Venice film fest

A GUT-WRENCHING film premiering at the Venice Film Festival on Wednesday about a five-year-old girl killed by Israeli forces in Gaza last year gives a “voice” to Palestinian victims of the war, its director said. “The Voice of Hind Rajab” shook audiences in its first press screenings in Venice on Wednesday, leaving some critics in tears over the dramatic portrayal of real events from January 2024.

“We see that the narrative all around world is that those dying in Gaza are collateral damage, in the media”, Franco-Tunisian director Kaouther Ben Hania told reporters.

“And I think this is so dehumanising and that’s why cinema, art and every kind of expression is very important to give those people a voice and face”. Her film, a strong contender for Venice’s top prize, has support from Brad Pitt and Joachin Phoenix as well as Oscar-winning directors Jonathan Glazer (“The Zone of Interest”) and Mexico’s Alfonso Cuaron (“Roma”). All of them are credited as executive producers.

“I’m very happy and I never in my life thought that can be possible”, Ben Hania said of her A-list Hollywood backers, whom she said had joined her after the film’s editing was completed.

TRUE STORY DRAMATISED

Hind Rajab Hamada was fleeing an Israeli offensive in Gaza City with six relatives in January 2024 when their car came under fire.

Left as the sole survivor in the badly damaged vehicle, her desperate pleas for help by phone — recorded by the Red Crescent rescue service and later released — caused brief international outrage.

She was later found dead along with two Red Crescent workers who had gone to rescue her.

“The Voice of Hind Rajab” reproduces the real phone recordings in the film but tells the story through the eyes and ears of a dramatised Red Crescent team which is trying to coordinate her rescue.

“It is dramatisation but very close to what they experienced”, Ben Hania added.

“Please come to me, please come. I’m scared”, Hind Rajab can be heard sobbing repeatedly in the film while bullets fly in the background.

Hind Rajab is described as six years old in the film, but a death certificate viewed by AFP in Gaza shows her age as five.



A guest holds a portrait of late Palestinian girl Hind Rajab during the red carpet for the movie “The Voice of Hind Rajab” presented in competition at the 82nd International Venice Film Festival, at Venice Lido. — AFP

‘STOP THE WAR’

The Gaza conflict has been a major talking point at the 2025 Venice Film Festival. Thousands of protesters marched to the entrance to the event on Saturday, shouting: “Stop the genocide!” An open letter calling on festival organisers to denounce the Israeli government has gone unheeded, but has been signed by around 2,000 cinema insiders, according to the organisers.

Hind Rajab’s mother, Wissam Hamada, said she hoped the film would help end the war.

“The whole world has left us to die, to go hungry, to live in fear and to be forcibly displaced without doing anything”, Hamada said by phone from famine-hit Gaza City where she lives with her five-year-old son.

“It’s a huge betrayal”. The conflict has cost the lives of at least 63,633 Palestinians, mostly civilians, according to figures from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza the United Nations deems reliable.

Tunisia has already announced it will be entering “The Voice of Hind Rajab” in the foreign film category of the Oscars. — AFP

FEATURES



THIS YOUNG OMANI ARTISAN REIMAGINES SILVER CRAFT

However, her innate passion for art and craftsmanship led her to silversmithing classes in 2024, where she discovered her true calling. Viewing her craft as an artistic expression of the soul, Balqees creates sculpted sterling silver jewellery adorned with authentic natural gemstones, each carrying its own unique energy and story.

Oman’s tradition of silver jewellery making is centuries old, deeply embedded in the culture and social fabric of the nation. Historically, silver ornaments have been an essential part of Omani identity, worn during celebrations, ceremonies and daily life. Artisans in Oman have perfected the craft, passing down intricate techniques from generation to generation — each piece a symbol of heritage and craftsmanship.

In traditional Oman, silver jewellery often features detailed filigree work, elaborate necklaces, earrings and bangles that showcase local motifs like the Diba (traditional headgear ornament) and intricate patterns inspired by Islamic art. The craft is not just about aesthetics; it’s a story of community, identity and tradition. However, like many artisanal crafts worldwide, the art faced challenges from

modernisation and changing consumer preferences.

Today, a new generation of Omani youth is reinvigorating this ancient craft, blending age-old techniques with contemporary design sensibilities. Young artisans like Balqees are changing the narrative, investing their heritage with new meaning and relevance. They are not only preserving traditional techniques but also transforming them to appeal to global markets and modern tastes.

Balqees’s work embodies this evolution. She draws inspiration from her cultural roots, infusing her jewellery with symbols and motifs that resonate with Oman’s vibrant history. Her approach exemplifies a broader trend where young Omanis use their craft as a form of cultural expression and national pride — revitalising the tradition while making it accessible to a new generation of collectors and fashion enthusiasts.

Balqees’s journey reflects this dynamic cultural renaissance. Her craftsmanship is rooted in respect for traditional silversmithing techniques, yet her designs are fresh, expressive and rooted in contemporary art forms. She believes every gemstone she selects emanates a unique energy, turning her jewelry into not just accessories but spiritual artefacts.

“Creating art that tells a story, that carries the energy of natural gemstones, is my way of honouring my heritage while expressing my individuality”, Balqees explains. Her work resonates with the growing trend of personalised, meaningful jewelry, appealing to an international clientele seeking authenticity and craftsmanship.

As Balqees continues to carve her niche in Oman’s vibrant artisan scene, her story exemplifies the potential of young Omanis to breathe new life into age-old traditions. With her passion, talent and an unwavering connection to her roots, she hopes to elevate Oman’s silver jewellery craft onto the global stage.

In a world rushing towards homogenisation, Balqees and her fellow young artisans remind us that tradition, when reimagined with creativity and purpose, can flourish anew. Her journey is a shining example of how heritage and innovation can coexist — creating not just beautiful jewellery, but a legacy for future generations.

For those interested in exploring her work or commissioning a piece, Balqees is available at 92938392 or via email at balqees_mkw@hotmail.com.

LIJU CHERIAN

A NEW WAVE of artistic expression is emerging in Muscat — one that intricately weaves tradition with contemporary flair. At the heart of this movement is Balqees al Wahaibi, a burgeoning silver jewellery artist whose work is not only a testament to her creative spirit but also a mirror reflecting Oman’s rich cultural heritage.

Balqees’s journey into the luminous world of silver jewellery began unexpectedly. With a background in process operation and maintenance engineering from the renowned National University of Science and Technology, she initially pursued a career rooted in science and technology.