

OMAN
Observer
DAILY

IS ANGER YOUR ENEMY

VOL. 45, NO. 3
PAGES 20 BAISAS 200

SUNRISE 06:22 AM
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ASR 03:04 PM
MAGHRIB 05:26 PM
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INBRIEF

OIA delivers 14 national projects worth RO 450m

HM’S CONDOLENCES TO IRAQI PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, has sent a cable of condolences to President Dr Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid, of the sisterly Republic of Iraq, on the death of his brother, Shahmal Jamal Rashid. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere condolences to the President, praying to Allah the Almighty to grant him mercy and forgiveness and to dwell him in Paradise.

OMAN, PAKISTAN DISCUSS RELATIONS

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, received a telephone call from Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on Saturday. They discussed the existing friendship and cooperation relations between the two countries and exchanged views on a number of regional developments of common interest.

NATIONAL DAY CUP

The Oman Equestrian Federation organised the National Day Horse Race on Saturday at the Rahba Racecourse in the Wilayat of Barka, as part of the federation's celebrations of the country's national occasion. The event attracted strong participation from stables, horse owners and jockeys, alongside notable public attendance. The race was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Namir bin Majid al Said, who crowned the winners at the end of the competition. **DETAILS ON P10**

MUSCAT: In conjunction with Oman's National Day celebrations and in reaffirmation of its commitment to turning national development goals into tangible achievements, Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has announced the completion of 14 landmark national projects valued at over RO 450 million. Spanning across the Sultanate of Oman, the projects open new horizons for growth and contribute to strengthening the national economy. Together, they are set to create around 1,350 new jobs for Omanis and cover vital sectors including food security, manufacturing and water. Mulham bin Basheer al Jarf, Deputy President for Investments at OIA, said that the 14 projects represent the outcome of OIA's strategy to contribute to economic diversification and support priority sectors in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. OIA plays a pivotal role in stimulating economic growth through the implementation of strategic projects conducted by its companies and in partnership with the private sector. These projects aim to strengthen the business environment, expand investment opportunities across the governorates and promote balanced regional development. Al Jarf added that the distribution of these projects across several governorates reflects OIA's commitment to decentralisation and its focus on directing investments to achieve geographic balance in development. **DETAILS ON P13**

UN Security Council still divided over Gaza move

Bodies of 15 Palestinians received under truce deal

THE United States and Russia have submitted rival draft resolutions on the Gaza conflict to the UN Security Council, setting up a confrontation among the council's veto powers as diplomats said a vote could take place as early as next week. The US draft seeks to secure President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan. "We urge the Security Council to seize this historic moment to pave a path towards enduring peace in the Middle East by supporting this resolution," the US mission to the United Nations said in a statement on Thursday. "Attempts to sow discord now" would have grave consequences for the population in Gaza. Egypt, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Türkiye have publicly backed the US draft. Russia, however, has introduced its own resolution, which includes recognising Palestine as a state. China has signalled it is prepared to support the Russian draft. Russia, China and the US all hold veto power in the council — meaning any resolution they vote against cannot be adopted.

Palestinians gather as they take shelter in tents in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, on Saturday. — Reuters

Last week, the Group of Seven (G7) leading democracies pushed for a UN Security Council mandate to ensure swift implementation of the Gaza peace plan. The Security Council has repeatedly been divided over the conflict in recent years. Meanwhile, the health ministry in Gaza confirmed on Saturday it had received the bodies of 15 Palestinians the day before under the US-brokered ceasefire exchange deal. "The Ministry of Health announces the receipt of 15 bodies of martyrs who were released yesterday, Friday, by the Israeli occupation through the Red Cross. This brings the total number of bodies received to 330," as part of the deal, the ministry said, adding it had so far identified 97. They were returned in exchange for the remains of 73-year-old Israeli captive Meny Godard, which Hamas returned via the Red Cross on Thursday. — Agencies

Climate protesters rally in Brazil at COP30 halfway mark

BELEM, Brazil: Thousands of people marched through the streets of Belem on Saturday to press for action from negotiators holding tough talks at the UN's COP30 climate conference in the Amazonian city. Under a baking sun, Indigenous people mixed with activists gathered in a festive atmosphere, blasting music from speakers, carrying a giant beach ball of Earth and holding a flag of Brazil emblazoned with the words "Protected Amazon." It was the first major

protest outside the annual climate talks since COP26 four years ago in Glasgow. Branded the "Great People's March" by organisers, the Belem rally comes at the halfway point of contentious negotiations and follows two Indigenous-led protests that disrupted proceedings earlier in the week. "Today we are witnessing a massacre as our forest is being destroyed," Benedito Huni Kuin, a member of the Huni Kuin Indigenous group from western Brazil, said. "We want to make our

A person holds a placard during a climate-justice activists' march during the ongoing UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Brazil, in Glasgow, Scotland, Britain, on Saturday. — Reuters

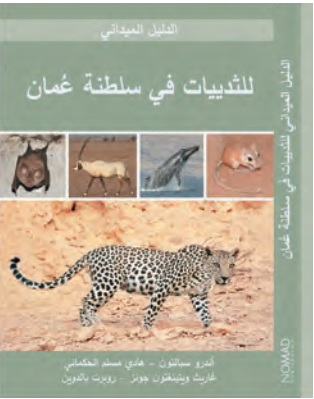
voices heard from the Amazon and demand results," he said. Tyrone Scott, a 31-year-old Briton from the anti-poverty group War on Want, said it was an "Indigenous-led, movement-led, people-powered march." Their demands include "reparations" for damage caused by corporations and governments, especially to marginalised communities. Inside the venue, talks are delicately poised. At the close of the first week of negotiations, the Brazilian presidency of COP30 is expected to unveil its strategy on Saturday for reconciling countries' demands. The top issues include how to address weak climate goals and how to improve financial flows from rich to poor countries to build resilience against a warming world and transition to low-emission economies. So-called trade barriers have emerged as a key contention, as has the issue of whether to set timelines and targets for the transition away from fossil fuels. — AFP

OMAN

SHORT TAKES

Royal Court unveils comprehensive guide on Oman’s mammals

MUSCAT: The Royal Court has released a new book titled ‘Field Guide to Mammals in the Sultanate of Oman’, a landmark addition to Omani environmental literature. The publication documents the country’s diverse wildlife with scientific precision and field-based insight, reflecting the Sultanate’s commitment to fostering environmental research and promoting a culture of sustainability in line with Oman Vision 2040. The guide offers an extensive scientific record of both terrestrial and marine mammals found across Oman. It blends rigorous research with field observation, highlighting each species’



The book is titled ‘Field Guide to Mammals in the Sultanate of Oman’

distribution, behaviour and reproductive patterns. The book also includes practical tips for identifying species through field markers and understanding their ecological impact. Richly illustrated with photographs, drawings, and maps, the guide serves as both a visual and scientific

reference for researchers, students, and nature enthusiasts.

Structured into seven chapters, the book captures Oman’s ecological diversity — from the rugged Al Hajar Mountains in the north and the sandy plains of the interior to the lush Dhofar Mountains in the south. It also explores the role of nature reserves in protecting biodiversity, classifies mammal species, and offers field techniques for observation and tracking. The concluding chapters are devoted to terrestrial and marine mammals, showcasing their habitats and ecological importance.

Published in both Arabic and English, the Field Guide aims to raise environmental awareness and strengthen Oman’s reputation as a regional model for wildlife conservation and sustainable natural resource management. — ONA



The book is a bilingual publication documenting half a century of friendship and cooperation between the two nations

Oman launches book on 50 years of South Korea ties

SEOUL: The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in the Republic of Korea launched The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Korea: Fifty Years of Diplomatic Relations, a bilingual publication documenting half a century of friendship and cooperation between the two nations.

Ambassador Zakaria bin Hamad al Saadi praised the enduring ties, saying the book “embodies the history of cooperation and the spirit of friendship that brought the two peoples together,” and expressed hope for another fifty years of fruitful collaboration. HE Lee Kyung chul, Senior Representative for UN Security Council Affairs at Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the initiative, highlighting the embassy’s role in deepening mutual understanding.

The book features six chapters, including messages from senior officials, a review of political and historical relations, accounts from ambassadors, cultural and creative exchanges in arts, media and education, and contributions from companies fostering bilateral cooperation.

The launch was attended by senior officials from Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of the diplomatic corps, cultural and media figures, business representatives and journalists. — ONA

Sohar University hosts third ALECSO Forum

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

SOHAR University hosted the Third ALECSO Forum on the Twinning of Arab Universities under the theme ‘The Productive University.’ The two-day forum is organised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in cooperation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and attended by Prof Dr Mohamed Ould Amar, Director-General of ALECSO, alongside a number of dignitaries, university presidents, experts, and academics from various Arab and international institutions.

The forum brings together 36 experts and academics from 16 countries, including Oman, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Germany, Slovenia, Singapore and Spain. Participants presented research papers, case studies, and discussion sessions exploring the future of higher education, innovation, and the evolving role of universities as drivers of knowledge economies.

In her opening address, Dr Rahma underlined that the concept of the productive university rests on an educational strategy that responds to societal needs and global challenges. “It seeks to bridge the gap between academia and the labour market, linking theory with practice and developing students’ critical thinking and problem-



The forum brought together 36 experts and academics from 16 countries

“A productive university not only graduates qualified talent but also generates knowledge, transfers technology, and provides innovative solutions to national and global challenges”

DR MOHAMED OULD AMAR

solving skills,” she stated.

Professor Dr Amar stressed that adopting the “productive university” model transforms universities into engines of economic and social development. “A productive university not only graduates qualified talent but also generates knowledge, transfers technology, and provides innovative solutions to national and global challenges,” he said, adding that this model enhances global university rankings through stronger research output, patents and partnerships.

Prof Dr Mohamed Sand Abu Darwish, Chair of the Forum’s Scientific Committee and Director of Science and Research at ALECSO, concluded the opening session by noting the global transformation

in the role of universities—from traditional academic institutions into dynamic engines of knowledge economies and influential soft power actors shaping public policy and innovation.

On the sidelines of the event, several academic and research cooperation agreements were signed, reflecting ALECSO’s ongoing efforts to advance higher education in the Arab world and Sohar University’s commitment to fostering research excellence and knowledge production.

The initiative also aligns with the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which aspires to build a sustainable, knowledge-based economy driven by innovation, partnerships and human capital development.

Maritime buffer reserve to protect natural resources

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority (EA) said that the Royal Decree establishing a new nature reserve in the Dhofar Governorate, named the Maritime Buffer Zone Reserve Around Al Hallaniyat Islands, is a step towards enhancing the Sultanate of Oman’s environmental position regionally and internationally. It is part of the environmental protection system and the preservation of marine biodiversity and is also in line with Oman Vision 2040.

The EA said that efforts are underway to implement the Royal Decree in coordination with the relevant authorities to ensure its provisions are carried out and the objectives of establishing the reserve are achieved.

The Royal Decree reflects the Sultanate of Oman’s unwavering commitment to protecting its natural resources and preserving its unique environmental heritage, in accordance with its obligations under international and regional agreements.

It also reinforces the Sultanate of Oman’s environmental standing and underscores its forward-looking vision for safeguarding its natural heritage for future generations as well as enhancing the environmental progress witnessed in the Sultanate of Oman under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The new reserve encompasses the Al Hallaniyat Islands, formerly known as the Khuriya Muriya islands, is located in the northeastern part of the Dhofar



The new reserve encompasses the Al Hallaniyat Islands and is located in the northeastern part of Dhofar

The reserve is a habitat for marine mammals with various species of whales and dolphins frequently observed in the waters surrounding the islands

Governorate. It comprises the Al Hallaniyat maritime archipelago, encompassing five islands namely Al Sawda, Birds Island, Al Hasikiyah, Al Qibliya and Al Hallaniyat which is the largest island. The reserve surrounds four of these islands: Al Sawda, Al Hasikiyah, Al Qibliyah and Al Hallaniyat.

The EA explained that the reserve’s boundaries extend from the highest tide point on each island’s shores to a distance of 5 kilometres into the sea. The reserve covers an area of approximately

667 square kilometres and is characterised by its vast topography, spanning deserts, highlands, springs, bays and beaches. It is known for its birds, sheep, rare sea turtles and large fish.

The EA noted that this reserve represents a valuable addition to the network of nature reserves in the Sultanate of Oman. It possesses unique environmental characteristics that make it a natural marine treasure.

It also contains diverse ecosystems including coral reefs in shallow waters, sandy beaches and deep-sea areas rich in marine flora and fauna.

The reserve is a habitat for marine mammals with various species of whales and dolphins frequently observed in the waters surrounding the islands.

The islands also provide predator-free areas suitable for nesting and breeding attracting both resident and migratory seabirds, it said.

The EA explained that the number of nature reserves in Dhofar Governorate has increased to 13, representing diverse environments, thus enhancing the representation of all natural environments in the governorate.

The reserve opens up opportunities for collaboration with research and tourism entities to develop monitoring programmes, environmental education and sustainable tourism initiatives while maintaining a balance between environmental protection goals and the sustainability of economic activities. — ONA



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SHORTTAKES



The Arab Scout Conference runs until November 21

OMAN AT 31ST ARAB SCOUT CONFERENCE IN ABU DHABI

ABU DHABI: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, is taking part in the 31st Arab Scout Conference in Abu Dhabi, running until November 21.

The event, hosted by the UAE Scout Association, included the sixth Arab Scout Youth Forum, addressing issues such as peace-building, climate change, social inclusion, sustainable development, and youth participation in policy-making.

Oman's Dawood bin Musabbeh al Amri was elected Vice-President of the Arab Scout Youth Forum for 2025–2028, while Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Zadjali joined the Arab Scout Youth Advisory Committee for the same term.

The forum promotes youth involvement in scouting decisions, sustainable development initiatives, training programmes, and exchanges between Arab scouting associations, with workshops highlighting youth empowerment and digital transformation in scouting. — ONA



The session brought together experts to examine ways to rebuild relationships in today's fast-paced, digitally-driven world

UTAS-MUSANNAH DISCUSSES LOST RELATIONSHIPS

AL MUSANNAH: The Student Affairs Centre at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS)-Musannah recently organised a panel discussion on 'The Lost Relationships Among Individuals: Causes of Human Detachment and Ways to Restore Communication', addressing the rising issue of social isolation and the breakdown of meaningful human connection.

The session brought together experts to examine the causes, effects, and practical ways to rebuild relationships in today's fast-paced, digitally-driven world. The discussion featured three main themes, namely, The Nature of Lost Relationships presented by Ruqaya al Rashidi, Head, Counselling and Guidance Department at UTAS-Musannah.

Causes of Relationship Loss addressed by Dr Khalfan al Busaidy, Head of the Family Development Section at the Social Development Department in Barka. Psychological and Social Impact of Relationship Loss explored by Dr Hilal al Kharousi, Lecturer in Psychological Counselling and Guidance. The session was moderated by Haitham bin Salim al Zadjali, presenter at the Youth Channel, who created an engaging atmosphere.

OMAN WELCOMES GULF FILM FESTIVAL 2025

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, NOV 15

The Sultanate of Oman will host the 2025 edition of the Gulf Film Festival from November 16 to 19 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), bringing together movie enthusiasts and film-making experts from across the region, the Oman Film Society (OFS) announced.

Organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the festival aligns with the GCC

Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 and will showcase 26 films from across the Gulf, while presenting awards in nine categories including Best Feature Film, Best Short Film, and Best Documentary.

"The Gulf Film Festival aims to promote regional cinema, foster collaboration, and celebrate the shared cinematic identity of the Gulf region. This event is a valuable opportunity for Omani talent to shine alongside regional experts, reinforcing Oman's presence in the Gulf's cinematic

landscape," said Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi, Chairman of the OFS.

Omani film-makers were invited to submit films produced within the last two years and subtitled in English, and the response was overwhelming, the chairman added. Participants will compete for awards in various categories, including Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Original Score and Best Actor and Actress, with financial prizes for all winners.



Nama unveils Al Shikhaikhat Water Network in Barka

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
BARKA, NOV 15

UNDER the auspices of Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Nama Water Services officially inaugurated the Al Shikhaikhat Renewed Water Network in the Wilayat of Barka on Thursday.

The ceremony, held near the Seeb wastewater treatment and reclaimed water production plant, was attended by dignitaries, farmers and beneficiaries.

Valued at over RO 2 million, the first phase of the project includes more than 40 kilometres of pipelines, ranging from 63 mm to 500 mm in diameter, supplying reclaimed water to 40 farms. By the inauguration, Nama had already received over 100 new connection requests, reflecting growing confidence in reclaimed water as a reliable agricultural resource.

Aligned with Oman Vision 2040, the initiative supports environmental sustainability, boosts agricultural productivity, and reduces pressure on groundwater, providing high-quality water for modern farming practices across the governorates. "Our treated water will now support farmers, ensuring food security and bolstering the agricultural sector of Oman," said Qais bin Saud al Zakwani, CEO of Nama Water Services.

Phase one also marks a major step in Nama's digital transformation journey. The renewed water network is fully integrated



Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi officially inaugurated the Al Shikhaikhat Renewed Water Network in Barka. PHOTO BY FAISAL AL BALUSHI

with the central SCADA system, enabling real-time monitoring, while smart metres offer beneficiaries a seamless digital experience via the Nama Water mobile app.

Nama unveiled its new reclaimed water brand, Manhal Nama, symbolising sustainability, innovation and renewal. The logo features a green leaf representing growth and a purple leaf for innovation.

The project lays the foundation for future expansion across Al Batinah North and along

the Al Batinah Expressway, while plans are underway for interconnecting wastewater treatment plants and constructing a reclaimed water transmission line between Nizwa and Manah by mid-2026.

Nama Water Services affirmed that the initiative strengthens its role as a national partner in Oman's water sustainability goals, promoting the circular economy and supporting agricultural and economic development across Oman.

Oman commits to cultural heritage protection

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman joins the world in marking the International Day against Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property, observed annually on November 14.

The occasion underscores the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage from illegal trade and highlights the need for precautionary measures and international cooperation to curb this global challenge. The illicit trafficking of cultural property is a cross-border issue that demands solidarity, expertise exchange, and coordinated efforts among nations.

Oman boasts a rich and diverse repository of tangible



cultural heritage, encompassing immovable assets such as castles, forts, archaeological landmarks, and unique geological sites, alongside movable artefacts including pottery, flint vessels, coins, seals, meteorites and other ancient relics.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) reaffirmed that tangible heritage represents



the civilisational and human identity of nations. Illegal trade in such heritage, it noted, has serious consequences, eroding national identity and leading to the loss of invaluable cultural assets.

To safeguard Oman's cultural legacy, the ministry has launched several initiatives — from public awareness campaigns and capacity-

building programmes to the development of preventive measures against theft, smuggling and unauthorised sales. It also maintains regular coordination with international organisations through meetings and workshops.

In line with Royal Decree No 35/2019, which regulates the management and sustainability of cultural heritage, the ministry established the Omani Cultural Heritage Register.

The register — supported by an electronic platform and mobile application — allows citizens, museums and institutions to record cultural items in their possession.

— ONA

SPOTLIGHT

IS ANGER YOUR ENEMY

HAVE YOU ever lost your temper over something trivial — a delayed message, a noisy street, or someone overtaking you off in traffic? It happens to all of us. But if such moments are becoming part of your daily routine, maybe it's time to ask yourself honestly: Am I becoming a short-tempered person? In today's fast-paced world, irritation has almost become part of our emotional DNA.

Our devices, meant to make life easier, have instead become new sources of irritation. From late-night messages to endless scrolling through heated debates online, the digital world keeps our minds wired for constant reaction.

With constant pressure from work, endless notifications on our phones, and the rush to keep up with life, anger seems to have found an easy way into our everyday behavior.

According to clinical psychologist Dr Hanaa Mohammed, anger is often misunderstood. "It doesn't always show in shouting or harsh words. Sometimes it hides behind silence, restlessness, or emotional withdrawal," she explains.

For many, irritability is not simply a personality trait. It's a reflection of internal tension, a mix of past experiences, stress, and personal expectations.

Some people grow up in households where anger is the only language of expression — and without realising it, they carry that habit into adulthood.

PRESSURES OF MODERN LIFE

But others become short-tempered because of the pressures of modern life. "We live in an age of over-stimulation," says Dr Mohammed "There's no room to pause, to breathe, or to process emotions. So, the smallest inconvenience becomes the spark that sets off a bigger reaction." Occasional frustration is normal. But when irritability becomes your default response, it slowly shapes your personality — and not for the better. Chronic anger wears you out, physically and emotionally. Studies show that constant exposure to stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline increases the risk of heart problems, sleeplessness and anxiety.

She says that the human body isn't

designed to stay in a state of tension. Anger, when frequent, keeps your system on high alert. You're fighting invisible battles all day, and that drains your energy and focus." What starts as a quick reaction can eventually affect relationships, work performance, and even self-esteem. People begin to avoid you — not because they dislike you, but because they fear your unpredictability.

Many people start their mornings checking their phones before even greeting their families. They absorb stress, comparison, and negativity before the day even begins. That's emotional overload disguised as routine. In a world obsessed with instant replies and quick results, patience feels outdated.

And when expectations aren't met, frustration finds its way out — often louder than it should.

Managing anger doesn't mean pretending to be calm. It means understanding your triggers and responding, not reacting.

Doctors suggest a simple yet powerful approach: When you feel that rush of irritation, pause. Ask yourself: What exactly am I angry about? Is it this situation, or something deeper that's been building up?" That moment of awareness — even a few seconds — can change the entire outcome of a conversation. Other small adjustments help too: taking short walks, listening to calming music, or even stepping away from your phone when you feel overwhelmed.

"Anger isn't the enemy. It's a message from your mind and body that something inside you needs attention. Listen to that message instead of fighting it." Being short-tempered doesn't make you a bad person — it simply means you care, you feel, and you react. But letting that emotion define you is a choice.



Anger isn't the enemy. It's a message from your mind and body that something inside you needs attention. Listen to that message instead of fighting it.

DR HANAA MOHAMMED,
Clinical psychologist

Sleep well – fatigue makes you more reactive

Move your body – exercise releases built-up tension

Watch caffeine intake – it can heighten stress responses

Disconnect regularly – not every message needs an instant reply

Breathe – slow, deep breaths calm the nerves instantly

WORLD

WAR-TORN COUNTRY



Sudanese refugees queue to fill jerrycans with water at Oure Cassoni camp in Chad. — AFP

MORE THAN HALF OF SUDAN NEEDS HUMANITARIAN AID

CAIRO: More than half of Sudan’s population is in need of humanitarian aid, the head of the Danish Refugee Council said, as fighting ravages the northeast African nation. Since breaking out in April 2023, the war between Sudan’s army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced nearly 12 million and triggered one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.

“We see a situation where more than 30 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. That is half of the population of Sudan,” Danish Refugee Council Secretary General Charlotte Slente said this week after a visit to a border region in neighbouring Chad. “The suffering we see is unimaginable.” Sudan had a population of around 50 million people in 2024, according to the World Bank.

The aid official’s comments came after a field visit to an area in Chad that borders Sudan’s western Darfur region, which has seen fierce fighting of late. Violence has escalated dramatically in recent weeks, with the RSF seizing control of the key town of El-Fasher — the army’s last stronghold in Darfur — after an 18-month siege and reports of atrocities multiplying. “There are violations that cross all international humanitarian laws,” she added.

Slente said the NGO had seen evidence of mass killings and violence in Sudan. “We see detentions, we see abductions, forced displacement and torture,” she said. She accused the international community of not doing enough. “Statements have a very limited impact both on the ongoing humanitarian needs on the ground, and they have not been able to stop the violence,” she said. She warned that there were other cities still under siege that were not receiving the same level of attention.

The town of Babanusa, the last army stronghold in West Kordofan state, has been under siege for several months, as have North Kordofan state capital El-Obeid and South Kordofan’s Kadugli and Dilling. “The international community must stop managing the consequences of this conflict and must start preventing the atrocities,” said Slente.

The UN Human Rights Council ordered investigators to probe alleged atrocities in Sudan’s El-Fasher and to seek to identify perpetrators so they can be brought to justice.

The United Nations’ top rights body adopted a resolution ordering the UN’s independent fact-finding mission on Sudan to urgently investigate violations in El-Fasher.

The text also called on the investigative team to “identify, where possible” suspected perpetrators in a bid to ensure they are “held accountable”. The decision came at the end of a special session called to address the situation in El-Fasher, amid mounting warnings of crimes against humanity and the risk of genocide.

“Bloodstains on the ground in El-Fasher have been photographed from space,” UN rights chief Volker Turk warned as he opened Friday’s session. “The stain on the record of the international community is less visible but no less damaging.” British ambassador Kumar Iyer insisted that “the scale and severity of the crisis in Sudan can no longer be met with silence”. — AFP

CONGO, M23 SIGN FRAMEWORK FOR PEACE, MORE STEPS NEEDED

DOHA: The Democratic Republic of Congo and the M23 rebel group signed a framework agreement for a peace deal aimed at ending fighting in eastern Congo that has killed thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands more this year. The agreement was signed by representatives from both sides at a ceremony in the Qatari capital Doha.

It was the latest of several documents that have been signed in recent months as part of efforts,

backed by the United States and Qatar, to end the decades-long conflict in Congo that has often threatened to escalate into a full-blown regional war. The framework was described by US and Qatari officials as an important step to peace but one of many that lie ahead.

The top US envoy to the region, Massad Boulos said the framework covered eight protocols, and that work still needed to be done to agree on how to implement six of

them. Boulos also acknowledged that implementing the first two protocols concerning the exchange of prisoners and the monitoring of a ceasefire, agreed in recent months, had been slow.

“Yes, they were a little bit slow in the first few weeks,” he told reporters after the signing. “Yes, people were expecting to see probably some immediate results on the ground, but this is a process... This is not a light switch that you just switch on and off.” — Reuters

EU considers training 3,000 Palestinian officers from Gaza

EUROPEAN Union foreign ministers will discuss next week a proposal for the bloc to take the lead in training 3,000 Palestinian police officers with the aim of later deploying them in Gaza, according to a document. In a paper produced by the bloc’s diplomatic arm ahead of the gathering of ministers on November 20, officials outlined options for contributing to the implementation of a 20-point plan for Gaza proposed by US President Donald Trump. Israel and Palestinian group Hamas agreed in October to the first phase of the blueprint, but the implementation of further parts of the deal remains highly uncertain.

In the document, the European External Action Service outlined proposals to expand the bloc’s two civilian missions in the region, which focus on border assistance and supporting the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) policing and justice reforms. The EU’s police support mission could “take leadership in training the Palestinian police force in Gaza by providing direct training and support to approx. 3,000 Palestinian police officers (on the PA pay-roll) from Gaza, with a view to training the full 13,000 Palestinian police force,” it said.

The paper also raises the idea of expanding the EU’s civilian border monitoring mission in Rafah to other border crossing points. But prospects for the EU moving ahead with these initiatives are unclear. Russia on Thursday proposed its own draft of a UN resolution on Gaza in a challenge to a US effort to



Palestinian kids take shelter in their tents, in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip. — Reuters

In the document, the European External Action Service outlined proposals to expand the bloc’s two civilian missions in the region, which focus on border assistance and supporting the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) policing and justice reforms

pass its own text that would endorse President Trump’s plan. Meanwhile, Indonesia has trained up to 20,000 troops to take on health and construction-related tasks during a planned peacekeeping operation in the war-torn enclave of Gaza, the defence minister said.

The world’s most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia is among the countries with which the United States has discussed plans for a multinational stabilisation force in Gaza, which include Azerbaijan, Egypt and Qatar.

Last week, media reported a draft readied by Washington for such a force that would authorise it to “use all necessary measures” to demilitarise Gaza, secure its borders, protect civilians and aid delivery, and support a newly trained Palestinian police force.

Indonesia says there is no decision yet on when troops will be deployed and what mandate

they will have, underscoring the uncertainty over establishing an international presence in Gaza. “We’ve prepared a maximum of 20,000 troops, but the specifications will revolve around health and construction,”

Defence Minister Sjafrie Sjamssoeddin told reporters. “We are waiting for further decisions on Gaza peace action.”

” President Prabowo Subianto and Jordan’s King Abdullah, who is making a state visit to Indonesia from Friday, would discuss the initiative of US President Donald Trump, he added.

If there was a United Nations resolution, Prabowo told the U.N. General Assembly in September, Indonesia was prepared to deploy 20,000 or more troops in Gaza to help secure peace. Indonesia would require a UN Security Council mandate to participate, Foreign Minister Sugiono said. — Reuters



HUGE EXPLOSIONS ROCK NEAR ARGENTINA 'S CAPITAL

EZEIZA: Powerful explosions tore through an industrial park near Argentina’s capital, sparking a huge blaze and injuring more than 20 people. Thick billows of black smoke rose hundreds of metres into the night sky, illuminated orange from the massive blaze, as observed by reporters near the site, which is close to the country’s busiest international airport just outside Buenos Aires.

“The explosions and fire breaking out in the different factories are huge,” said Gaston Granados, mayor of Ezeiza, the area where the site is located. “We are trying to control (the fire) and extinguish it but have not been able to so far,” he said on C5N television, adding that the windows of his own nearby house had been shattered and that they were evacuating families from the area. Hospital director Carlos Santoro said his facility had received 22 injured patients. Firefighters were still battling to put out the fire early on Saturday, local media reported, after authorities earlier warned it would be challenging to bring the blaze under control. — AFP

ACCIDENTAL EXPLOSION

Blast kills 9 at Kashmir police station



Nine people were killed and 31 were injured when confiscated explosives accidentally blew up at a police station in Indian-administered Kashmir. Samples from the recovered material were being sent for further forensic examination and the procedure was being handled with utmost caution due to its unstable and sensitive nature. The victims included police personnel, forensic team members, photographers and administrators. — AFP

HEAVY RAINFALL

Toll from Indonesia landslide rises to 11



A landslide on Indonesia’s Java island has killed at least 11 people, an official said, updating a previous tally as rescuers scrambled to find 12 others who are still missing. The landslide, caused by heavy rainfall, hit three villages in Central Java province, burying some houses and damaging others. More than 700 personnel from the search and rescue office, military and police as well as volunteers were involved in the operation. — AFP

SURGE IN PRICES

Nepal extends registration ahead of polls



Nepal announced a five-day extension in voter registration for the first elections since anti-corruption protests toppled the government earlier this year. “There has been enthusiastic participation. We have extended the deadline to ensure no eligible voter is left out,” Election Commission spokesman Narayan Prasad Bhattarai said. The vote follows deadly protests, spearheaded by young people under the loose “Gen Z” umbrella title. — AFP

The New York Times



JIN YU YOUNG

The author reports on South Korea, the Asia Pacific region and global breaking news

AI cheating rattles top universities in South Korea

MANY college students in South Korea are enjoying downtime, relieved to wrap up midterm exams. But the nation's elite universities have been left scrambling after it emerged that testing season was marred by a spate of mass cheating incidents involving artificial intelligence. One high profile incident, at Yonsei University in Seoul, became public on Sunday. Local news media reported that a professor had found that dozens of students may have cheated by using textbooks, computer programmes or even ChatGPT during an online midterm examination for a course on ChatGPT. Hundreds of undergraduates took the test, and 40 of them admitted to cheating, the school said. Within days, similar episodes of mass cheating emerged at two other top-tier schools in South Korea — Seoul National University and Korea University, which also said students had used AI to cheat on recent tests. Collectively, the colleges are known by the acronym SKY, which is also a nod to their status in the hyper-competitive world of Korean education. While the questionable use of artificial intelligence in colleges is becoming widespread, it is rare for a nation's most prestigious universities to simultaneously be embroiled in AI scandals. Education is still seen as a driver of social mobility in South Korea, which has one of the highest proportions of college graduates among developed countries. For most students, the goal is to secure a spot at the SKY schools. To do that, they need a top score on an

eight-hour college entrance exam testing their knowledge of Korean, math, English and other subjects. On Thursday, more than 500,000 high school seniors in South Korea sat for the exam, a decades-old tradition that disrupts the rhythm of the entire nation. Flights are grounded, construction is halted and traffic restrictions are enforced, and the public is urged to keep noise at a minimum so the students can concentrate. In recent years, AI has become entrenched in higher education. More than 90 per cent of South Korean college students who have some experience with generative AI said they used those tools on school assignments, according to a 2024 survey by the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training. Some educators say colleges have failed to keep pace. "AI is a tool for retaining and organising information so we can no longer evaluate college students on those skills," said Park Joo-Ho, a professor of education at Hanyang University. Since students are already using AI, he added, they should instead be tested on their creativity, something AI cannot replicate. "The current method of education is already out of date," he said. Yonsei students taking the "Natural Language Processing and ChatGPT" class were forbidden from using AI for the Oct. 15 midterm. It was administered online, and test-takers were told to keep their laptop cameras on so proctors could monitor them. After examining the camera footage, a professor said he found evidence of dozens

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of students cheating. They will be given a zero in the test, the school said. On a separate occasion, students at Yonsei were caught sharing test answers on a phone app that uses AI, the school said. "It's inevitable that AI will affect our education," said Ju Yuntae, an undergraduate at Yonsei who is studying physical education. He said he used ChatGPT to find research papers and for help with translating between English and Korean. "But if students break a pact with their professors to refrain from using it," he said, "then it is a matter of trust and a bigger issue." That covenant also appears to have been broken at Korea University in Seoul. Several students admitted to using AI during an online test last month for a class about aging societies, a university spokesperson said, after one student reported that some had used a group chat to share recordings of their screens and answers throughout the test. Those students will be given a score of zero, the spokesperson said. In a statement on Wednesday, Seoul National University said that it had discovered that students used AI to cheat in a statistics exam, but did not disclose further details. The exam will be given again, the university said. In recent years, these schools have set forth some AI guidelines. Korea University has an 82-page guidebook that states that "unauthorised use or submission of AI-generated content is considered academic misconduct." Yonsei's rules declare that using AI to "generate the quintessential and creative output of research is prohibited."

Trump escalates pressure on Venezuela with unclear endgame



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THE Trump administration is rapidly escalating its pressure campaign against Venezuela, with America's largest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R Ford, about to take up a position within striking distance of the country, even as President Donald Trump's aides provide conflicting accounts of what, exactly, they are seeking to achieve. Trump held back-to-back days of meetings at the White House over the past two days, reviewing military options, including the use of Special Operations forces and direct action inside Venezuela. It is still not clear whether Trump has made a decision about what kind of action to authorise, if any. On Friday, he told reporters on Air Force One that "I sort of made up my mind." "I can't tell you what it is," he said, "but we made a lot of progress with Venezuela in terms of stopping drugs from pouring in." It is possible Trump is relying on the arrival of so much firepower to intimidate the government of Nicolás Maduro, who the United States and many of its allies say is not Venezuela's legitimate president. Maduro has put his forces on high alert, leaving the two countries with their weapons cocked and ready for war. There were signs that the administration was moving into a new and more aggressive posture. Shortly after a meeting on Thursday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth posted on social media that the mission in the Caribbean now had a name — "Southern Spear." He described its goal in expansive terms, saying the operation "removes narco-terrorists from our Hemisphere." "The Western Hemisphere is America's neighbourhood," he wrote, "and we will protect it." With the arrival of the Ford and three accompanying missile-firing Navy destroyers, there are now 15,000 troops in the region, more than there have been at any



President Donald Trump speaks to reporters aboard Air Force One.

time in decades. The only thing missing is a strategic explanation from the Trump administration that would clarify why the United States is amassing such a large force. Hegseth's posting on the social platform X was only the latest in a series of statements from administration officials that, at best, are in tension with one another. Some are outright contradictory. Trump has been the most consistent, saying it is all about drugs. But that would not explain why the Ford was rushed from the eastern Mediterranean Sea to the Caribbean region, adding to a US force that has now reached 15,000 soldiers and sailors, to attack small boats that until early September had been intercepted by the Coast Guard. Nor would it explain why Colombia or Mexico — Mexico being the main conduit for fentanyl — are not in the Navy's sights. So far, the United States has launched 20 strikes on speedboats, killing at least 80 people in an operation that legal experts said might violate international law. In private, Trump has talked to aides about Venezuela's huge oil reserves, estimated at 300 billion barrels, the largest in the world.

Trump held back-to-back days of meetings at the White House over the past two days, reviewing military options, including the use of Special Operations forces and direct action inside Venezuela.

He had an offer from Maduro that would have essentially given the United States rights to much of it, without resorting to military action. Trump called off those talks, though Friday a senior administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the situation, said the talks were not entirely dead — and that the deployment of the aircraft carrier was a means to gain leverage over Maduro. If so, it would be a return to the era of "gunboat diplomacy," a phrase that became popular in the 19th century as great powers used their naval capabilities to intimidate lesser powers — including Venezuela, which was the target of a European-led naval blockade from 1902 to 1903. Just as the blockade was ending, the US Navy intervened to support Panama's secession from Colombia, paving the way for the construction of the Panama Canal. And then there is the question of whether Trump is pursuing regime change in Venezuela, in hopes of installing a government friendlier to the United States. When Secretary of State Marco Rubio held a private meeting with House and Senate leaders last week, he

insisted that ousting Maduro was not the administration's objective, and that any reporting to the contrary was a creation of the press. What is left is strategic incoherence, with officials explaining a different mix of grievances, objectives and acceptable outcomes. Just a day before Hegseth said "Southern Spear" was about protecting the whole Western Hemisphere, Rubio indicated that there was a simple explanation. "This is a counter-drug operation," he told reporters travelling with him in Canada. "And if they stop sending drug boats, there won't be any problems." At the White House, Anna Kelly, a spokesperson, said on Friday that Trump's message to Maduro was to stop sending drugs and criminals to the United States. "The president has made clear that he will continue to strike narco-terrorists trafficking illicit narcotics," she said, "anything else is speculation, and should be treated as such." While the president has publicly focused on confronting the region's drug threat to the United States, in private he has talked more about Maduro's fate, and about oil, aides say. "The Trump administration's decision to conduct military operations in the Caribbean is consistent with their contention that the traffickers are terrorists, not just criminals and as such should be dealt with just as we have dealt with terrorists elsewhere," said Patrick Duddy, a former US ambassador to Venezuela and a visiting senior lecturer at Duke University. But he added: "I am not certain of whether they have conflated counter-narcotics with regime change in Venezuela. If in fact the administration sees Maduro as the head of a cartel and views him as a fugitive for American justice, it would suggest their ambitions are greater than simply intercepting drugs in the Caribbean."

OPINION

Why do we take things personally?



DR HAMED AL SINAWI

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at SQU Hospital

MRS M came to her therapy session a little later than usual. She looked upset, and when asked, she told me that her supervisor had commented on her work, saying that the report she submitted “needed more clarity”. Although the comment was brief and professional, Mrs M couldn’t stop thinking, “Is my supervisor disappointed with me? Did I sound careless in my writing?”

She described how her mood remained low for the rest of the day. She avoided chatting with her colleagues and kept replaying the feedback in her mind. When she got home, her husband asked innocently, “You look tired, is everything okay at work?” She snapped, “Why do you always assume I’m not doing well?”

Later that evening, guilt replaced irritation. She knew her husband meant well and that her supervisor wasn’t attacking her, but it still felt personal. She kept thinking, why did every bit of feedback sound like criticism?

From a psychological perspective, many people tend to take things personally. They could get defensive when a friend or a spouse gives them feedback, or even feel overly

responsible for other people’s bad moods.

No matter what form it takes, taking things personally can create a negative impact on one’s emotional life and relationships. When we interpret neutral or constructive comments as personal attacks, we’re not really hearing what’s being said; we’re hearing our own insecurities echoing back at us.

Psychological theories explain that this tendency often stems from early childhood experiences in which approval equalled safety or love. Over time, we internalise the idea that mistakes or criticism threaten our self-worth. But the good news is that it’s absolutely something we can change about ourselves with practice and a bit of patience.

When someone criticises us or offers feedback, our minds often start bringing up stories like “they don’t respect me; I’m not important to them”. These unhelpful thoughts lead to more difficult emotions such as anger, shame, or sadness, and the vicious cycle continues. One of the ways to manage the initial emotional reaction of taking things personally is through emotional validation, which means reminding yourself that it’s okay

Psychological theories explain that this tendency often stems from early childhood experiences in which approval equalled safety or love

to feel bad, even if it’s uncomfortable.

You do that in three steps: notice, name and normalise, so when you feel a little angry after getting such tough feedback, you notice your feeling, name it by saying I am angry then remind yourself that it’s OK to get angry, as most people would feel the same in such a situation. This process sends a signal of safety to your brain, calming your nervous system from overreacting. As a result, you no longer need to take things personally, and it becomes much easier to let go.

So, the next time you find yourself overthinking a comment or replaying someone’s tone in your head, pause. Instead of analysing what their words ‘mean’ about you, take a moment to name what you feel and remind yourself that it’s human to feel hurt or anxious. With practice, that simple act of self-compassion can transform how you experience relationships — and yourself.

In my opinion, emotional validation is a useful technique to help you manage your emotions and prevent you from jumping to unhelpful conclusions about yourself based on a single comment.

POOR AIR FORCES INDIA’S SUPREME COURT TO GO VIRTUAL

ARPAN CHATURVEDI

India’s Supreme Court has asked lawyers to stay away from courtrooms and argue cases via its virtual platform, media reported, in the latest disruption caused by deteriorating air quality in the capital.

New Delhi’s air quality index has hovered above 400 this week, placing it in the “severe” category and prompting authorities to step up curbs on construction, industrial activity and vehicular movement. Schools in several districts have been asked to close temporarily, while public health officials continue to urge residents to limit outdoor exposure, especially for children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions.

Describing the situation as “very, very serious”, the Supreme Court asked lawyers on Thursday to consider using its virtual hearing facility.

“This (air pollution) will cause permanent damage... Even masks are not enough”, said Justice P S Narasimha, according to India Today, among other media outlets. The Supreme Court did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

The air quality index stood at 437 at the monitoring station closest to the Supreme Court on Thursday, according to India’s Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), which rates readings between zero and 50 as “good”.

New Delhi is home to 34 Supreme Court judges and hundreds of lawyers argue cases daily across the city’s courts and tribunals. Yet every winter, the capital is enveloped in thick smog, much of which authorities attribute to crop stubble burning in the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana.

Experts note that numerous Supreme Court directives over the past decade aimed at reducing pollution have largely gone unimplemented.

The health and economic impact of the smog is severe.

A 2023 study showed that chronic exposure in parts of South Asia can cut life expectancy by more than five years per person. Local livelihoods are routinely disrupted, as workers are forced to limit outdoor activity and outdoor markets see reduced footfall.

Residents staged a rare protest over the weekend, calling for urgent measures to combat the toxic air, highlighting growing frustration with the government’s slow action.

Authorities have promised stricter enforcement of emissions controls, promotion of cleaner fuels and increased green cover to mitigate the crisis.

Environmental activists warn that unless systemic changes are implemented, New Delhi could face worsening pollution in the coming years. — Reuters

Walking beside a friend through early dementia

JUST recently, I found out that one of my closest friends had been diagnosed with early-stage dementia, and it hit me hard. He’s someone I’ve always admired for his intelligence, and to see him facing something so life-changing was deeply upsetting.

The diagnosis came as a shock to him, and he’s now having to come to terms with the reality that his memory isn’t what it used to be and will most likely worsen.

At this early stage, he’s still able to manage his day-to-day life, but there are definite changes. He sometimes forgets recent conversations and every so often, I notice a bit of confusion, especially if something unexpected happens.

It’s tough to witness, especially knowing how much pride he’s always taken in his independence and mental agility. For someone who has always relied on his intellect, realising that something as fundamental as memory could slip away has been a heavy blow.

Dementia itself is a generic term used to describe a range of conditions that affect memory, thinking and behaviour. It isn’t a single disease but rather a group of related disorders.

The most common type is Alzheimer’s disease. The name Alzheimer’s disease comes from Dr Alois Alzheimer, a German psychiatrist and neuropathologist. In 1906, he described the case of a woman named Auguste Deter who had experienced memory loss, confusion and unpredictable behaviour. After her death, Dr Alzheimer examined her brain under a microscope and discovered some abnormalities, the same that are now recognised as hallmarks of Alzheimer’s disease.

The next most common form is vascular dementia, which is linked to problems with blood flow in the brain.

Other forms include Lewy Body dementia, which can cause



KARIM EASTER-BROOK

The writer is a Former Cambridge School Principal and Author

There is currently no cure and the condition eventually affects the body’s ability to function

movement and visual disturbances, and frontotemporal dementia, which often affects personality and language. Each type progresses differently, but all gradually interfere with daily life and independence.

In England and Wales, dementia has now become the leading cause of death, surpassing heart disease. This shift is largely because people are living longer, and age is the greatest risk factor for developing dementia.

Better diagnosis and more accurate recording on death certificates have also contributed to the recorded increase. While some drug and non-drug treatments can sometimes help manage symptoms, there is currently no cure, and the condition eventually affects the body’s ability to function. I’ve learned that what matters most right now is simply being there for my friend.

I don’t make a fuss or treat him any differently, but I do make a point of listening more and being

patient when he repeats himself or loses track of what he was saying.

We will still do the things we’ve always enjoyed together, and I will make sure to keep our routines familiar and easy. Small things, like gentle reminders or sticking to plans, seem to help sufferers cope, but above all, for my relationship with my friend, it’s giving him the reassurance that our friendship hasn’t changed.

It’s natural to feel at a loss when someone you care about receives this kind of news. I’ve realised that you don’t need to have all the answers.

Just showing up, offering a listening ear and letting them know you’re there for both the good days and the bad really does make a difference.

My friend has told me how much he appreciates my understanding, and that’s something I hold on to. Even though dementia is now so common, each person’s story is unique, and every bit of kindness and understanding truly counts.

Can he deliver a ‘New York State of Mind’



RAY
PETERSEN

The writer is a media consultant

THE 34-year-old Ugandan-born Indian, the immigrant son of a Columbia University professor and a decorated film-maker, is a true anachronism in today’s world. After all, how did he ever emerge from nowhere, a socialist, to take the mayoralty of New York, America’s most iconic city, from under the nose of Donald Trump’s politics?

Mamdani himself, to be so politically active given his tender years, has never attempted to shake off his ‘privilege’, his freedom to question the social and political diversity of his adopted home. However, he may well acknowledge that the city of New York is a very different beast than the United States of America is, the city being possibly the greatest cultural ‘melting pot’, the world has ever known, while the wider nation is a bible-thumping bastion of ultra-conservatism, NY seethes and bubbles under, in every way.

Within that paradox lies the challenge of being responsive, not only given his diversity, to a massive immigrant-based city population, from Italy, Ireland, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, with all their cultural and religious heterogeneity, but questions whether he will also be responsive and relevant, to the staunch, bold, often arrogant ‘New Yorker’. Will he be able to navigate their sense that, though Osama bin Laden no longer lives, retribution has been comparatively insignificant, and through gritted teeth, that is still, to generations of New Yorkers, offensive.

Zohran’s father, Mahmood Mamdani, is

Ugandan-born and served as Director of the Makerere Institute for Social Research in Kampala, Uganda, until 2022. He is the current Herbert Lehman Professor of Government at Columbia University, also holding professorships in African Studies, Political Science and Anthropology. He also holds numerous honorary academic distinctions and specialises in colonialist and post-colonialist politics. One should imagine, I suppose, that the political nurturing of the younger Mamdani has been well cast then, in the socialist perspective, though maybe lacking balance or diversity of its own making.

Certainly, in his book entitled ‘Good Muslim, Bad Muslim’, Mamdani Snr at length debates that there is no real distinction, unless as a rebuttal of propositions by prominent anthropologists, Harvard’s Samuel Huntington, and Princeton’s Bernard Lewis, that Islam was tethered only by bloodshed, and that a war of ‘civilisations’ was a certainty. Mamdani offers that the difference in American eyes is only that ‘good Muslims’ support American Middle Eastern policies, while their ‘bad’ counterparts do not.

Mira Nair has achieved prominence in the film industry, having first directed the 1991 drama ‘Mississippi Masala’, which starred Denzil Washington, as one half of a mixed-race marriage, with its hypocrisy maybe a reflection of Idi Amin’s Uganda of the time. The movie was an acclaimed success. Then followed her 2001 comedy, ‘Monsoon Wedding’, sort of an Indian take on Richard

Mamdani himself, to be so politically active given his tender years, has never attempted to shake off his ‘privilege’, his freedom to question the social and political diversity of his adopted home

Curtis type cinema, humorous, yet poignant. ‘The Namesake (2006)’ portrays the cross-cultural struggles of Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli, Bengali immigrants to the United States, and their American-born children, Gogol and Sonia. My concern then is not that Zohran Mamdani is socialist, communist, or even democrat, but that he will find himself so restricted by his youth and inexperience that he will ‘rule’ his city-to-be only from that singular context. That the panorama he sees from his office will not be of Alicia Key’s “concrete jungle where dreams are made,” of which Simone de Beauvoir echoed, “There is something of New York that makes sleep useless,” and of which John Steinbeck was adamant that, “Once it becomes your home, no other place is good enough.”

He has George Soros’ millions to sustain him fiscally, two respected, doting, academic and artistic parents to sustain his philosophical and political contentions, and a Syrian-born, former UAE resident, pro-Palestinian, anti-Zionist activist wife Rama Duwaji to keep him focused. It’s clear, much will hinge on how these three key elements will influence the balance with which the young man rules from the day he assumes office on January 1, 2026.

Can he navigate the murky politics? Is social change genuinely possible? Can he make \$30 per hour minimum wages happen? Or will the great ‘clobbering machine’ wear him down? Billy Joel sang of “knowing what I’m needing, and I don’t want to waste more time, I’m in a New York state of mind.”

EU BOWS TO PRESSURE ON LOOSENING AI, PRIVACY RULES

RAZIYE AKKOC

The European Union is set this week to kickstart a rollback of landmark rules on artificial intelligence and data protection that face powerful pushback on both sides of the Atlantic.

Part of a bid to slash red tape for European businesses struggling against US and Chinese rivals, the move is drawing accusations that Brussels is putting competitiveness ahead of citizens’ privacy and protection.

Brussels denies that pressure from the US administration influenced its push to “simplify” the bloc’s digital rules, which have drawn the wrath of President Donald Trump and American tech giants.

But the European Commission says it has heard the concerns of EU firms and wants to make it easier for them to access users’ data for AI development - a move critics attack as a threat to privacy.

One planned change could unite many Europeans in relief however: the EU wants to get rid of those pesky cookie banners seeking users’ consent for tracking on websites.

According to EU officials and draft documents seen by AFP, which could change before the November 19 announcement, the European Commission will propose: a one-year pause in the implementation of parts of its AI law; and overhauling its flagship data protection rules, which privacy defenders say will make it easier for US Big Tech to “suck up Europeans’ personal data”.

The bloc’s cornerstone General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) enshrined users’ privacy from 2018 and influenced standards around the world.

The EU says it is only proposing technical changes to streamline the rules, but rights activists and EU lawmakers paint a different picture.

The EU executive proposes to narrow the definition of personal data, and allow companies to process such data to train AI models “for purposes of a legitimate interest”, a draft document shows.

Reaction to the leaks has been swift - and strong. “Unless the European Commission changes course, this would be the biggest rollback of digital fundamental rights in EU history,” 127 groups, including civil society organisations and trade unions, wrote in a letter last Thursday.

Online privacy activist Max Schrems warned the proposals “would be a massive downgrading of Europeans’ privacy” if they stay the same.

An EU official said that Brussels is also expected to propose a one-year delay on implementing many provisions on high-risk AI, for example, models that can pose dangers to safety, health or citizens’ fundamental rights.

Instead of taking effect next year, they would apply from 2027. — AFP

A turning point for clean energy...

THIS year marks a historic milestone: for the first time, global renewable-energy production has surpassed coal.

In the first half of 2025, renewables accounted for more than 34 per cent of the world’s electricity, while coal’s share fell to just above 33 per cent. Notably, these gains were largely driven by emerging economies.

As the world’s attention turns to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Brazil (COP30), this milestone serves as a powerful reminder that the clean-energy transition is already underway. Having led investments at the US International Development Finance Corporation and now serving as chief investment officer at the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, I know a promising business opportunity when I see one. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), 91 per cent of new renewable-energy projects are now cheaper than their fossil-fuel counterparts. This finding provides clear evidence that, despite the ongoing growth in coal and oil use, renewables are both economically and technically viable throughout much of the world.

We cannot afford to let today’s momentum slip away.

To reduce climate pollution, promote sustainable economic growth, and strengthen energy resilience where it is needed most, we must build on these achievements. As we approach the tenth anniversary of the Paris climate agreement, meaningful global climate action is still possible, even in the face of escalating geopolitical tensions and competing national priorities.

Yet such progress is inherently fragile. All too often, clean-energy adoption stalls once the infrastructure is in place. Solar projects, for example, can fail when communities lack the necessary tools and financing to make full use of the electricity they produce.



Ninety-one per cent of new renewable-energy projects are now cheaper than their fossil-fuel counterparts.



AGNES
DASEWICZ

The writer is Chief Program and Investment Officer at the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet

Providing solar panels is not enough. To lock in the benefits of renewables, governments must invest not only in power generation but also in systems, training and equipment – such as electric mills and water pumps – that enable communities and countries to harness clean energy for business growth and job creation.

When implemented effectively, such investments deliver benefits across the board. Climate goals advance as renewables replace costly, polluting fuels. Communities gain access to affordable power, enabling them to improve education and healthcare, create jobs, and raise incomes. And with energy companies profiting from rising demand, emerging economies can attract new investment.

The challenge is enormous, but so is the opportunity. The World Bank projects that 1.2 billion young people in developing economies will reach working age over the next decade, but that only 420 million new jobs will be created by then. Access to clean energy, and the opportunities it brings, offers a way to bridge this gap before it becomes a global crisis. The World

Economic Forum estimates that the renewables industry alone could generate more than 30 million jobs and mobilise \$2.2-2.8 trillion annually. Embedding renewable technologies into other downstream sectors, such as industry and agriculture, could create a further 500 million new jobs and improve the quality of 700 million existing ones.

To succeed, we must align energy policies with broader development objectives, integrate renewables into local industries, and accelerate investment in the equipment and training needed to use it effectively.

Across Africa, this approach is already delivering tangible results. In Nigeria, farmers and traders are increasingly using solar-powered irrigation pumps, cold-storage facilities and mills. These investments, in turn, have fuelled a wave of distributed renewable-energy projects that are rapidly transforming local power systems.

In the Amazon, where COP30 is under way, the government of Brazil is investing \$800 million to expand energy access and transition away from reliance on diesel.

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SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Competitions will continue on November 18, featuring 15 rounds for the Lagaya category, three years old, over 5 km.

RCC TO SELECT TOP RACING CAMELS FOR PURCHASE

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

The Oman Camel Racing Federation (OCRF), in cooperation with the Royal Camel Corps (RCC), will kick off the fourth race of the annual camel racing season on Sunday morning at Al Felaij Race Track in the Wilayat of Barka, in Al Batinah South Governorate. The five-day event will run from November 16 to 20.

As part of this round, the Royal Camel Corps will purchase a select group of winning camels that record the best overall timings across key categories. The acquisition plan includes five camels from the Hagayeg category, three camels from the Lagaya category, and two camels from the Elythaa category.

The value of the ten camels identified for purchase is expected to exceed half a million Omani rials, reflecting RCC’s significant investment in supporting elite racing lines. In accordance with RCC regulations, each purchased camel will remain with its original owner after the sale, allowing the owner to continue training the camel for competition — ensuring performance continuity and preserving the bond between trainer and racing camel.

An additional valuation race is scheduled for December, during which more top-performing camels will be evaluated and priced according to RCC standards.

The RCC has also designated this fourth race as the first qualifying event for the prestigious HM’s Cup, which will be held in April 2026, with the winners of the main rounds earning direct qualification.

The fourth race will commence today November 16, with 25 rounds dedicated to the Hagayeg category, two years old, over a distance of 3 km.

On November 17, the track will host 12 rounds, including eight rounds for the Hagayeg category over 4 km, in addition to three rounds for human riders over 2 km.

Competitions will continue on November 18, featuring 15 rounds for the Lagaya category, three years old, over 5 km.

On November 19, the Elythaa category, four years old, will headline the programme with 13 rounds, including six rounds over 6 km and seven rounds over 5 km. The final day on November 20 will feature six rounds for the Thanaya category, five years old, followed by six rounds for the Al Hawl category, six years and above, all contested over 6 km.



The Royal Camel Corps will purchase a select group of winning camels that record the best overall timings across key categories.

AL RAHBA RACECOURSE HOSTS NATIONAL DAY CUP

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
BARKA, NOV 15

THE OMAN Equestrian Federation organised the National Day Horse Race yesterday at the Rahba Racecourse in the Wilayat of Barka, as part of the federation’s celebrations of the country’s national occasion the event attracted strong participation from stables, horse owners and jockeys, alongside notable public attendance, the race was held under the auspices of Guest of Honour HH Sayyid Namir bin Majid al Said, who crowned the winners at the conclusion of the competition.

The event featured eight competitive races, each offering a distinct level of challenge and showcasing the quality and readiness of local and Arab horses, the performances reflected the steady progression of horse racing standards in Oman and the growing capabilities of professional trainers and riders.

In the opening round, the mare Labwah Al Shahaniya, ridden by Abdulrahman bin Abdullah al Balushi and trained by Mohammed bin Abdullah al Balushi, secured first place, Finishing second was Shorouq Al Salam with jockey Mazin bin Mubarak al Yahyaei and trainer Mohammed bin Habib al Balushi, while Nawadir Al Faisal came in third under Amer bin Ali al Rasbi and trainer Nasser bin Hamed al Qutaiti.

The second round witnessed a dominant performance by Al Mahamed stable, as the colt SSR Talal clinched first place with jockey Al Mutasim bin Said al Balushi under the training of Abdulaziz bin Salim al Rashidi. The stable completed a one two finish with SSR Shaklan in second place ridden by Ahmed bin Mohammed al Siyabi, third place went to Mushrif Malik, ridden by Ibrahim bin Khamis al Hinai and trained by Abdullah bin Said al Kharousi,

Following the win, trainer Abdulaziz al Rashidi stated, “Today’s results are the outcome of precise preparation and teamwork. Both Talal and Shaklan were in top condition, and we look forward to even stronger performances throughout the season.”

Owner of the winning colt, Salim bin Said al Rashidi of Al Mahamed Stud, expressed his pride, saying, “Winning the National Day race means a great deal. Talal is a promising horse, and we expect a successful season ahead, God willing.”

In the third round, the mare Itlal Al Saif triumphed with jockey Adam bin Talib al Balushi and trainer Mohammed bin Hamed al Hajri, the horse Al Baaz finished second under Al Mutasim al Balushi and trainer Ahmed bin Said al Balushi, while BF Majeed took third place with jockey Wathab bin Said al Balushi under the training of Marwan bin Darwish al Balushi.

The fourth round was won by the horse Al Eqab, ridden by Ibrahim bin Khamis al Hinai and trained by Kahlan bin Mohammed al Balushi. SSR Naseem placed second under jockey Ahmed al Siyabi and trainer Abdulaziz al Rashidi, while SNS Somood finished third with jockey Mohammed bin Mahmoud al Farsi and trainer Majid bin Abdullah al Farsi.

In the fifth round, the horse Al Areeq claimed victory ridden by Mounis bin Salim al Siyabi and trained by Kahlan bin Mohammed al Balushi, BF Arkan secured second place under Amer al Rasbi and trainer Mahmood bin Khamis al Balushi, while Qaisar Majan came third with jockey Abdulaziz bin Fahd al Balushi and trainer Nasser al Qutaiti.

The sixth race saw Libyan Classic win first place with jockey Khalid bin Mahmood al Balushi and trainer Mohammed bin Habib al Balushi, Scott Pine finished second ridden by Adam al Balushi and trained by Ahmed bin Ibrahim al Balushi, while Oudy to Duty



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PHOTOS BY **ABDULSALAM AL BALUSHI AND MOHAMMED AL BALUSHI**



The performances reflected the steady progression of horse racing standards in Oman and the growing capabilities of professional trainers and riders.



At the end of the races, Guest of Honour HH Sayyid Namir bin Majid al Said crowned the winners, praising the strong competitive spirit and the efforts of the Oman Equestrian Federation in advancing horse racing.

placed third with jockey Amer al Rasbi under trainer Mousa bin Mohammed al Balushi.

In the seventh race, the horse RB Blast delivered a strong performance to take first place with jockey Anas bin Salim al Siyabi and trainer Ahmed bin Ibrahim al Balushi, Bataash De Faust came second with jockey Mohammed al Farsi and trainer Majid al Farsi, while Ezmir De Carrier placed third ridden by Issa bin Mohammed al Balushi and trained by Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Balushi.

After his victory, jockey Anas al Siyabi remarked, “The race was fast and competitive, but RB Blast responded powerfully in the final stretch, I appreciate the trust and support from the trainer and team.”

The final race concluded with a win for Madhmoon, ridden by Al Mutasim bin Said al Balushi and trained by Hussain bin Ali al Sanidy. Shujaa Muscat followed in second place with jockey Adam al Balushi and trainer Hassan bin Mohammed al Falahi, while the colt SSR Kaheelan finished third under Ahmed bin Mohammed al Siyabi and trainer Abdulaziz al Rashidi.

At the end of the races, Guest of Honour HH Sayyid Namir bin Majid al Said crowned the winners, praising the strong competitive spirit and the efforts of the Oman Equestrian Federation in advancing horse racing and preserving Oman’s long-standing equestrian heritage.

SHORT TAKES



Oman and Sudan players in action.

OMAN DEFEAT SUDAN IN TUNE-UP MATCH

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

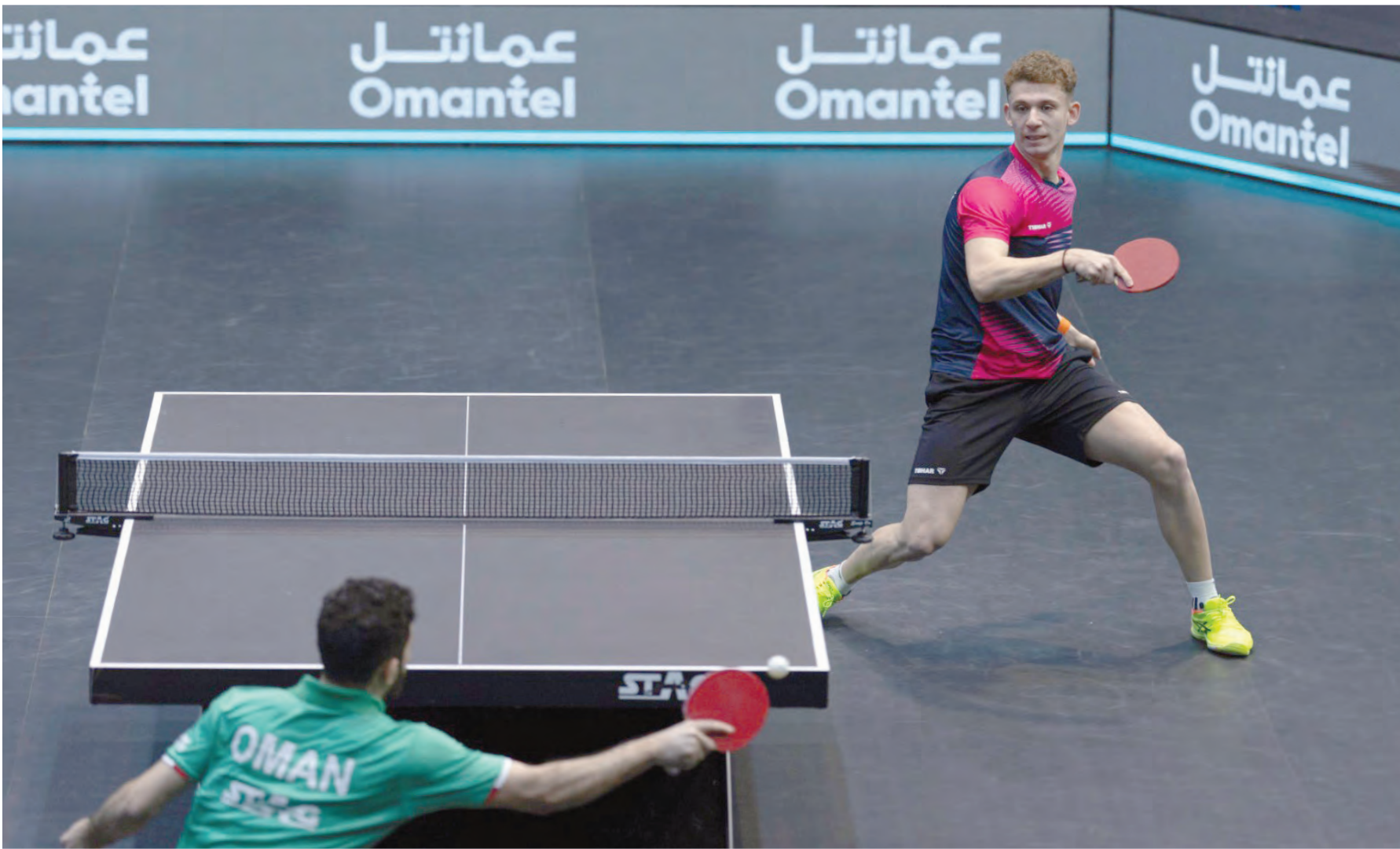
Oman’s national football team ended their first preparatory match with a confident 2-0 victory over Sudan on Friday night at Seeb Stadium. The first scheduled warm up was part of the underway domestic camp for Red Warriors to gear up for the Fifa Arab Cup Qatar 2025 pre-qualifier match against Somalia on November 26. Oman’s goals scored by Zaher al Aghbari (63) and Al Mundher al Alawi (79).

The first half ended in a balanced performance as both sides exchanged control without posing major threats on goal. The Red Warriors returned after the break with renewed momentum and greater attacking purpose. The breakthrough arrived in the 63rd minute as Zaher al Aghbari scored the opening goal. Al Aghbari managed to weave past Sudanese defenders before unleashing a powerful low strike that beat the goalkeeper and put Oman ahead 1-0. Oman doubled their advantage in the 79th minute through Al Mundher al Alawi, who rose high to head home a precise cross from Mohammed al Ghafri, sealing a well-deserved 2-0 win for the hosts.

Oman head coach Carlos Queiroz fielded a lineup that featured a strong mix of experience and emerging talent as part of the ongoing domestic camp. The starting eleven included: Bilal al Balushi as a goalkeeper while Thani al Rushaidi, Ghanim al Habshi, Yousef al Malki, Musab al Shaqsi and Amjad al Harthy in the defending line. The experienced player Harib al Saadi controlled the middle area beside Nasser al Rawahi and Jameel al Yahmadi while Salah al Yahyaei in the front area and Essam al Subhi as attacker.

Oman will continue their warm-up programme with another friendly match scheduled against Côte d’Ivoire on Tuesday which is expected to provide a tougher test as the African giants recently secured qualification to the Fifa World Cup 2026. Both matches will form a key component of Oman’s preparation for the crucial playoff against Somalia on November 26 as they will target to go into the group stage of the Fifa Arab Cup Qatar 2025 scheduled from December 1 to 18 in Doha.

Oman team will back to the training sessions at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Sunday under the guidance of coach Carlos Queiroz. The head coach and his coaching staff will focus on the weakness areas that happened in Sudan match and to strengthen technical and tactical sides ahead of the next matches



More than 300 participants representing 32 countries will compete in Muscat, making it one of the largest WTT Star Contender events of the season.

OTTA all set to host 2025 WTT Star Contender

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

THE Sultanate of Oman represented by Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) is all set to host one of the most prestigious table tennis event as WTT Star Contender Muscat 2025 to start on Monday. The six-day international championship, organised by OTTA in collaboration with World Table Tennis (WTT), will kick off on Monday and run until Saturday at the both main halls of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bousher.

World No. 5 Felix Lebrun of France, one of the youngest global sensations in men’s table tennis, will arrive in Muscat on Monday to headline the world-class field competing for top honours. Pre-qualification matches will take place on Monday and Tuesday, while the main draw begins on Wednesday.

Beside young French player, many others top ranking players to take part in the competitions including: Darko Joric from Slovenia, Lin Yun -Ju from China, Alexis Lebrun from France, and Dang Qiu from Germany. The top five women’s singles are: Satsuki Odo from Japan, Hina Hayata from Japan, Bernadette Szocs from Romania, Miyu Nagasaki from Japan, and Cheng I-ching from Chinese Taipei.

More than 300 participants representing

32 countries will compete in Muscat, making it one of the largest WTT Star Contender events of the season. The participants representing: China, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chinese Taipei, Croatia, Czech, Denmark, Egypt, England, France, Germany, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Wales, Yemen and the hosts Oman.

This event is taking place in Muscat for the first time as the highest category ever staged in the Sultanate of Oman following several successful WTT Contender events held in previous years. OTTA earned the confidence of WTT and the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) to stage the Star Contender after extensive evaluations and site visits earlier this year.

This edition of the event will introduce several upgrades, including: Full utilisation of two connected competition halls using advanced broadcast technology, a newly installed lighting system in the secondary hall to meet WTT’s technical standards, Centralised technical control linking results, live scoring, and broadcast feeds directly to WTT and ITTF platforms and enhanced spaces for players, umpires, international officials, and media teams.

Players will compete across five categories including: Men’s Singles, Women’s Singles,

Men’s Doubles, Women’s Doubles, and Mixed Doubles. The event will provide a total prize cash of \$300,000. The national team players will also take part in the tournament like: Muhannad al Balushi, Ahmed al Riyami, Ghassan al Ghassani, Luqman al Farsi, and Bilal al Rashdi. Oman players will receive the right environment to gain technical exposure, ranking points, and experience against the world’s elite.

ESSENTIAL MOMENT FOR OMAN

Abdullah bin Mohammed Bamakhlaf, Chairman of OTTA said that hosting WTT Star Contender represents a major milestone for table tennis in Oman.

“This edition comes with completely new organisational and technical standards. The confidence of ITTF and WTT in Oman reflects years of hard work and commitment to hosting world-class events. We invite the public to attend this historic tournament and enjoy watching the top global champions live in Muscat.” he concluded.

Tournament Director, Sajjad al Lawati, affirmed that preparations exceeded all minimum requirements to ensure an exceptional event. “This was a major technical challenge, especially linking two halls with advanced broadcast technology. All thanks to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for their cooperation. We are ready and we will look forward to delivering a world-class event.” he ended.

Bahrain camp begins for Oman 3x3 ahead of Arab and Gulf events

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

Oman’s national 3x3 basketball teams, the men’s team, youth team, and women’s team, have entered a new phase of preparation as they arrived in the Kingdom of Bahrain to begin an intensive training camp. The senior and women’s teams will train from November 15 to 18, while the youth team will also participate in the GCC Youth Championship, hosted in Bahrain from November 18 to 20 .

ahead of the Arab and Gulf Youth Championships, which will be hosted in Muscat from November 25 to 29, 2025. The technical and administrative staff continue to elevate the readiness of all teams through focused training sessions, internal camps, and physical-conditioning programmes, ensuring the players are fully prepared for regional competition that will see wide participation from Arab and Gulf nations.

The women’s national team is led by coach Wafa Zaghdoud, who focuses on enhancing



The preparations come as part of a comprehensive build-up programme. — Ammar al Musafir

both tactical and physical aspects of the players’ performance. The squad consists of: Shams al Khanji, Fatma al Nuaimi, Nareen al Mammari, Ruba al Kalbani, Reema al Maghiri, Zainab al Busaidy, Malak al Salimi, Sayyidah Lamar al Said, Reem al Shirawi, and Aisha al Yafei. The youth and senior men’s national teams are under the leadership of national coach Mohammed al Owaisi. The U-18 national

3x3 youth team includes eight players: Mashal Qafqaf, Muhab al Humaissim, Mazin al Owaisi, Ibrahim al Balushi, Azd al Bahlani, Azzan al Ajmi, Adam al Hinai, and Akram al Rashdi. The youth team’s administrative staff includes: Ghassan al Busaidy (Team Manager) and Sulaiman al Muslimi (Physiotherapist).

The first men’s 3x3 national team consists of eight players: Ahmed al Halhali, Hadeed bin Abdulhakeem Beit Bakhit, Osama al Riyami, Abdulrahman al Maamari, Ahmed al Sinani, Rashid al Zuhaimi, Ahmed al Maamari, and Abdulrahman al Shueibi.

Preparations are progressing smoothly, with high commitment and strong morale among players a promising indication of the teams’ readiness for strong competition and their ambition to deliver impressive performances and secure advanced positions in the upcoming championships. The technical and administrative staff express full confidence in the players’ abilities to represent Oman in the best possible way. National coach Mohammed al Owaisi confirmed that

the training camps for the first men’s team and youth 3x3 basketball teams in Bahrain represent a continuation of the intensive preparation phase ahead of the Arab and Gulf Championships in Muscat. He explained that the youth team began its programme early in July with a local camp, followed by an external camp in the UAE, gaining important technical benefits. He noted that the Gulf Championship in Bahrain will offer strong competitive exposure before the Arab event in Muscat.

As for the senior team, Al Owaisi said they completed an intensive internal camp focusing on fitness, movement under pressure, and shooting accuracy, and that the friendly matches in Bahrain will help measure the team’s actual readiness. He added that selecting players born in 2007–2009 comes as part of a plan to support young talents, pointing out that weekend-only training sessions before travel were due to players’ university commitments, ensuring the preparation programme continued without interruption.

SPORTS

SHORTTAKES



Italy's Jannik Sinner in action during his semifinal match against Australia's Alex de Minaur. — Reuters

SINNER BEATS DE MINAUR TO REACH ATP FINALS

TURIN, Italy: Jannik Sinner continued his mastery over Alex de Minaur on Saturday with a straight-sets win to reach the ATP Finals championship match for the third year in a row.

Sinner broke late in the first set and then pulled away from De Minaur to complete a 7-5, 6-2 win — his 13th in as many meetings with the Australian.

The Italian world number two has yet to drop a service game en route to the final. He will try to defend his title on Sunday against top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz or Felix Auger-Aliassime.

“It is the last event of the year and it is great to finish in this way,” said Sinner.

“It was a very tough match, especially at the beginning of the first set. I felt like he was serving great, very precise.

“In the second set, I broke very early and then my level rose. I tried to be a bit more aggressive and it worked well but it was a tough match.”

Sinner has won his last 18 sets played in Turin, where he beat Taylor Fritz in last year’s final. The four-time Grand Slam champion is on a 30-match winning streak on indoor hard courts.

The 24-year-old Sinner hasn’t dropped a set at the ATP Finals since losing the 2023 final to Novak Djokovic.

“Making the final for three consecutive years means a lot to me,” said Sinner.

“It is a great atmosphere for me to play tennis and a great place for me to close this beautiful season. Tomorrow I will enjoy and try my best to get the best possible result.”

De Minaur fought off two break points in the opening game of the semifinal but then failed to convert any of the three he carved out in Sinner’s first service game.

The Australian resisted again when Sinner threatened to break in the seventh and ninth games, but the second seed eventually struck the key blow at 5-5 and snatched the first set.

Sinner surged 4-0 ahead in the second set before wrapping up his ninth straight win at the tournament, becoming the youngest player since Lleyton Hewitt in 2004 to reach three finals at the season-ending event.

If Sinner faces Alcaraz in the final, it will be their sixth meeting of the season. Alcaraz has won four of the five previous matches, triumphing in the French Open and US Open finals. — AFP



Oman player Ahmed al Khusaibi suffered a 0–3 loss to Iran’s Siavash Mozaeini.

Oman World Cup of Snooker launches group-stage battles

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

THE singles competition of the 2025 Oman World Cup of Snooker officially began yesterday at the Active Oman Centre in the Oman Automobile Association. The tournament, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman through the Oman Billiards and Snooker Committee at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), runs from November 15 to 23 with the participation of elite international players.

68 PLAYERS IN 17 GROUPS – TOP TWO ADVANCE

The International Billiards and Snooker Federation’s technical committee held the group-stage draw on Friday evening, placing 68 players into 17 groups of four. The top two players from each group will qualify for the knockout stages, beginning with the Last 34 and Last 32 rounds, before progressing toward the grand final, where the new world singles champion will be crowned on November 19.

The draw produced several challenging paths for the nine Omani players competing across various groups, each aiming to secure a historic qualification on home soil. The event witnesses wide participation from internationally ranked athletes, further elevating the level of competition.

BREAKDOWN OF OMANI PLAYERS’ GROUPS

Oman’s Abdullah al Raisi found himself in a demanding Group D, which includes

Qatar’s Ali al Obaidli, Malaysia’s Thor Chuan Leong, and Afghanistan’s Mohammad Noor Zai. In Group E, Ahmed al Khusaibi faces Iran’s Siyavosh Mozayani, Australia’s Hassan Kerde, and Afghanistan’s Mohammad Rais Senzahi, an open group that presents a promising opportunity for him to advance.

Sadiq al Farsi will navigate a challenging Group F featuring Hong Kong China’s Chao Hon Man, Poland’s Sebastian Milewski, and Bahrain’s Khalil Busaif. Meanwhile, Hassan al Harthy competes in Group G alongside Nansen Wan of Hong Kong China, Ukraine’s Mykhailo Larkov, and Bangladesh’s Abdullah Siddiqi.

In Group H, Haitham al Mahri looks to draw on his experience as he meets Poland’s Michal Szubarczyk, Australia’s Chi Kin Yeung, and India’s Dhvaj Haria.

Oman’s Hussiin al Lawati faces one of the toughest assignments in Group M, where he competes with Bahrain’s Hesnam Alsacer, Hong Kong China’s Chang Yu Kiu, and Indian superstar Pankaj Advani, a leading title contender. Taha Bashir lines up in Group N with France’s Micolas Mortreu, England’s Harvey Chandler, and Egypt’s Mohammed Abdelkader. Qasim al Balushi competes in Group R featuring Pakistan’s Mohammad Asif, India’s Aditya Mehta, and Indonesia’s Gibi Putra, while Muslim al Mushaili faces China’s Ding Haohui, Egypt’s Hesham Shawky, and Afghanistan’s Mohammad Zarif Afzali in Group S.

MIXED RESULTS FOR OMAN ON OPENING DAY

The first day of group-stage action delivered contrasting results for Omani players.

Abdullah al Raisi opened his campaign with a 0–3 defeat to Malaysia’s Thor Chuan Leong. Despite the scoreline, Al Raisi displayed competitive moments but ultimately fell short against the Malaysian’s superior experience.

Similarly, Ahmed al Khusaibi suffered a 0–3 loss to Iran’s Siavash Mozaeini, who sealed his first victory of the tournament. With several matches remaining, both Omani players still have opportunities to revive their hopes of advancing to the knockout stages.

International stars also made strong statements on day one. Iran’s Ali Garhaqzolu began with a 3–0 win in Group A, while Pakistan’s Mohammad Hasnain endured a heavy 0–3 defeat. Pakistan’s Sajjad Iqbal recorded an important 3–1 win in Group B, and Fung Kwok Wai of Hong Kong China impressed with a 3–0 result in Group C.

In another notable upset, Qatar’s top seed Ali al Obaidli suffered a surprising defeat to Afghanistan’s Mohammad Noor Zai.

Group-stage action continues today (Sunday), with several crucial fixtures for Omani contenders. Abdullah al Raisi faces Qatar’s Ali al Obaidli and Afghanistan’s Noor Zai in two decisive matches that could determine his qualification prospects. While Ahmed al Khusaibi plays Australia’s Hassan Kirdi before meeting Afghanistan’s Mohammad Rais Senzahi as he seeks to bounce back from his opening loss.

Curry’s 49 points propel Warriors in 109-108 win over Spurs

LOS ANGELES, United States: Golden State star Stephen Curry scored 49 points, including the game-winning free-throws in the waning seconds, as the Warriors beat the San Antonio Spurs 109-108 in NBA Cup action on Friday. For the second time in three days Curry propelled the Warriors to a victory over Victor Wembanyama’s Spurs, following up a 46-point performance on Wednesday with another masterpiece.

Curry connected on 16 of 26 shots from the field, drilling nine three-pointers and finishing a perfect eight for eight at the free throw line as the Warriors came out on top in a tense battle in Texas that included 13 lead changes.

French star Wembanyama scored 26 points and grabbed 12 rebounds and De’Aaron Fox added 24 points

and 10 assists for the Spurs, who led 79-77 going into the fourth quarter only to be undone by 14 points from Curry in the final frame.

Wembanyama scored 10 in the fourth, his tip-in layup putting San Antonio up 108-105 with 1:05 remaining.

Golden State’s Jimmy Butler drove for a layup to cut the deficit to one and after Wembanyama blocked a Butler shot Fox fouled Curry, who calmly stepped up and made the deciding free throws.

Curry said the two “gritty, gutsy, professional wins” in San Antonio could set a tone for a Warriors team trying to find their identity.

“That was fun,” he said. “They’ve got a great team. To come in here and win back-to-back games is huge.

“We all did it together,” Curry said.



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) drives to the basket against San Antonio Spurs guard Devin Vassell (24). — Imagn Images

“I know the points look great, but we all did it together to win. That’s what we’re trying to build on.”

Friday marked the third night of group play in the league’s in-season tournament, in its third edition this year.

Teams were drawn into six groups for round-robin matches that also count in the regular-season standings. Eight teams advance to the Cup quarter-finals, with the semifinals and final in Las Vegas in December.

In New Orleans, the Los Angeles Lakers improved to 2-0 in Cup play as they bounced back from a blowout loss at Oklahoma City with a 118-104 victory over the Pelicans.

Austin Reaves scored 31 points, Luka Doncic added 24 points, seven rebounds and 12 assists and Deandre

Ayton chipped in 20 points on impressive 10 of 11 shooting for Los Angeles, who are still awaiting the season debut of superstar LeBron James.

“After the dud we threw out in Oklahoma City, you need to bounce back with a win,” Reaves said. “I thought we played pretty good for the most part tonight. We’ve obviously got to clean some things up, but pretty good.”

Veteran James Harden produced a 41-point triple-double to lead the Los Angeles Clippers to a 133-127 double-overtime triumph over the Mavericks in Dallas.

Harden, 36, played a career-high 51 minutes and scored 10 points over the two overtime periods as the Clippers held on to halt a six-game skid. — AFP

BUSINESS



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Madayn investments reach RO 7.8 bn

CUMULATIVE investment in the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) reached approximately RO 7.8 billion by the end of the first half of 2025, marking a 2% rise compared with the same period last year.

CEO Engineer Dawood bin Salem al Haddabi said that cumulative projects across Madayn's industrial cities increased to 2,095, reflecting a 3% growth rate, while total contracts rose to 2,385. Leased land across all industrial cities, Knowledge Oasis Muscat and Al Mazunah Free Zone reached 34.6 million square metres, representing 68% occupancy of the 61.6 million square metres of developed land. During the first half of 2025, Madayn received 215 new investment applications and signed 124 contracts worth more than RO 80 million, covering an area exceeding 895,000 square metres.

Under the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan (2021–2025), Madayn implemented a

wide range of infrastructure and service projects designed to enhance the investment environment and ensure long-term sustainability across Oman's governorates.

Major works completed during this period include Phase 1 of Ibri Industrial City, spanning around 3 million square metres and the infrastructure development of Mahas Industrial City, covering 1.4 million square metres.

Consultancy, design and supervision services were also completed for pioneering industrial complexes in Al Rusayl, Nizwa, Mahas, Al Suwaiq and Madha. In Suhar, the seventh-phase infrastructure project was delivered over an area exceeding 8.5 million square metres.

The organisation also utilised advanced drone technology for geographic mapping and infrastructure surveys across industrial cities.

Al Haddabi highlighted that during this development plan, Madayn underwent a major institutional and technological



During the first half of 2025, Madayn received 215 new investment applications and signed 124 contracts worth more than RO 80 million.

transformation, adopting a digital-first model and establishing a culture of excellence and performance-based governance. This effort enabled Madayn to achieve Level 2 in the European Organisation for Quality Management (EOQ) model – an important milestone in

its digital and institutional transformation journey.

Looking ahead, Madayn is finalising its strategic road map for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2026–2030), aligned with the priorities of Oman Vision 2040.

The new plan positions Madayn as a national enabler of a competitive and sustainable economy, with 98 major projects planned across development, institutional excellence and environmental sustainability.

Key initiatives for the next five years include major infrastructure and service projects in Al Mudhaibi Industrial City (2.5 million sqm), Al Suwaiq Industrial City (5 million sqm), Madha Industrial City (348,000 sqm), Al Wadi Al Kabir Industrial City and multiple rehabilitation works in Suhar Industrial City.

Additional projects include the development of a marine pier and master plan for Sur Industrial City and the expansion of water networks in Raysut Industrial City. — ONA

OIA delivers 14 national projects worth RO 450 million



The 14 projects represent the outcome of OIA's strategy to contribute to economic diversification in Oman.

BUSINESS REPORTER MUSCAT, NOV 15

IN conjunction with Oman's National Day celebrations and in reaffirmation of its commitment to turning national development goals into tangible achievements, Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has announced the completion of fourteen landmark national projects valued at over RO 450 million.

Spanning across the Sultanate of Oman, the projects open new horizons for growth and contribute to strengthening the national economy. Together, they are set to create around 1,350 new jobs for Omanis and cover vital sectors including food security, manufacturing and water.

Mulham bin Basheer al Jarf, Deputy President for Investments at OIA, said that the 14 projects represent the outcome of OIA's strategy to contribute to economic diversification and support priority sectors in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

OIA plays a pivotal role in stimulating economic growth through the implementation of strategic projects conducted by its companies and in partnership with the private sector.

These projects aim to strengthen the business environment, expand investment opportunities across the governorates and promote balanced regional development. Al Jarf added that the distribution of these

projects across several governorates reflects OIA's commitment to decentralisation and its focus on directing investments to achieve geographic balance in development.

He also pointed out that the projects carry direct economic and social dimensions, including the enhancement of local content, the creation of employment and business opportunities for citizens, the development of national talents; and the empowerment of small and medium enterprises, all of which are vital elements that support economic diversification and enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the national economy.

In the water sector, Nama Water Services (NWS) implemented four strategic projects across several governorates, including Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Al Batinah North and South Governorates; and Al Sharqiyah North and South Governorates, to enhance water transmission efficiency and meet the growing demand through 2040.

These projects included the development of transmission networks linking desalination and pumping stations with multiple wilayats, along with the construction of strategic reservoirs and pumping stations.

The total investment for these projects exceeded RO 408 million and generated over RO 112 million in local content through contracts awarded to local suppliers and companies, of which more than RO 44 million were allocated to SMEs.



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C invites interested companies to participate in the following tender

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (OMR)	Bid Bond	Site Visit
NESC/2025/035	Construction Works for Ground Floor Renovation and Fifth Floor Extension at NESC Headquarters.	24/11/2025	09/12/2025	Specialized Companies	52.5	1% of the bid amount	02/12/2025 At 9:00 AM in the company's HQ building

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -							
Participation	- Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply) - To obtain the tender document and payment procedure, please visit https://supply.nama.om, under NESC vendor / E Tender						
Enquiries	- Any inquiry can be sent to Tender@supply.nama.om using the inquiry form found in the tender document (05) Five working days before bid submission date. - Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.						
Tender Submission	Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER and supplier guidelines available at NESC Website https://supply.nama.om, under NESC vendor / E Tender						
Guarantee	- The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF MINOR TENDER COMMITTEE, Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C. - The hard copy of the bid bond should be deposited in the Tender Box at the Nama Electricity Supply Company Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 10:00 AM on the day specified for bid submission or any extended deadline. - Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.						
Terms and Conditions	- The Tender shall be valid for a period of (90) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. - NESC is not bound to accept the lowest (or highest) Tenderer. - A certificate confirming a minimum Omanization level of 30% within the organization is obligatory , bidder who fails to submit this certificate will result in exclusion from the tender evaluation process. - Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization - NESC gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. - Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.						
Incentives and exemptions	- Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, are exempted from Tender fees - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, are exempted from bid bond requirements. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, are exempted from registration fees on business opportunities platform and supplier registration with Nama Group.						



للتزويد
SUPPLY

Nama Electricity Supply Company SAOC
PO Box 1239, PC 131, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 24250800 | CR 1/71235/7
records@supply.nama.om | www.supply.nama.om



ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



The campaign is valid across all model year vehicles of Range Rover, Defender, Discovery and Jaguar; and is available until December 18, 2025.

MHD ACERE reinforces commitment to safety with exclusive brake care initiative

MUSCAT: MHD ACERE, the exclusive distributor of Jaguar and Land Rover vehicles in Oman, has announced the launch of its comprehensive Brake Care campaign, providing customers with exceptional value and peace of mind as they prepare for the season's journeys.

The campaign is valid across all model year vehicles of Range Rover, Defender, Discovery and Jaguar; and is available until December 18, 2025.

This limited-time offer includes a complimentary brake and braking system check, along with 20% off parts and labour on recommended work related to brake discs, brake pads and brake oil.

Customers will benefit from

the superior performance and assurance that comes from choosing 100% genuine Jaguar and Land Rover brake components, engineered to meet the brand's exacting global standards. Genuine brakes are designed, tested and manufactured to deliver:

- Optimum braking performance
- Advanced durability and safety
- Consistent comfort and control across varied driving conditions.

From the refined luxury of Range Rover, to the unstoppable capability of Defender, the boundless exploration spirit of Discovery and the iconic performance sophistication of Jaguar, every vehicle deserves expert care that maintains the essence of its design and engineering.

Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE stated: "At MHD ACERE, our commitment goes beyond providing world-class vehicles — we are devoted to delivering ownership experiences that are safe, seamless and deeply rewarding. This exclusive brake offer reinforces our promise to ensure every Jaguar and Land Rover on Oman's roads continues to perform with the excellence, capability and confidence our customers expect". Customers are encouraged to schedule their appointments early to enjoy the offer before expiry.

Make your college city drives fun with Kia Sonet

MAKE every campus drive fun with the Kia Sonet — perfect for college life in Oman.

Whether it's a quick drive to campus, a late-night food run, or a weekend road trip with friends, the Kia Sonet turns every journey into something memorable. Compact, stylish and packed with personality, it's the perfect SUV for students who want to stand out — and have fun doing it.

The Sonet's bold and youthful design makes a statement wherever you go. With its signature 'tiger-nose' grille, heartbeat LED lights and sporty stance, it's a head-turner whether you're parked at SQU or cruising through Streets of Oman. It's more than just a car — it's a vibe.

Under the hood, the Sonet's 1.5L Smartstream engine delivers a smooth 114 hp that's as efficient as it is fun to drive. You'll feel the confidence whether you're gliding through city traffic or hitting the highways in Oman — and it won't empty your wallet with its impressive 17.5 km/l fuel economy.

Inside, the Sonet feels like your personal hangout space. There's plenty of room for you and your friends, a 392L boot for your gym bags or weekend luggage and smart tech everywhere — from an 8-inch touchscreen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto to USB ports for every seat. Staying connected and charged up is never a problem.

The little details make college life easier too — like rear AC vents to beat the Oman heat, push-button start, Smart Key access and Cruise Control for those long drives home. It's all about comfort and convenience



Compact, stylish and packed with personality, it's the perfect SUV for students who want to stand out.

that keeps up with your busy schedule.

Safety? Covered. With features like ABS, ESP, Brake Assist and ISOFIX mounts, you can focus on your classes (and playlists) knowing you're always protected.

The Kia Sonet isn't just a compact SUV — it's freedom, ambition and fun rolled into one. For students who want a car that matches their lifestyle, it's the smart choice for every new adventure, you can count

on Kia to keep your Sonet in perfect shape through every semester and beyond.

Reliable International Automotive LLC (RIA), the official distributor for Kia in Oman, ensures a rewarding ownership experience. Ranked #1 by Kia in 2024 for Sales Customer Satisfaction in the Middle East and Africa, RIA delivers excellent products and unmatched facilities to guarantee customer satisfaction every mile.

31ST SPAR SUPERMARKET OPENS AT AL RAHMA MALL AL KHOUDH

MUSCAT: SPAR Oman has strengthened its presence in the Sultanate of Oman with the grand opening of its 31st store at Al Rahma Mall, Al Khoudh featuring a new-generation store design.

Following the success of its first Al Khoudh outlet, the new store reaffirms SPAR Oman's commitment to offering quality, savings, variety and convenience at affordable prices to the local community.

To commemorate the milestone, SPAR Oman has launched a special "Shop & Win Gold" promotion, offering 31 lucky shoppers the opportunity to win a gold coin every day for 31 days.

The new store features a comprehensive range of locally sourced fresh produce including fruits and vegetables, a dedicated meat and fish counter, a nuts section and a state-of-the-art live bakery operated by four in-house chefs. The bakery prepares a variety of Arabic sweets, pastries, savoury snacks and freshly baked breads, making the outlet a one-stop destination for everyday essentials.

Enhancing customer convenience, the store has home-delivery services via WhatsApp, eliminating



The new store reaffirms SPAR Oman's commitment to offering quality, savings, variety and convenience at affordable prices to the local community.

the need for logins or registration, as well as a self-checkout counter to ensure a faster and more seamless shopping experience. The outlet operates daily from 8:00 am to 12:00 midnight.

SPAR Oman distributed shopping vouchers to 50 families through Al Rahma Association for Motherhood and Child Welfare, reinforcing

its long-standing commitment to community support and social responsibility.

Commenting on the launch, Kanan Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas, said: "SPAR Oman has earned a stellar reputation as a go-to destination for world-class products and exceptional customer service.

As we celebrate our 31st store, we remain committed to gaining customer trust and expanding our presence across the country. From fresh produce and groceries to household essentials, the SPAR store at Al Rahma Mall will provide customers with a seamless shopping experience every time they shop".

Chief-guest at the launch-event, Sana bint Abdulrahman al Khanjariyah, Chairperson of Al Rahma Association for Motherhood and Child Welfare remarked: "We are delighted to have SPAR Supermarket as our exclusive grocer. SPAR is known for being neighbourhood-friendly, sourcing local products and fostering community partnerships. I am confident that SPAR customers will enjoy a modern, pleasant shopping environment that will build long-term loyalty within the community".

Bank Muscat launches subscription-based accounts for Najahi customers

MUSCAT: As part of the Bank's efforts to enhance Najahi's value proposition to small businesses, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the launch of 3 new Current Accounts.

The new accounts are subscription-based where customers will be charged a monthly subscription fee (ranging from RO 5 to RO 25, Including 5% VAT) and can avail concessions in pricing on various transactions.

With the introduction of the new current account variants, customers will be able to choose any of the 5 Current Account variants; Corporate Current Account, Najahi Current Account, or the 3 Subscription-Based Accounts, with different tariff and benefits depending on their needs.

First, the Basic Current Account comes with a monthly subscription fee of RO 5 (Including 5% VAT), no minimum balance requirement and no fees for issuing new debit card.

It offers 25 free cheque leaves per month, 3 Automated Clearing House (ACH) transactions



The new accounts are subscription-based where customers will be charged a monthly subscription fee.

per month and 10% concession for 5 Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) transactions per

month.

In addition, the Advanced Current Account comes with a monthly subscription fee of RO 15 (Including 5% VAT), no minimum balance requirement and no fees for issuing new debit card or replacement card. It offers 50 free cheque leaves per month, 10 ACH transactions per month and 20% concession for 10 RTGS transactions per month.

As for the Premium Current Account, it comes with a monthly subscription fee of RO 25 (Including 5% VAT), no minimum balance requirement and no annual fees for the debit card, issuance of new card or replacement card.

It also offers 100 free cheque leaves per month, 20 ACH transactions per month, 20% concession for 10 RTGS transactions per month and 10% concession for 5 outward SWIFT transactions per month (when charges are borne by remitter). The subscription-based current accounts will benefit customers who transact heavily and are currently incurring expenses on account of bank charges.

Customers can save on fees by availing benefits provided on charges.

Customers will be able to upgrade or downgrade as per the business requirement; and they will be notified through SMS and Email about the category of current account they are using.

Abdulnaser al Raisi, General Manager for Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "Over the years, Bank Muscat has been working steadily to further improve its portfolio of services and solutions; and has always sought to address customers' needs and aspirations by developing new solutions in line with the Bank's vision 'To serve you better, everyday'.

The launch of the three new current accounts for Najahi customers translated the Bank's customer-centric strategy and global banking trends. It will help us provide an unmatched banking convenience for our potential and existing Najahi customers. In Bank Muscat, we are proud to be the first bank in Oman to launch subscription-based variants to SME customers."

SHORTTAKES



The rollout is part of a strategic collaboration between Oman Airports and Huawei.

OMAN AIRPORTS LEADS GLOBAL SHIFT WITH WORLD’S FIRST WI-FI 7 LAUNCH

MUSCAT: Oman Airports has set a new global benchmark by becoming the first airport operator in the world to deploy Wi-Fi 7 technology, introducing next-generation connectivity at Muscat International Airport. This milestone underscores the Sultanate of Oman’s ambition to lead digital transformation in the aviation sector and strengthens its position as a regional hub for innovation in line with Oman Vision 2040.

The rollout is part of a strategic collaboration between Oman Airports and Huawei, aimed at building an advanced digital infrastructure capable of supporting the future needs of smart airports. Wi-Fi 7 delivers ultra-fast speeds and can handle a dramatically higher number of simultaneous connections.

The result is a more stable, secure and responsive browsing experience for travellers, airport staff and service providers.

With over 40,000 passengers passing through Muscat International Airport each day, the upgrade will ensure seamless, high-capacity connectivity across terminal areas, including departure halls, check-in counters, retail zones and dining spaces.

The initiative forms a core component of Oman Airports’ broader digital-transformation programme, designed to enhance the digital travel journey and create an innovation-driven operational environment.

Commenting on the achievement, Ahmed al Amri, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Airports, said: “Introducing Wi-Fi 7 marks an important milestone in our journey to elevate the passenger experience and enhance operational efficiency.”

RO 1.4 billion to build Oman’s green super-grid

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, NOV 15

OMAN’S infrastructure and project finance sector is powering forward with a strategic, large-scale capital investment programme designed to ensure long-term energy security and accelerate progress towards the nation’s Oman Vision 2040 goals.

This commitment positions the Sultanate of Oman’s utilities for a decade of sustained growth and leadership in the region’s green energy transition. This optimistic assessment of the sector’s trajectory is reinforced, according to Moody’s Report on November 12, by recent improvements in operational efficiency and strong government backing.

At the heart of this strategy is a transformative capital programme. The country’s three main rated utilities — Oman Electricity Transmission Company SAOC (OETC), Nama Electricity Distribution Company SAOC (NEDC) and Dhofar Integrated Services Company SAOC (DISC) — are collectively planning to invest RO 1.4 billion between 2025 and 2027.

This investment cycle goes far beyond maintaining existing assets; it lays down the backbone of Oman’s future green super-grid, supporting the national target of sourcing 30% of electricity from renewables by 2030 and meeting projected annual demand growth of around 4%.

This multi-year investment push follows a highly successful sector restructuring undertaken



This multi-year investment push follows a highly successful sector restructuring undertaken in 2023.

in 2023. The consolidation of five companies into three entities strengthened operational scale, minimised fragmentation and aligned the entire sector under a more coherent planning and regulatory framework.

Moody’s notes that this reorganisation is already delivering synergies through unified operations, shared-service efficiencies and improved financial management across both the Main Interconnected System (MIS) and rural networks.

These gains were supported by Nama Holding’s significant financial injections totalling approximately RO 225 million between 2021 and 2023, which helped stabilise balance sheets and strengthen the utilities’ regulated asset bases.

The flagship project driving the sector’s next phase is OETC’s Rabt 400 kV transmission interconnector, a milestone initiative linking Oman’s power system from the northern regions down to the central and southern governorates.

Once completed, Rabt will integrate areas that have historically depended on costly, carbon-intensive diesel generation, enabling the dispatch of large-scale wind and solar power, improving grid resilience and substantially reducing long-term operating costs.

The project is considered a cornerstone in unlocking Oman’s renewable-energy potential and in strengthening the reliability of supply for both industry and households.

Although the investment wave will place pressure on free cash flow and drive increased borrowing over the coming years, the sector’s financial foundation remains robust. The regulatory regime continues to be one of its principal credit strengths, offering predictable returns on a growing regulated asset base, transparent cost-recovery mechanisms and visibility on long-term cash flows.

Tariff structures, although evolving to support economic competitiveness, remain supported by clear rules and independent oversight.

A key challenge — and opportunity — lies in the approximately RO 2.3 billion in debt maturing between 2026 and 2027, which Moody’s highlights as a major refinancing event for the sector.

Instead of viewing this as a risk, investors see a window for competitive long-term financing, including green bonds, sukuk and sustainability-linked instruments aligned with Oman’s energy transition.

World Bank highlights Oman’s fiscal reform success

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 15

THE success of Oman’s fiscal reform agenda in strengthening public finances has been highlighted in a report featured on World Bank Blogs, the multilateral development financing institution’s official platform for analysis, commentary and insights on global development issues.

Jointly authored by World Bank experts Jasmin Chakeri, Hoda Youssef, Muhammad Khudadad Chattha and Yacine Ouahioune, the report outlines the key measures taken by the Omani government that helped reduce public debt from a peak of 68% of GDP in 2020 to 35% by the end of 2024.

“Oman’s experience illustrates the importance of fiscal sustainability as an ongoing process. For oil-rich economies, this includes managing



The fiscal measures overseen by the Ministry of Finance are designed to build a more balanced and resilient fiscal framework.

spending during periods of high revenue and planning for long-term stability. Oman’s recent reforms and targeted support measures have contributed to a rapid improvement in fiscal indicators”, the experts wrote.

A pivotal moment, the report noted, came in 2020 with the introduction of the Medium-Term

Fiscal Plan (MTFP), which set a five-year path to restore fiscal sustainability by reducing spending and broadening revenue sources.

The government curtailed hiring, lowered the wage bill; and reformed fuel and electricity subsidies through a targeted support system, helping cut public expenditure by 16 per cent.

On the revenue side, Oman introduced a 5 per cent VAT in 2021 alongside existing excise taxes, maintained a 15 per cent corporate income tax for most firms, applied a reduced 3 per cent rate for SMEs and upheld a higher 55 per cent rate for oil and gas companies — all measures designed to build a more balanced and resilient fiscal framework.

“MTFP delivered strong results, exceeding its fiscal balance and debt targets”, the report stated. “The country not only balanced its

books but has run fiscal surpluses since 2022. In 2024, Oman regained its investment-grade rating, attributed by credit rating agencies to improved debt indicators, stronger fiscal management and the implementation of economic reforms”.

Laudable was Oman’s decision to keep spending in check by trimming non-essential outlays rather than reducing essential services, the authors noted. At the same time, revenues were bolstered by widening the tax base instead of raising existing tax burdens.

Crucially, when oil prices rose, the country used the windfall to pay down debt instead of raising expenditure, it was stressed.

A core ongoing priority is strengthening non-oil revenues, which help stabilise the economy during downturns and enhance long-term fiscal resilience.

Oman has already taken significant steps, including the 2024 introduction of a Top-Up Tax for multinational groups in line with OECD BEPS rules, ensuring a minimum effective tax rate of 15 per cent. The country also plans to introduce the Gulf’s first personal income tax by 2028, starting with a 5 per cent rate on high earners — an approach other resource-dependent economies may consider.

Welcoming the progress made so far, the authors concluded: “As fiscal reforms remain an unfinished agenda, the next challenge for Oman will be maintaining momentum, requiring a steady commitment to build on the progress achieved.

With fiscal reform complementing efforts to expand growth in new non-oil sectors under Oman Vision 2040, the future could be bright for fiscal stability and broad-based economic growth”.

ECONOMIC PRESSURE

Trump eases food tariffs



US President Donald Trump has lifted tariffs on over 200 food items, including beef, coffee, bananas and orange juice, responding to rising public concern over grocery prices. The exemptions mark a notable shift after Trump repeatedly denied his import duties were contributing to inflation.

He admitted tariffs “may in some cases” raise prices but insisted the US faces “virtually no inflation”. — Reuters

ENERGY EXPANSION

Aramco set for US LNG deals



Saudi Aramco is preparing to sign two major LNG supply agreements with Woodside Energy and Commonwealth LNG during Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s visit to Washington next week, according to sources.

Seeking to become a leading LNG player, particularly in the US market, Aramco aims for 20 mtpa of LNG capacity, with 4.5 million tonnes currently under development. — Reuters

MARKET JITTERS

Bitcoin falls to six-month low



Bitcoin slid to a six-month low on Friday as investors retreated from risk assets amidst declining expectations of a Federal Reserve rate cut at the upcoming policy meeting.

Markets remained tense ahead of key economic data following the government’s reopening after a 43-day shutdown. Analysts note Bitcoin still mirrors equity trends rather than serving as a hedge asset. — Reuters

Balanced growth: Developments in Oman’s governance model



**DR HILAL
AL SAWAI**

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert.

AS Oman approaches the end of its fourth decade, the progress made in developing a governance structure that enables all regions of the Sultanate of Oman to advance in a balanced and sustainable manner is remarkable.

As a testament to this progress, Oman is placing greater attention to the development of its governorates, the upgrading of local administrations, the delivery and equitable geographic spread of public services; and the provision of quality services to all citizens.

Development at this tier is essential to the Oman Vision 2040 Framework and the subsequent focus on social development and community resilience to allow for Oman’s international competitive capabilities.

Administrative divisions of the Sultanate of Oman include a range of geographical governorates, cultural distributions and economic capacity variations. As a result, development programmes are customised to address these differences.

The decentralisation phenomenon released the structural dependence of local authorities on regional administrations, enabling local authorities to prioritise the planning of development programmes and their subsequent implementations.

This rapid response capacity of local administrations enables authorities to enhance their community engagement, regional development-oriented investment promotion capacity, job provision and employment generation.

One of the primary focuses of the governorates’ strategic development plan is the development of infrastructure. Huge development has been made in the road, port and airport transport networks, which has made it possible to connect the road networks of the governorates to the bordering countries

These networks have also aided the trade and tourism sectors of the countries.

The upgrades to the coastal governorates port and fishing facilities also aid in the logistics and recreational activities.

The road networks of the interior regions have also been improved and these roads are able to connect remote communities to major cities.

Improving the economic diversity of the regions is another major area of focus for development of the governorates.

Each region is provided with the encouragement to develop the industries that are in alignment with the natural resources that are present in that region.

Among the northern regions, tourism and logistics industries have been developed as there is a close proximity to international borders.

The southern regions that are also known for their agriculture as well as their tourism have developed their agriculture and seasonal tourism.

Other regions continue to put focus on mining, manufacturing and renewable energy. These developments help in improving the distribution of resources

As a testament to this progress, Oman is placing greater attention to the development of its governorates, the upgrading of local administrations, the delivery and equitable geographic spread of public services; and the provision of quality services to all citizens.

to different regions and to create a stable economy for the nation as a whole.

Social development remains a priority, and planning for each governorate incorporates improvements in healthcare, education and housing.

The government guarantees that all areas of Oman have quality medical services, modern schools and affordable housing. Oman is seeking to enhance the infrastructure of its society to improve the quality of life and promote the positive demographic growth of its people.

Enhancing the governorate development policies to include protection of the environment is an important step in the right direction.

The government of Oman’s policies focus on protecting the diverse wildlife, fragile ecosystems and developing responsible urbanisation.

This importance on eco-sustainability is visible in the country’s water sustainability initiatives, development of renewable energy, eco-tourism and wildlife reserves.

In summary, Oman’s governorate growth is truly a leap in community development and a positive change in economic diversification. The country is also protecting diverse cultural traditions and the natural environment.

This growth, coupled with planned decentralisation, community-focused investments and infrastructure development is bringing balance and increased prosperity to all of Oman’s communities.

SOLAR POWER: OMAN SHAPES ITS OWN ENERGY FUTURE



**NAJAH
AL RIYAMI**

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

SOLAR power has become the fastest growing source of electricity worldwide, transforming energy systems at a pace that analysts once thought impossible.

Recent global assessments show unprecedented momentum in solar deployment as countries commit to cleaner, more resilient power systems.

In 2024 alone, the world added around 585 gigawatts of renewable capacity, most of it solar, marking a 15 per cent increase from the previous year. This pushed total global installed renewable capacity to roughly 4.45 terawatts and solidified solar’s position at the core of global energy expansion. Projections remain even more striking. Solar is expected to account for nearly 80 per cent of all new renewable electricity capacity added between 2025 and 2030.

Independent research also shows that solar generation is now growing faster than global electricity demand, signalling a structural shift in power markets as daytime solar output lowers average system costs.

Analysts note that the world is entering a phase where solar is not simply supplementing energy supply but actively reshaping grid operations and investment behaviour.

Technological progress is accelerating the trend. Tandem perovskite-silicon cells have surpassed 33 per cent efficiency in laboratory tests, with pilot production beginning in several major manufacturing hubs. Advances in bifacial modules, floating solar, agrivoltaics and AI-driven system optimisation are moving into commercial deployment.

At the same time, global manufacturing capacity for solar modules and components continues to expand as countries seek to localise supply chains for energy security.

Long-duration battery storage technologies are maturing, enabling solar-rich regions to meet evening peak demand more reliably.

For Oman, these global shifts are timely and strategically significant. The country has one of the world’s strongest solar resources, with annual irradiation levels that position it among the most suitable regions for large-scale solar development.

National diversification plans already call for substantial increases in renewable generation, supported by competitive utility-scale projects producing some of the region’s lowest electricity tariffs.

Rethinking how Omani companies grow

WHEN the government launched the “Promising Companies Market” as a five-year platform to help local firms access capital, many people saw it as simply another financing tool. But the real story lies elsewhere.

This initiative signals a deeper shift in the way Oman wants its private sector to think, grow and compete. It is less about pumping money into companies and more about building a new business culture — one defined by transparency, discipline and ambition.

For years, the major obstacle to private-sector growth was not the lack of funds. Banks had liquidity. Investment funds were active. National programmes were constantly introduced.

Yet most companies struggled to expand because they lacked the structure and governance needed to attract and manage investment. In truth, capital was available, but investable companies were not.

That is why this new market matters. It tells the private sector that the era of closed, family-run businesses that avoid transparency is fading.

The future belongs to companies that grow through clarity, accountability and strong management — not through protection or connections.

In advanced economies, listing on a market is not a reward; it is a test. Companies that pass it demonstrate they can publish clean financial statements, separate ownership from day-to-day management and make decisions based on data rather than instinct.

They show they are ready for scrutiny, investor expectations and the pressure to perform consistently.

The Promising Companies Market offers three flexible pathways — direct listing, indirect listing or conversion into a closed joint-stock company with targeted incentives. But beneath these technical



The Promising Companies Market offers flexible pathways to a closed joint-stock company with targeted incentives.



**QASIM
AL MAASHANI**

The author is the head of the Business and Politics department at Oman Observer.

This initiative signals a deeper shift in the way Oman wants its private sector to think, grow and compete. It is less about pumping money into companies and more about building a new business culture — one defined by transparency, discipline and ambition.

pathways is a more important question: How many Omani companies are truly ready for this cultural transformation?

Companies often face internal challenges that hold them back: weak governance structures, family-based decision-making, limited financial reporting, fear of sharing ownership and a lack of long-term planning.

These issues cannot be solved with loans or tax incentives alone. They require a shift in mindset. A company can receive every type of support, but without a modern organisational culture, it will remain fragile and unable to scale.

Investors — whether local or international — look for two things: trustworthy numbers and reliable management. If this programme manages to help even a modest number of companies develop these qualities, the impact could be profound. Oman would gain a new generation of firms capable of exporting, forming global partnerships and leading new industries.

This matters because Oman’s future economy — built around green hydrogen, logistics, advanced manufacturing, technology, aquaculture and tourism — depends on companies with strong internal systems. Without a modern business culture, even the most promising sectors will struggle to grow.

One risk is that incentives could end up circulating among the same established companies. If that happens, the programme will lose

its purpose. The real achievement lies in bringing fresh companies into the formal market — companies led by young entrepreneurs, innovators and ambitious SMEs.

That is why the third pathway, which supports conversion to a closed joint-stock company with tax and marketing incentives, is so important. It opens the door to companies that were previously excluded.

The Promising Companies Market should be viewed within the broader economic transition underway in Oman. The country is shifting from a state-led model to an economy powered by private-sector initiative.

This shift includes regulatory reforms, FDI growth, industrial diversification, digital transformation and new green-energy investments. To keep pace with these developments, companies must evolve — structurally and culturally.

The Promising Companies Market is more than a platform for funding. It is a call for companies to rethink how they operate, how they grow and how they present themselves to investors.

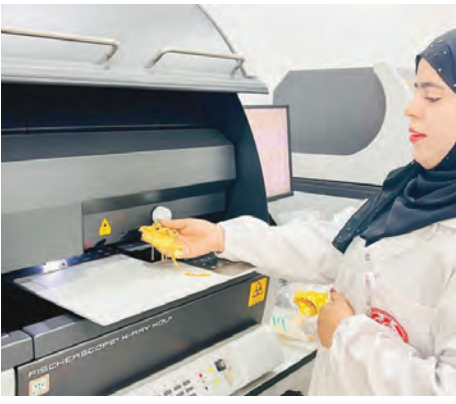
If this programme succeeds in reshaping business culture before reshaping balance sheets, it could become one of the most influential private-sector reforms of the Oman Vision 2040 era. It has the potential to redefine what it means to be a successful Omani company and to open the door to a stronger, more resilient economy.

Stronger controls on metals trade

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion has reinforced its oversight of the precious metals and gemstones trade, strengthening market integrity and protecting the national economy.

The Ministry's efforts — aimed at curbing illicit practices, tackling commercial fraud and limiting smuggling — form part of its wider strategy to support and regulate the precious metals industry.

Imad bin Khamis al Shukaili, Director General of the Directorate General of Standards and Metrology, said the Directorate's work centres on three key precious metals: platinum, gold and silver.



The Ministry's efforts form part of its wider strategy to support and regulate the precious metals industry.

Oversight is carried out through the Precious Metals Laboratory,

which provides a full suite of technical services, including elemental analysis, purity testing, alloy examination and verification of gold and silver leaf used in plating and specialised industrial applications.

Following detailed analysis, jewellery and alloys are stamped in accordance with Omani legal standards, ensuring product reliability and issuing official licences for trading as stipulated under the Precious Metals Control Law.

Al Shukaili added that the laboratory conducts regular and random inspections at retail and manufacturing outlets to ensure compliance with approved

specifications. It also issues official analysis certificates to clients seeking certification for their jewellery.

These efforts, he said, reflect a wider institutional drive to embrace advanced digital systems, accelerate testing processes and elevate service quality, thereby reinforcing the Directorate's position as a leading national and regional institution.

Mansour bin Rashid al Yaarubi, a technician at the Precious Metals Laboratory, highlighted an "unprecedented operational leap" this year, driven by an increased volume of analysed samples and improved technical efficiency. He said the total

weight of samples analysed and stamped exceeded 1.53 tonnes, all of which were found to comply fully with standard specifications — evidence, he noted, of the laboratory's precision and quality.

He added that investment in modern digital technologies has accelerated workflows and improved procedures. The department has also strengthened its workforce by increasing the number of technicians to meet rising demand and enhance service delivery.

Performance indicators show an average processing time of three working days, with samples delivered within two days after testing and stamping. — ONA

CLASSIFIEDS

SIT. WANTED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SIT. VACANT

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ART/LIFE



FILM FESTIVAL

‘The Unknown’ wins best international short film at Rabat Festival



The Omani short film ‘The Unknown’, directed by Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, has won the Best International Short Fiction Film Award at the 30th The Rabat International Author Film Festival (FICAR) (Festival International du Cinema D’Auteur de Rabat) in Morocco, earning strong praise from the jury for its compelling narrative, assured direction and high-quality visual treatment.

Oman’s participation, represented by the Oman Film Society as the Guest of Honour, provided a significant platform to showcase the country’s fast-growing cinematic capabilities. The film, which centres on the mysterious disappearance of a young man named Musa in an old village, captivated audiences with its blend of suspense and striking visuals.

This achievement underscores the rising stature of Omani cinema in international festivals. The closing ceremony was attended by Khalid bin Salim Bamakhalif, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Morocco, who joined in celebrating the national success and Production Manager Qasim bin Mohammed al Salimi was honoured for his distinguished contributions to the development of Oman’s film industry.

The festival is dedicated to the author cinema, a true cinema of art and thought in all its forms, to brave films, demanding, intelligent, even radicals who destroy the clichés; films that have an urgency and a personal writing dedicated to humanity in all its forms.

The FICAR is an alternative practice to counter the industrial machine that has globalised the taste and erased the right to be different. — ONA

QUICK FEATURES



CLIMATE

An indigenous man attends a protest to call for climate justice and territorial protection during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30), in Belem, Brazil. — Reuters



FESTIVAL

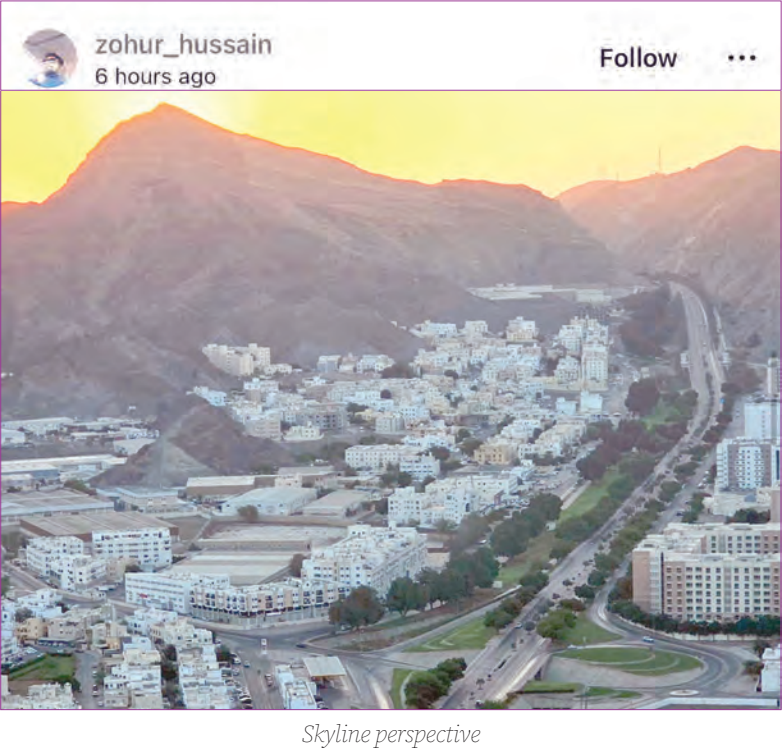
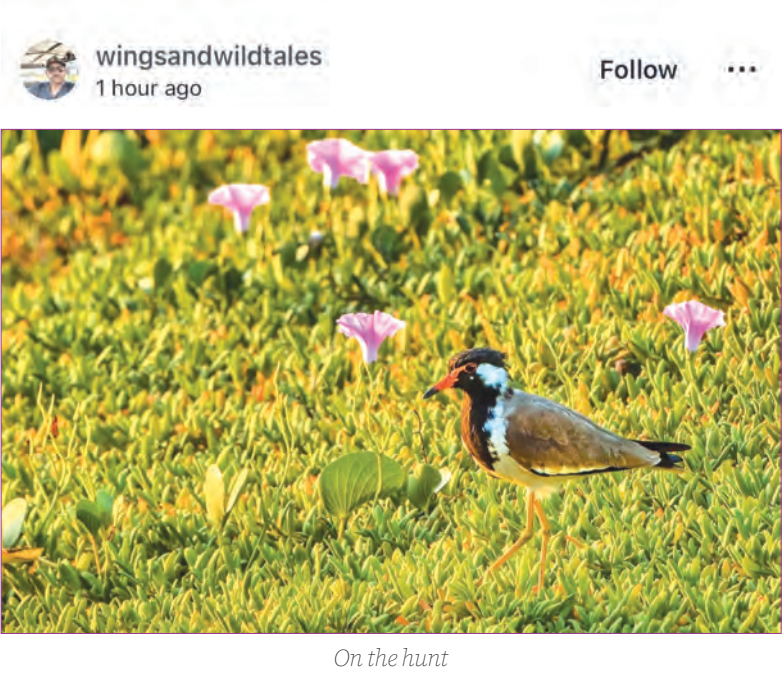
Giant hot air balloons of various shapes being lifted to begin flights from the Metropolitan Park over the city of Leon during the 2025 International Balloon Festival in Leon, Mexico. — AFP



FLOCK

Red-billed gulls are seen in their colony in Taiaroa Head at the northeastern tip of the Otago Peninsula in Dunedin. — AFP

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REDEFINING ART WITH NEW IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE



An immersive art space in the ancient Japanese capital of Kyoto is offering a novel experience to visitors from around the world, aiming to dissolve the boundary between observer and art. Titled “Biovortex”, the exhibition is the latest and largest permanent installation in Japan created by teamLab, an art collective that has risen to global fame for its pioneering approach blending art, technology and nature. Biovortex, which opened on October 7, presents more than 50 immersive digital artworks spanning 10,000 square metres (107,639 square feet) and is attracting a broad spectrum of visitors from toddlers to the elderly. In one of the installations, called “Morphing Continuum”, countless glowing spheres float in space as a monumental sculpture emerges from the

ground and drifts in midair, constantly shifting and reshaping in response to visitors’ movements. “Viewers become one with the sculpture, while the boundaries between themselves and artwork grow indistinct and float in air”, said teamLab founder Toshiyuki Inoko. “It creates an experience unlike anything humanity has ever made in terms of material objects — something that defies ordinary expectations. I think the artworks offer an experience which expands human perceptions”. Visitors expressed surprise at the intensity of emotion and physical immersion that the experience offered. “Just wonderful”, said Dimitri VanCorstanje, a 25-year-old tourist from the Netherlands. “It immersed me more than just with my eyes”. — Reuters



COFFEE WASTE TURNS TO ‘GREEN’ INK

ARWA AL HASHIMI

At a time when environmental challenges are growing and the need for innovative solutions is becoming more urgent, young Omanis continue to prove that creativity can be a powerful tool for positive change. Among these inspiring examples stands “Midad”, an Omani idea born from a simple everyday observation, which evolved into a national initiative dedicated to sustainability and green innovation. The story of Midad began with a simple moment of reflection in a university café, when a group of students noticed the large amount of coffee waste thrown away daily without being used. This ordinary scene sparked an inspiring environmental question: Could this waste be turned into something valuable? From that point, the idea emerged to create eco-friendly ink from coffee waste, combining environmental innovation with practical thinking, while reducing the environmental impact of everyday waste. Midad started as a university research project that aimed to explore the possibility of extracting natural pigments from used coffee grounds and transforming them into usable ink. After successful initial experiments, the team managed to develop a prototype, marking the first step towards turning their research into a tangible initiative. Later, they participated in several innovation and entrepreneurship competitions, including the Eureka Competition in Dubai, where they won the Best Sustainable Product Award, an achievement that boosted their confidence

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and encouraged them to continue developing their idea. The award was not only recognition of their scientific effort, but also proof that young Omanis can provide practical solutions to modern environmental issues. The ink produced by Midad is made from natural ingredients extracted from coffee waste, with safe organic additives that help maintain colour stability and quality. In terms of performance, the ink has shown excellent consistency and durability, while being free from the harmful chemicals typically found in commercial inks. This makes it both environmentally friendly and safe for human use. Through this innovative approach, coffee transforms from a simple beverage into a valuable raw material contributing to a more sustainable economy. Currently, the team is focusing on developing black printer ink made from coffee waste, working to improve its quality and make it ready for commercial use. However, their ambition extends beyond that. In the future, they aim to expand production to include other colours of organic ink and eventually to design and produce eco-friendly pens carrying the Midad identity, completing their vision of creating a range of sustainable, coffee-based products. Recognising the importance of economic sustainability, the Midad team is working on enhancing production efficiency and reducing costs without compromising quality. They are also building

partnerships with local cafés to secure a continuous and almost cost-free supply of raw materials — used coffee grounds — thereby lowering manufacturing expenses. Their goal is clear: to make sustainable ink an affordable and accessible product, not just a niche eco-friendly alternative. Midad believes that sustainability is not just an environmental concept but a mindset and a way of life. Through their journey, they inspire Omani youth to view waste as an opportunity rather than a burden. When young people realise they can turn waste into valuable resources, they gain a sense of responsibility, innovation and empowerment, which lies at the heart of true sustainability. The founders of Midad aspire to transform their initiative into the first Omani company specialised in sustainable organic inks. “Our dream is for Midad to become a symbol of Omani environmental creativity to prove that green solutions can start as a student idea and grow to make a real difference”, the team says. With their ongoing research, development and expanding production plans, this dream is becoming closer to reality every day. In the end, Midad is more than an environmental initiative, it’s a story of awareness, transformation and youthful innovation. It reminds us that big change can begin with a small idea, one that was once born in a university café and today writes, quite literally, a new chapter of Omani sustainable creativity.

B E T W E E N L I F E A N D R O U T I N E

A HAUNTING NEW EXHIBITION IN MUSCAT



PICTURES BY **BILARAB AL KHARUSI**

IDRIS AL BALUSHI

THE Omani Society for Fine Arts opened its halls to a world both eerie and familiar. This is the world of ‘When Life Turns into a Habit’, the new exhibition by contemporary artist Hamad al Harthy, who uses the visual language of the undead to explore the experience of living without truly being alive.

The show was opened under the auspices of Ibrahim Bani Oraba, Assistant Director-General, General Directorate of Arts, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

In this dim space, where the lights fall softly on distorted faces and swollen forms, the air feels unusually still, as if the room itself is holding its breath. The figures on the walls stare back with yellowed skin and green tinted cheeks, eyes dulled into a lifeless red.

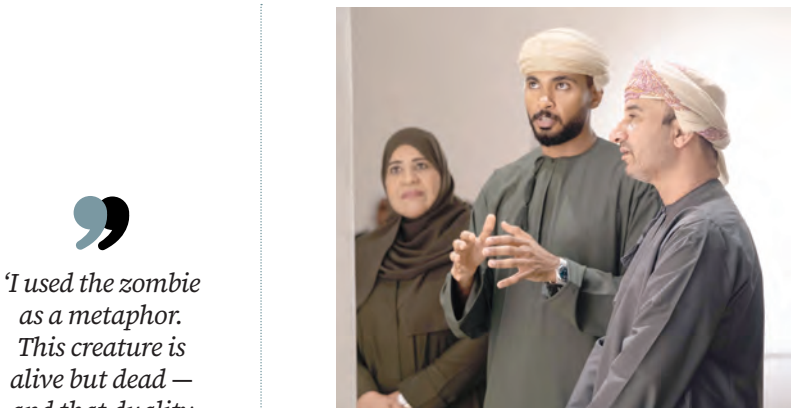
At first glance, they resemble beings from a forgotten world, yet something in them feels dangerously close. They look like us, they live like us, they continue like us.

Al Harthy stands in the centre of his show, calm and direct, speaking about the idea that shaped every canvas, sculpture and animation in the room.

“There are people who exist in life”, he says, “but they are not truly living. They move, but something inside them has died”.

He gestures towards a series of hybrid figures, half human, half rotting, caught between decay and routine. Their bodies sag as though exhausted from the inside, their skin carrying the sickly colours of decomposition. “I used the zombie as a metaphor”, he explains. “This creature is alive but dead. And if you look at the sculptures and paintings, you will notice hints of mummification, stages of deterioration. The skin tones, greens, yellows, show that the body is not natural anymore”.

Despite their decay, these figures continue with their daily tasks. In the exhibition’s video piece, screened inside a retro 90s television, a character is shown mechanically going about his conventional life, landing a job,



“I used the zombie as a metaphor. This creature is alive but dead — and that duality reflects how many people live today. If you look closely at the sculptures and paintings, you’ll see hints of mummification, stages of deterioration. The greens and yellows in the skin show a body that is no longer natural.”

HAMAD AL HARTHY
Contemporary artist about his exhibition ‘When Life Turns into a Habit’

buying a car, getting married, having children.

Al Harthy uses this interaction to highlight how easily life becomes a checklist, a path walked without reflection. “They are living their lives”, he says, “but not truly. Not in earnest. They just follow routine, step by step, as if life is carrying them instead of the other way around”.

One of the show’s most striking pieces is an enormous soft sculpture, heavy and swollen, lying on its side. Its unsettling form comes from a specific observation.

“When an animal dies in a river”, Al Harthy explains, “its body swells from the inside. I imagined this figure the same way, dying internally, puffed from within, exhausted, yet still continuing as if nothing is wrong”.

Throughout the exhibition, every figure wears a square on its head or is rather trapped in a consuming cube, a repeated symbol.

“It is about thinking inside the box”, he says. “No one tries to break

out of it. That is why the square appears everywhere”.

For Al Harthy, the show is a statement about the evolving art scene in Oman. “Most exhibitions here rely on traditional art, landscapes and portraits”, he says. “I wanted to show that contemporary art exists here too, that there are Omani artists with modern and unusual ideas”. He chose mediums that reflect this shift, digital painting, soft sculpting with fabric, 3D printed forms, graphic design and video animation.

“All of them work together to tell one story”, he says.

As visitors move through the space, their reactions oscillate between fascination and discomfort.

Mohammed al Abri, an architect and visual artist, shares his first impression, “It is strange”, he says. “The shapes are unfamiliar, the red eyes, protruding bones, skin clinging to skeletons. It feels like something from another dimension”.

He pauses before a piece with

hollow cheeks and torn clothing. “It looks like a memory of famine or a glimpse into another era. But that is the beauty of it. This kind of art expresses the artist himself, his emotions and stories. In the end, art is a personal vision”.

By the same token, Ahed bin Rashid al Harthy, a visual artist, observes a digital painting with fractured lines and muted colours.

“The idea captured me immediately”, she says. “It is different and new. I have never seen an exhibition with this concept”.

“We live this. Routine has made our days almost identical. The exhibition captures and expresses that feeling beautifully”.

What impressed her most was the diversity of techniques and mediums. “The variety gave the exhibition richness”, she says.

“The works did not just sit on the walls. They made you part of the experience. You do not just look, you feel”.

As the evening progresses, visitors gather around the swollen sculpture, the boxed heads and the flickering 90s television. Their footsteps echo softly through the gallery, weaving gently into the story Al Harthy has built.

In this dim hall, surrounded by figures who walk yet do not live, a question lingers, which parts of our own lives have turned into habit?

Al Harthy’s exhibition does not answer. It simply holds a mirror to society, revealing that the border between living and merely existing is far thinner than expected.