

P13

OMANI-POLISH STUDY EXPLORES HYDROGEN GENERATION FROM WASTEWATER



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VINTAGE MESSI NETS HAT-TRICK AS ARGENTINA HIT BOLIVIA FOR 6



P20

A NEW MINI-MOON IS BEING CAPTURED BY PLANET EARTH



MUSCAT

HM THANKED BY ARMENIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Vahagn Khachaturyan of the Republic of Armenia, in reply to His Majesty's greetings cable to him on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, President Khachaturyan expressed his utmost thanks and sincere appreciation for His Majesty's heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health and well-being. He also wished the people of Oman continuous peace and prosperity.

Decree promulgates Law on Protection of Bank Deposits

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Wednesday issued two Royal Decrees.

Royal Decree No 47/2024 promulgates a Law on Protection of Bank Deposits, after presenting the same before the Council of Oman.

Article (1) stipulates that the Law on Protection of Bank Deposits attached to this Decree shall be enforced.

Article (2) states that all origins, rights, obligations and assets pertaining to the system of insurance of bank deposits cited in the Law on Bank Deposits Insurance Scheme promulgated by Royal Decree No (9/95) shall be transferred to the "insurance fund for the protection of deposits in licensed establishments of

conventional origin", cited in the law attached to this Decree.

Article (3) says that the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman shall issue the Executive Regulation of the attached law, as well as the decisions necessary for the implementation of its provisions. Till such time, the existing regulations and decisions shall continue to be implemented without prejudice to the provisions of the law attached to this Decree.

Article (4) annuls the aforementioned Law on Bank Deposits Insurance Scheme promulgated by Royal Decree No 9/95, as well as all that contradicts the attached law or contravenes its provisions.

Article (5) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publication.

Royal Decree No (48/2024) ratifies an agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on mutual visa waiver for holders of Diplomatic, Special and Service passports, signed in Muscat on June 26, 2024.

Article (1) ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this Decree. Article (2) says that this Royal Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — ONA

HM, Iran President discuss regional issues

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Wednesday conducted a phone call with President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian of the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the telephonic conversation, His Majesty the Sultan and the Iranian President exchanged views about developments on the regional and international arenas, in addition to methods to achieve peace and stability in the region. — ONA



MACRON TAKES JAB ON ISRAEL'S CREATION

French President Emmanuel Macron has further strained tense relations with Israel with a comment referring to the creation of the Israeli state, a verbal jab that was rapidly denounced by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as distorting history. Macron has sought to take a more uncompromising stance on the conflicts in the Middle East after Israel launched an offensive against targets of the Hezbollah in Lebanon, a former French protectorate. The French leader said last week that stopping the export of weapons used by Israel in Lebanon and in its war against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip was the only way to stop the two conflicts. Paris has also denounced Israeli fire against the 10,000 peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon in southern Lebanon, which includes a French contingent of around 700 troops.

Honorable Lady congratulates Omani women

MUSCAT: Her Highness The Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, on Wednesday delivered a speech on the occasion of the Omani Women's Day, celebrated on October 17 annually. The speech reads as follows: "The 17th of October every year renews our pride and honour in the Omani women who have proven, through their dedication and determination, that success knows no boundaries and that their prominent imprint appears in all fields as an illuminating beacon of the comprehensive renaissance of our dear country.

"Their outstanding role cannot be ignored whether through their cultural, social or economic contributions as they march steadily towards progress and prosperity carrying the banner of giving that stands upright supported by the attention of the wise leadership. "The achievements made by Omani women are a source of pride and inspiration and we

call on them to carry on with their great progress with excellence and creativity being their beacon and self-development and skill-building are their permanent path to remain a beacon of awareness and positivity and a voice that rejects extremism and narrow-mindedness.

"We are currently witnessing rapid changes with women shouldering double responsibility especially with regard to raising children and protecting the family in light of the boom in modern means of communication invading the entire world and consuming people's time trying to follow up with the content of visual and written media that have created new lifestyles and unusual behaviours. This requires intensifying awareness of the importance of dealing wisely and cautiously with the content of social media by taking the good and avoiding the bad.

"May the Omani women and all women of the world enjoy goodness and peace." — ONA

GCC-EU agree to expand scope of strategic ties

BRUSSELS: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, the Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, headed the Sultanate of Oman's delegation at the first GCC-EU Joint Summit in Brussels.

Upon his arrival at the summit's venue at the EU building, HH Sayyid Asaad was greeted by Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.

HH Sayyid Asaad delivered a speech during the opening of the summit reading as follows: "Your Excellencies, Your Highnesses, Leaders of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and European Union (EU) countries, esteemed guests, May the Almighty's peace and mercy



HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said headed the Sultanate of Oman's delegation at the first GCC-EU Joint Summit in Brussels.

be upon you. "At the outset of this summit, I am pleased to convey to you the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman, along with his sincere wishes for the success of this summit.

"No doubt, this first meeting at the level of our countries' summit ushers in an advanced stage, reflecting the shared GCC-EU

countries' vision to expand the scopes of strategic partnership and deepen the existing cooperation in various fields, notably in economic spheres, trade, investment, renewable energy and the common keenness to ease the freedom of travel for our countries' citizens, including business owners, tourists, and students. TURN TO P2

Omani women vital contributors across sectors

MAI AL ABRI
MUSCAT, OCT 16

The Sultanate of Oman on October 17 celebrates the Omani Women's Day in recognition of their vital role in the nation's progress. This year, Omani Women's Day is celebrated under the theme "Women as Partners in Development."

This day highlights the contributions of women across many fields, such as politics, economy, culture and education. It also underscores the role of women in the sustainable development of the Sultanate of Oman.

The Sultanate of Oman is home to 1,468,077 women, who play a crucial role in the nation's workforce and society. While many actively contribute across various sectors, a significant number remain engaged in unpaid family work,

highlighting both their contributions and natural role in the society. According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), as of June 2024, 100,450 Omani women are employed in the public sector and 119,593 in the private sector. Meanwhile, as many as 57 per cent artisans are women, according to the NCSI data.

This celebration underscores Omani women's influence as they contribute in driving forward Oman Vision 2040.

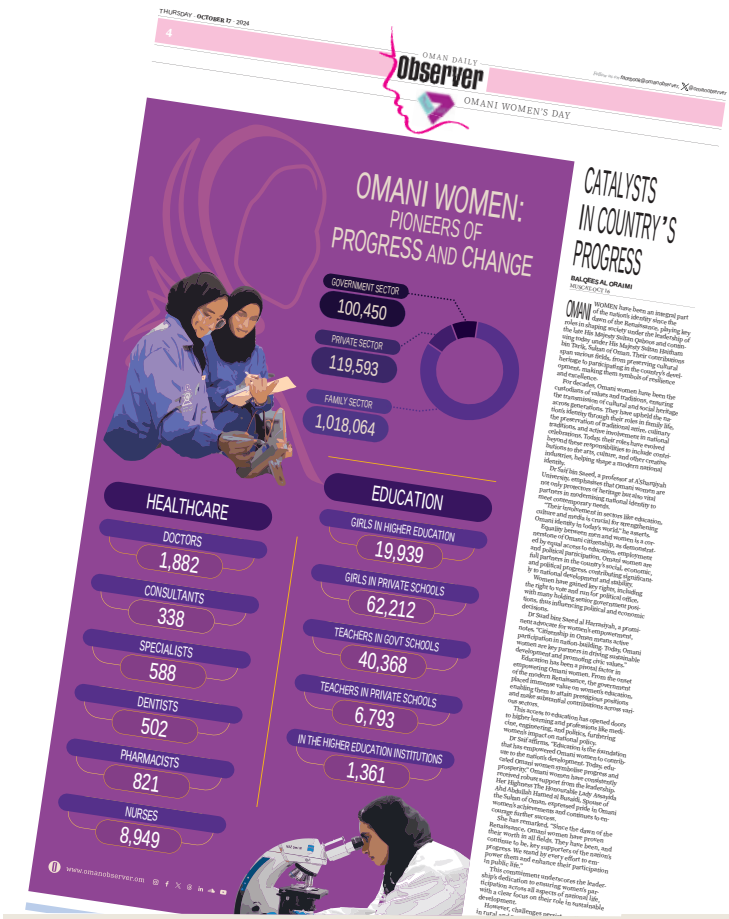
In education, Omani girls are making strides, with 19,939 enrolled in higher education and over 366,000 in public schools. Female teachers are instrumental in shaping young minds, with 40,368 teaching in government schools and 6,793 in private institutions.

However, only 1,361 women faculty members serve in higher education, indicating a gap

where further investment could benefit future generations.

A notable area of progress is in healthcare, where 22,779 women are employed across various roles. Among these, 1,882 are qualified women doctors, serving as primary care providers and specialists.

Additionally, 338 women consultants offer expert guidance, while 588 women specialists represent diverse medical fields, providing critical care in areas like paediatrics and oncology. With 956 women general practitioners acting as first points of contact for patients, and 502 women dentists promoting oral health, Omani women are vital to the healthcare system. Furthermore, 821 women pharmacists ensure safe medication management, demonstrating their importance in healthcare delivery. TURN TO P2



OMAN

TENDERS WORTH OVER RO 216M AWARDED

MUSCAT: The Tender Board on Wednesday awarded a number of tenders and additional works complementing different development projects to the tune of RO 216,377,944. The tenders were awarded during the Tender Board's 4th meeting of the year (2024), chaired by Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, and Chairman of the Board. The works included the dualisation of Izki-Nizwa road linking South Qarut, Birkat Al Mouz and Farq (value RO 46,874,983), the dualisation of the road between Raysut and Al Mughlail in Dhofar Governorate (value RO 34,844,452) and other projects.

OMANI WOMEN VITAL CONTRIBUTORS

FROM PI
Omani women nurses also play a crucial role, with 8,949 working in the sector. Of these, 8,353 are employed by the Ministry of Health (MoH), delivering essential services in hospitals and clinics. In the private sector, 3,305 nurses provide quality care outside the public system, while 507 work in various other healthcare settings. Despite these achievements, challenges persist. The Omanisation rate in the MoH stands at 71 per cent, but disparities exist among roles. While a majority of dentists and pharmacists are Omani, only 60 per cent of nurses are Omani. Omani women actively participate in community initiatives through various associations, with over 10,600 involved in promoting their rights and development. This engagement reflects the significant strides towards equality that Omani women enjoy in society today. As the nation moves forward, the continued support for women's empowerment is essential for maintaining and enhancing this progress, ensuring more equitable future for everyone.

Sayyid Asaad meets EU leaders

HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan met on Wednesday with Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of the Republic of Greece. The meeting was held on the sidelines of HH Sayyid Asaad participation in the first GCC-EU Joint Summit. HH Sayyid Asaad also met, separately, with Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium and Charles Michel, President of the European Council. These meetings reviewed bilateral relations and means of enhancing cooperation in different fields. The officials also exchanged views on several matters of mutual interest. The meetings also discussed topics in the agenda of the first GCC-EU Joint summit. The meetings were attended by several senior officials from each side. — **ONA**



HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said with European Council President Charles Michel, European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels on Wednesday.

Vision to expand scope of GCC-EU strategic partnership

FROM PI
The summit paves the way for strengthening political and diplomatic cooperation in a manner that contributes to consolidating the pillars of security, stability and peace. “Cooperation between our countries — in political, economic, cultural and technological areas—constitutes a bridge that will enable us to address common challenges more effectively. We would like to commend the role of the European Union and its openness to coopera-

tion aimed at achieving the positive transition desired by the entire world, and to which the whole world needs to contribute in order to deepen the values of peaceful coexistence and enrich interaction among peoples. “Your Excellencies, Your Highnesses, Esteemed Guests: We welcome the positions of countries that are consistent with the positions of the GCC countries and the international community, notably towards the realisation of an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the

recognition of the State of Palestine. Such an international recognition reflects the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and affirms the Two-State Solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. “In this regard, we would like to state that the Sultanate of Oman supports the international coalition to implement the Two-State Solution announced by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and in partnership with Norway and the European Union. “Oman also welcomes the call

made by President Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, to stop arms exports to Israel. This call represents an important milestone within the framework of international efforts aimed at realising a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, protecting innocent civilians from the horrors of this conflict and terminating the Israeli aggression on Lebanon that constitutes a serious escalation and threatens to expand the scope of the conflict, violence and instability in the region. — **ONA**



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THE RESIDENCES



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Visit our Open House at
The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort
From October 20th to 22nd, 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Own your St. Regis Residence in Oman
with our limited-time payment plan

40% Down Payment

60% Installments across 3 years

*Payment plan valid until October 31st only



VOTINGSTAGE



‘TOGETHER WE PROGRESS’ FORUM TO VOTE ON TOPICS

Muscat: The voting stage for the selection of topics to be debated during the 3rd edition of the “Together we progress” forum began on Wednesday. The forum is organised by the Secretariat-General of the Council of Ministers to enhance interaction and communication between the government and society. Voting will continue until October 23, 2024. Voters can participate in the topic selection process through an electronic questionnaire available via the link (<https://2u.pw/QfKI6IdD>). The questionnaire identifies three themes, each of which comprises different topics. The first theme titled “Economy and Development” includes the topics of: “Salient features of the 11th Five-Year Plan”, “Economic diversification efforts”, and “Entrepreneurship and local content”. The second theme titled “Private Sector and Investment” includes the topics of: “Role of private sector in generating employment opportunities”, “Investment in future technologies and artificial intelligence (AI)”, and “Efforts of Oman Investment Authority in developing local and foreign investments”. The third theme titled “Development of governorates” covers the topics of: “Local economy”, “Sustainable cities”, and “Urban planning”. — **ONA**



OMAN JOINS WAIPA

Geneva: Oman has joined the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) in Geneva in an event that reflects Oman’s Vision 2040 to attract investments. This came during the reception of Idris bin Abdulrahman al Khanjari, Permanent Representative of Oman to the UN and international organisations in Geneva on Wednesday by Ismail Ershin, Executive Director of WAIPA. The Executive Director of WAIPA congratulated Oman on joining the Association, established by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and 50 other investment promotion agencies in 1995.

Share of GDP from agriculture and fisheries up

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Oman has clocked a milestone in the first half of 2024 for agriculture and fishing, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR). The gross domestic product (GDP) from the two activities rose to RO 451.2 million in the first half of this year compared to RO 423.4 million for the same period last year, and the contribution rate to the GDP at market price increased from 2.3 per cent to



Salim bin Ali al Hakmani, Chairman of the Consumer Protection Authority, and other officials at the World Food Day celebration.

2.4 per cent during the period. Speaking to the Observer on the sidelines of World Food Day, Khalisa bint Talib

al Hadramiyah, Director-General of Planning at the MoAFWR, said that various factors have contributed to this immense growth rate. “Oman has adopted comprehensive development policies for the sectors of agriculture, fisheries, and water resources while enhancing modern technology and techniques such as artificial intelligence, digital agriculture, scientific research and innovation to increase productivity and transform agricultural and food systems to achieve self-

sufficiency,” she said. Al Hadrami further said that Oman has achieved tangible progress in the Global Food Security Index, as the country was ranked 35 out of 113 countries and 3rd in the Arab world. According to her, one of the most prominent initiatives achieved by Oman in this field is the focus on supporting small farmers and fishermen and strengthening local food supply chains to reduce dependence on imports, which enhances food independence and eases global crises.

Sayyal weakens, rains likely to continue today



Sur received the highest rainfall, crossing 227 mm, followed by Qurayat (170 mm), Jaalan Bani Bu Ali (117 mm), Muscat (112 mm), and Masirah (96 mm)

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

DURING THE impact of Sayyal, the tropical depression, on Tuesday, the Wilayat of Sur received the highest amount of rainfall, crossing 227 mm, followed by the Wilayat of Qurayat (170 mm), the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali (117 mm), Muscat Governorate (112 mm), and the Wilayat of Masirah (96 mm), according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The rescue teams of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority responded to 23 cases since the beginning of the weather conditions in the governorates of Al Sharqiyah South and Muscat. The weather forecaster at the Oman Met Office,

while speaking to the Observer, said, “The system is still active, although it is weakening. Now we can expect light to moderate rain as the intensity of the system is lesser than before.” According to him, the chances for light to moderate rain on Thursday are for Dhofar Governorate. By Wednesday evening, Al Wusta began to receive scattered rains. “If the atmosphere is clear, there could be an advection of clouds over Al Hajar Mountains bringing rain to Al Dakhiliyah and Al Dhahirah governorates because of their proximity to the mountains,” the weather forecaster noted. Meanwhile, the National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) decided on Wednesday to deactivate the sub-committees that were formed to handle the effects of recent weather conditions.

Various authorities will work on restoring services according to their competencies. NCEM had earlier activated the Emergency Management Centre and sub-committees in the governorates of Al Sharqiyah South, Al Wusta and Dhofar. The capital, Muscat, witnessed heavy rains and active winds. Traffic has been reopened on Al Jabal Street (Al Amerat - Bausher road) or the Mountain Road as the clouds approach the coasts of the Al Wusta Governorate. The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority in Muscat Governorate responded to a report about rising rainwater levels in a house in the Wilayat of Muttrah, where 10 people were evacuated and transferred to the shelter centre in coordination with the sub-committee of the National Committee for Emergency Management. They are in good health.

Agricultural Cities project to boost food security

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, is implementing the Agricultural Cities project as part of the government’s efforts to achieve food security and economic sustainability. The Agricultural Cities project is part of the national and regional urban strategy and aims to realise agricultural sustainability by using advanced technologies such as hydroponics, aeroponics, fish farming, developing a sustainable agricultural infrastructure and increasing local production. Saud bin Ali al Farsi, Director of the Agricultural Cities Project, said that the Ministry is evaluating three main sites to implement the project in the Wilayat of Saham

in Al Batinah North Governorate, Al Dhahirah Governorate, and the Al Najd area in the Wilayat of Thamrait in Dhofar Governorate. The evaluation covers aspects related to the land, water availability, climate compatibility as well as the strategic location which enhances economic integration and seamless transportation of agricultural products. In the first phase, two sites were identified and selected to develop the detailed plan for two agricultural cities in Saham and Al Najd. The agricultural city project in Saham was assigned to Surbana Jurong Company, while Dar Al Handasah Company will take over the agricultural city in Al Najd, Al Farsi said. Mohammed bin Sulaiman al



Students will engage directly with NASA in a STEM learning project, enhancing their scientific research skills

Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North, said that the governorate is witnessing increasing interest

in agricultural city projects, including the agricultural city project in Saham. The project

is aimed at developing the agricultural sector and enhancing sustainability and social welfare in line with Oman Vision 2040, which focuses on economic diversification. The project seeks to boost the government’s economic diversification efforts by drawing investments in the agricultural sector and utilising advanced agricultural technologies. The Agricultural Cities project is an important step to enhance food security in the Sultanate of Oman with a focus on sustainability, innovation and economic diversification. The project is expected to effectively contribute to achieving comprehensive agricultural development and boosting the national economy. — **ONA**

OMANI WOMEN: PIONEERS OF PROGRESS AND CHANGE

GOVERNMENT SECTOR

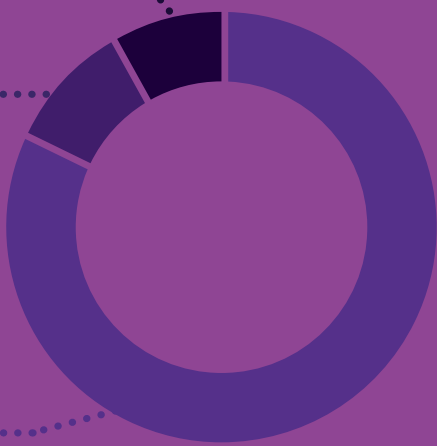
100,450

PRIVATE SECTOR

119,593

FAMILY SECTOR

1,018,064



HEALTHCARE

DOCTORS

1,882

CONSULTANTS

338

SPECIALISTS

588

DENTISTS

502

PHARMACISTS

821

NURSES

8,949

EDUCATION

GIRLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

19,939

GIRLS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

62,212

TEACHERS IN GOVT SCHOOLS

40,368

TEACHERS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

6,793

IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

1,361

CATALYSTS IN COUNTRY’S PROGRESS

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, OCT 16

OMANI WOMEN have been an integral part of the nation’s identity since the dawn of the Renaissance, playing key roles in shaping society under the leadership of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and continuing today under His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman. Their contributions span various fields, from preserving cultural heritage to participating in the country’s development, making them symbols of resilience and excellence.

For decades, Omani women have been the custodians of values and traditions, ensuring the transmission of cultural and social heritage across generations. They have upheld the nation’s identity through their roles in family life, the preservation of traditional attire, culinary traditions, and active involvement in national celebrations. Today, their roles have evolved beyond these responsibilities to include contributions to the arts, culture, and other creative industries, helping shape a modern national identity.

Dr Saif bin Saeed, a professor at A’Sharqiyah University, emphasises that Omani women are not only protectors of heritage but also vital partners in modernising national identity to meet contemporary needs.

“Their involvement in sectors like education, culture and media is crucial for strengthening Omani identity in today’s world,” he asserts.

Equality between men and women is a cornerstone of Omani citizenship, as demonstrated by equal access to education, employment and political participation. Omani women are full partners in the country’s social, economic, and political progress, contributing significantly to national development and stability.

Women have gained key rights, including the right to vote and run for political office, with many holding senior government positions, thus influencing political and economic decisions.

Dr Suad bint Saeed al Harrasiyah, a prominent advocate for women’s empowerment, notes, “Citizenship in Oman means active participation in nation-building. Today, Omani women are key partners in driving sustainable development and promoting civic values.”

Education has been a pivotal factor in empowering Omani women. From the onset of the modern Renaissance, the government placed immense value on women’s education, enabling them to attain prestigious positions and make substantial contributions across various sectors.

This access to education has opened doors to higher learning and professions like medicine, engineering, and politics, furthering women’s impact on national policy.

Dr Saif affirms, “Education is the foundation that has empowered Omani women to contribute to the nation’s development. Today, educated Omani women symbolise progress and prosperity.” Omani women have consistently received robust support from the leadership. Her Highness The Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, expressed pride in Omani women’s achievements and continues to encourage further success.

She has remarked, “Since the dawn of the Renaissance, Omani women have proven their worth in all fields. They have been, and continue to be, key supporters of the nation’s progress. We stand by every effort to empower them and enhance their participation in public life.”

This commitment underscores the leadership’s dedication to ensuring women’s participation across all aspects of national life, with a clear focus on their role in sustainable development.

However, challenges persist, particularly in rural and remote areas, where traditional customs and perceptions may sometimes impede women’s progress. Despite these obstacles, ongoing governmental and societal initiatives are actively working to overcome such barriers, striving to enhance women’s roles in all sectors.

Omani women have excelled in diverse fields



There are issues we face as women, but there is strong cooperation among the team. Our department manager is always informed, and the issue is addressed swiftly. Fieldwork has also helped me understand the market better and develop a strategic follow-up plan.

HANAN AL HABSİ
Quality control specialist with the Consumer Protection Authority

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@afrahbalushia

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN is marking Omani Women's Day on Thursday (October 17) as part of its annual celebration recognising the invaluable contributions of Omani women to the nation's comprehensive development.

This day serves as a testament to the essential role women play across various sectors, showcasing their achievements and dedication to Oman's progress. Omani women have excelled in diverse fields, equipped with knowledge and expertise, allowing them to make significant strides not only in administrative roles but also in more challenging fieldwork positions. Their presence in the labour market has been prominent since the 1970s, contributing equally to the modern renaissance alongside their male counterparts. The recent reforms in legislation, aimed at safeguarding women's rights and enhancing their work environment,

are part of the government's continuous efforts to support gender equality. These reforms also enable women to balance their professional responsibilities with their roles within their families. The participation of Omani women has extended beyond traditional office jobs, with many now excelling in field-based roles. While challenges remain, such as those posed by fieldwork, Omani women have consistently proven their resilience and ability to overcome obstacles. Women in Oman have demonstrated their capacity for achievement, earning respect and recognition for their contributions. A prime example is the role of female consumer protection inspectors. These women bravely face the demands of fieldwork, ensuring consumers' rights are upheld by responding swiftly to reports and complaints from citizens. In doing so, they navigate cultural and linguistic barriers, often encountering resistance from some suppliers and businesses. Nevertheless, these in-

spectors continue to excel, balancing the rigours of field duties with their personal responsibilities as mothers and home-makers. They stand as symbols of strength and perseverance in a demanding role. Hanan al Habsi, a quality control specialist with the Consumer Protection Authority, shared her experiences: "There are issues we face as women, but there is strong cooperation among the team. Our department manager is always informed, and the issue is addressed swiftly. Fieldwork has also helped me understand the market better and develop a strategic follow-up plan." Omani women continue to make significant contributions to the country's development, earning international recognition for their efforts in achieving sustainable development goals and advancing women's empowerment. Their accomplishments highlight the remarkable progress Oman has made in gender equality, with women now firmly established as key players in the nation's success.



Al Sahwa Schools wishes to invite for the position of **School Nurse (Female)**

Candidates are required to have the following:

- **Bachelor Degree in Nursing.**
- **At least 2 years of experience (ideally with A & E experience).**
- **Fluent in English, Arabic is an advantage.**

***Preference will be given to Omani nationals**

Interested candidates should submit their application through the school's website **www.alsahwa.edu.om** under the careers section.

The deadline for applications is **Thursday 24 October 2024.**



**MUSCAT GOVERNORATE
MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY**

Advertisement No. (31/2024)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following bidding :

Serial	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Document Fee	Deadline for obtaining bidding docs.	Deadline for inquires submission	Deadline for submission
1	PRE-24-226	Organizing events for the Muscat Festival (2024-2025) Implementing and managing the consumer exhibition in Al Naseem Park and Al Amerat. (Re-Bidding)	30 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024
2	PRE-24-227	Organizing events for the Muscat Festival (2024-2025) International Circus. Al Naseem and Al Amerat parks (Re-Bidding)	25 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024
3	PRE-24-228	Organizing events for the Muscat Festival 2024-2025 Heritage Village - Al Naseem and Al Amerat Park (Re-Bidding)	25 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024
4	PRE-24-272	Organizing events for the Muscat Nights (2024/2025) Organizing and managing of equestrian event at Al Qurum Natural Park (Re-Bidding)	25 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024
5	PRE-24-302	Rental of simple activity Akshak (selling snacks) Muscat Festival (2024-2025) Al Naseem and Al Amerat parks	25 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024
6	PRE-24-301	Rental of temporary Omani sweets manufacturing sites for Muscat Nights 2024-2025 in Al Naseem Park and Al Amerat	25 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024
7	PRE-24-300	Implementation and management of inflatable games (rubber) Al Amerat Public Park, Muscat Nights	25 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024
8	PRE-24-299	Implementation and management of the Muscat Nights Train events 2024-2025 at Al Naseem Park	25 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024
9	PRE-24-304	Design, implementation and operation of beach activities and events at Seeb Beach (Sur Al Hadid) for Muscat Nights	25 R.O	26/10/2024	28/10/2024	31/10/2024

Companies registered with Muscat Municipality and specialized in the above mentioned bidding field are invited to participate according to the following procedures:

1. To get the bid's documents, company's registration with Muscat Municipality must be valid.
2. Document fee for the requested bid must be paid through bank deposit into the following Muscat Municipality's Bank account:

Bank Muscat 0423010702710024

3. To receive the bid's documents, a Copy of bank receipt must be submitted to the Quantity Surveying and Contracts Department at Muscat Municipality (Head office, first floor, Darsait), accompanied with the following details: (name and bid number, representative's name, contact number (mobile & office), bidder official email, commercial registration number).
4. **10.00 A.M** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining bid documents. Any bid's document request received after the specified time will not be considered.
5. Bidders offers must be accompanied with a bond as mentioned in the bidding document valid for a period not less than (90) days, issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat Municipality. Bids that do not meet the required bond **will not be accepted**.
6. Documents must be enclosed in a plain closed envelope (without mention the company identity) and placed in the box located at Quantity Surveying and Contracts Department at Muscat Municipality (Head Office, first floor, Darsait)

NOTES:

1. Companies which are not registered in Muscat Municipality or their registration has been expired shall register through the Muscat Municipality's website (www.mm.gov.om). For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality through this email (crm@mm.gov.om).
2. If the bidders have any inquiries regarding the scope of the work, they have to sent their inquiries through the following e-mail (S.O.S@mm.gov.om).
3. **10.00 AM** on the above submission mentioned dates, is the last timing for receiving bids. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason.
4. Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om



Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
322/2024	Buying new washing machines and towels for Dar Al Aman (home for the severely disabled in Al Khoud)	Companies specialized in the field of supplying electrical, mechanical and industrial machinery and equipment and spare parts, registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree.	Tuesday 22-10-2024 02:00 PM	Tuesday 29-10-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
432/2024	General maintenance work for the building of Al-Wafa center for the Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in Al-Mudhaibi	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting interior decoration implementation works and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second or third degree	Monday 04-11-2024 02:00 PM	Sunday 24-11-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (**<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>**). On **Wednesday 16/10/2024**.
- ❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (**reg@tenderboard.gov.om**) tel. (24402200).

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

www.mosd.gov.om

‘EVERY WOMAN SHOULD CHASE HER DREAMS’

KABEER YOUSUF @kabeeryousef

GENIUS is one per cent inborn and the rest, 99 per cent, is purely the result of hard work, perseverance, dedication and commitment. Here are two women who, from their school day dreams, carved a niche for themselves and say smilingly, ‘we made it’.

While Dr Azza bint Mohsin al Hashimiyah, environment lover from her childhood days, is today a Lab Chemist/Lab Technician with Veolia Oman at its Samail Sewage Treatment Plant, Sumaya al Harthy, who was fond of fashion, is a traditional Omani wear fashion designer who has been in business for more than two decades.

“My motivation to reach high levels in my career has been driven by a passion for environmental science and a commitment to making a positive impact on the world,” said Dr Azza who believes that working in environmental research, particularly in wastewater treatment, has allowed her to address critical issues related to water quality and sustainability.

She chose a path that most women wouldn’t have chosen but her genuine desire to make a positive impact on the surroundings made her choose a path in environmental science and wastewater treatment.

“I had a deep passion for science and the environment, along with a belief that women have an important role in this field. I wanted to contribute to environmental sustainability and public health and saw wastewater management as a crucial area where I could make a difference,” she said.

Dr Azza is very active in the field of STEM, where she involves herself applying scientific and technical expertise to environmental science and wastewater management. As a lab chemist at the Samail Sewage Treatment Plant operated by Veolia, she oversees the analysis of water quality to ensure compliance with Omani standards and contribute to the development of sustainable water treatment practices.

Sitting in the school class, a girl dreams of making it big and creating her brand when she grows up and, after several years, Sumaya al Harthy reaches beyond what she had dreamt and that is the story of Sumaya al Harthy. Today, her products under the brand name ‘Sumaiitha’ speak for herself. Her business is all about an online and offline boutique where she sells premium class women’s dresses, especially for parties and other gatherings. She has clients across the GCC and beyond who approach her as and when they have a special occasion. She believes that every designer is different and they have their own style catering to the vast customers across the globe.

She believes that her strength is her set of skilled expatriate workforce behind her, and the vast clientele that she enjoys across the region and beyond who visit her online store as well as her exclusive boutique in Al Khuwair.

On mobile phones that take most of our time in a day, Sumaya says phones are a great boon but most people don’t know the positive side of it but they use them for things that take their time away.

“Our youth unfortunately doesn’t know that they are living in a world full of opportunities. When I started doing business, only ‘Sablat Oman’ was there for me to connect with people and introduce me and my products but today, our netizens are bombarded with connectivity galore.”

She believes that youth power is the basis of any nation but our youth is driven by high expectations in everything. What our youth lacks today is the passion and willingness to work hard, and they seek for instant gratification. They don’t explore the chances around them but wait for the chances to come to them. “It is simple. You have a kitchen at home but it is up to you if you want to cook and eat or just buy from outside,” she opines about the youth of today.

“We are living in a world full of opportunities. When I started doing business, only ‘Sablat Oman’ was there for me to connect with people and introduce me and my products but today, our netizens are bombarded with connectivity galore where they can reach millions of audiences across the world just by one click.



DR AZZA AL HASHIMIYAH



SUMAYA AL HARTHY

Women are driving force behind entrepreneurship

AFRAH AL BALUSHI @afrahalbalushia

OMANI WOMEN have steadily gained financial and economic independence, becoming significant competitors alongside their male counterparts across various fields.

The business environment in Oman, coupled with its openness to both local and international markets, has enabled women to establish and grow private enterprises. Laws and policies aimed at gender equality and women’s empowerment have played a key role, fostering success beyond expectations for Omani women at both national and international levels.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has highlighted the essential role of women in achieving Oman Vision 2040. This strategic framework emphasises policies that promote women’s participation in the workforce and ensures equal opportunities with men. Despite notable progress, further efforts are still needed to enhance women’s contributions to national development.

According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), as of June 2024, the number of Omani women employed in the government sector (aged 15 and above) reached 100,450, with 119,593 employed in the private sector.

Furthermore, 1,018,064 Omani women are engaged in private and family businesses, and 57 per cent of those working in craft industries are female. The economic participation rate of Omani women reached 32.1 per cent in 2022, a significant increase from 27.7 per cent in 2021.

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a dynamic platform for Omani women, reflecting the positive impact of Vision 2040 and shifting cultural attitudes towards supporting working women.

Omani female entrepreneurs play a crucial role in bolstering the national economy, attracting investments, and imparting skills and expertise to the workforce.

As of 2024 some 48,692 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are registered under female ownership, according to the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Develop-



ment. Additionally, 10,257 women hold entrepreneurship cards, and many have benefited from training, consultation, and financing opportunities.

Omani women are making notable strides in sectors such as wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, and construction, with prominent activities including building contracting, tailoring, and beauty services.

This growth is supported by various government initiatives, including the Oman Development Bank’s loan facilities and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s project support.

Women are increasingly recognised as vital contributors to Oman’s sustainable development. Government policies have empowered them to participate fully in economic activities without discrimination.

Women enjoy equal rights under the Civil Transactions Law, which grants them access to bank loans, real estate, and other economic resources. The Commercial Law further ensures their ability to engage in business without gender-based barriers.

Entrepreneurship has become a cornerstone of Oman’s economy, contributing to job creation, skill development, and overall social and economic progress. Female entrepreneurs are playing a vital role in this movement, offering innovative solutions and services across diverse sectors.

As Oman continues to embrace the growth of SMEs, women are set to benefit from executive leadership programmes designed to enhance their professional capabilities, ensuring that their contributions to the economy remain significant and enduring.

The entrepreneurial sector, particularly for young Omani talents, has proven to be highly productive and influential. With continued government support and programmes aimed at fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, the future looks promising for Omani women in business. These initiatives are essential in ensuring that women remain at the forefront of Oman’s economic development and are well-prepared to navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Balancing act between personal and professional life

SIHAM AL SAIDI SUHAR, OCT 16

The Office of the Governor of Al Batinah North hosted the “Leaders’ meeting,” a two-day event led by Mohammed bin Suleiman al Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North. The meeting brought together deputy governors, directors, and other high-ranking officials to foster a culture of innovation, trust, and collaboration among leadership.

The discussions centred on reviewing the governorate’s strategic plan, addressing current challenges, and setting future goals aimed at enhancing public services and institutional performance. Among the participants were several female leaders, whose contributions to the development and governance of Al Batinah North are important.

They shared their insights on leadership and emphasised the value of such forums in enhancing cooperation and sound decision-making.

Hajar bint Misbah al Qatabiyah, Director of Municipal Council Affairs, highlighted her leadership qualities, focusing on effective communication, influence and problem-solving.

She stressed the importance of teamwork in driving success, stating, “Working as a cohesive team to prioritise the public



good over personal interests is the true value of this meeting.” Looking ahead, Hajar envisions herself becoming a consultant to the governor, further enhancing her knowledge and strengthening community ties. Maitha bint Hamad al Maqbaliyah, Director of Financial Affairs, emphasised her leadership approach rooted in teamwork, strategic financial planning, and data-driven decisions. She praised the event’s focus on knowledge exchange, which offered valuable insights for improving her department’s efficiency.

Maitha’s goals include achieving financial balance in the governorate and boosting transparency, emphasising the critical

role such meetings play in building professional networks and sharing best practices.

Manal bint Suleiman al Ajmiyah, Head of the Planning and Statistics Department, expressed her passion for innovation and continuous improvement. She believes that collective team efforts, not individual actions, drive success. Manal aspires to lead major developments in planning and statistical analysis to support the governorate’s long-term objectives.

Rehab al Badi, a Statistics Specialist involved in monitoring Oman Vision 2040, echoed similar sentiments. Her expertise in communication and data-based decision-making reinforces her

belief in the importance of leadership meetings for enhancing collaboration and service quality.

Female leaders in Al Batinah North Governorate continue to face challenges as they advance their roles.

Hajar al Qatabiyah highlighted the internal struggle of self-belief that many women experience, which can hinder their progress.

However, these leaders are challenging societal expectations, demonstrating their abilities through their achievements. Maitha noted the difficulty of breaking traditional perceptions in male-dominated sectors like finance, while Al Ajmi discussed the balancing act between personal responsibilities and professional ambitions. Despite these challenges, their perseverance, commitment to continuous learning, and emphasis on teamwork are proving effective.

All four women underscored the importance of a strong support network, both within their institutions and beyond.

With initiatives like the “Leaders’ Meeting” and the guidance of influential figures such as Governor Mohammed al Kindi, they are overcoming barriers and advancing sustainable development in their respective fields. These trailblazing leaders are paving the way for future female leadership in Oman.

ESSENTIALROLE



ROLE MODELS WHO SUPPORT NATIONAL IDENTITY AND FOSTER TRADITIONS

DR AMANI AL JALBOOBY
The author is head of Awareness' and Guidance, SQU

WOMEN PLAY an essential role in preservation and promotion of national identity and societal customs. Their contributions are wide ranging from social, cultural and educational fields, promoting both national cohesion and traditional values. Women establish and continue cultural continuity through active participation in family, community and national activities, to transmit customs and traditions to future generations.

Women are important in nurturing national identity in the family. Women are primary caregivers and pass on national values, customs and historical narratives to children ready to learn. Through their work, they educate younger generations about their cultural heritage, and instil a sense of pride and belonging. Additionally women contribute their quota in community education initiatives through schools, national festivals and social programmes, by promoting awareness of historical and cultural milestones. It is always women who actively raise and carry out traditional customs which include participating and organising traditional events like weddings, religious festivals and national holidays. They help these traditions to stay fresh and meaningful, and help maintain a sense of unity that comes with being a part of their community. Besides participation, women also train new generations on rituals, etiquettes and social norms and help hold on to cultural values. Their adherence to traditional dress, for example a white Abaya, is the most visible attire in the Gulf enables them to reinforce their societal identity through cultural continuity. Participation in these customs allow women to raise pride, integrate people, and ensure the traditions over time develop in accordance with the changing social reality without losing its essence.

National identity is also promoted by women who participate in leadership positions and promote social development, cultural preservation, and other kinds of initiatives. For example in the UAE, women's increased participation in government and public life is a corollary of the broader national agenda of preserving identity while entering into modernity (Al Dhaheiri & Al Kaabi, 2021). Female leaders balance the two traditional values with the contemporary needs of the society allowing them to contribute to national cohesion.

Women played a deep and diverse role in supporting national identity and the customs of society. Women play important roles in the continuities of traditions and in national pride through their participation in family, education, cultural and leadership activities. It is their capacity to reconcile period values with today's expectations that demonstrate their crucial part in segmenting the cultural and social fabric of society.

AT THE FOREFRONT IN SPORTS TOO

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 16

AISHA AL SAADI is one of the most prominent women in the field of international sports officiating in Oman. Her success story serves as an inspiration to many Omani women striving to achieve their dreams in sports. As an international table tennis referee, Aisha has overcome numerous challenges to become a role model for Omani women on the global sports stage.

Aisha al Saadi, holder of the prestigious international blue badge in table tennis officiating, is the first Omani and Gulf woman to reach this level in refereeing. Her journey began in 2016, and since then, she has proven her excellence by participating in numerous international and regional tournaments, including the China Star Contender tournament, as well as other international competitions in France and Tunisia.

Her latest achievement was officiating at the 2024 World Table Tennis Championship finals in South Korea, where she stood out in managing matches in a tournament featuring some of the world's strongest teams, further cementing her position as a professional sports referee.

Aisha expresses pride in representing Omani women internationally and emphasises the importance of these contributions in enhancing the role of women in all fields.

She believes that her presence on the international stage reflects the true image of Omani women, who are capable of excelling and shining in various fields.

Speaking about her experience, she said, “The journey was not easy. Officiating in world championships requires a high level of precision, intense focus, and a huge sense of responsibility. But I always believed in my ability to achieve this accomplishment, and every match I officiated was an opportunity to present an honourable image of my coun-



try, Oman, and of Omani women who always strive for the best.” Aisha believes that the role of women in sports, especially in officiating, is part of the progress Oman is making in supporting and empowering women. On Omani Women's Day, she emphasises the significance of this day in highlighting women's achievements in all fields, stressing the importance of supporting and encouraging Omani girls to enter new fields.

For Omani girls aspiring to enter the sports or officiating fields, Aisha says, “First, you need to be committed to what you love. This field requires patience and perseverance, but most importantly, belief in your ability to succeed.” She also encourages girls to take advantage of available training opportunities and to continuously develop themselves.

Al Saadi adds, “Self-confidence is key. You must believe in yourself and your ability to excel, and never allow any difficulties to stop you from achieving your goals in any field.” Aisha al Saadi journey is not just an individual success story, but a reflection of the progress Oman is witnessing in empowering women and providing them with support across various fields, especially in sports.

MARYAM AL HADHRAMI
In the light of the significant development in women's sports in Oman, Maryam bint Salim al Hadhramiyah stands as one of the inspiring figures in this field. In 2020, she earned her international refereeing badge from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and Fifa, making history as the first Omani woman to achieve this title. Her inclusion in the elite Asian referees list in 2023 was a crowning achievement in her distinguished career in sports and refereeing.

Maryam reflects on her sports journey, saying, “Since my school days, sports were my first passion. To me, sports were more than just physical activity; they were an opportunity for women to prove their capabilities and excel.” Before venturing into refer-

eeing, Maryam had an outstanding sports career as a handball player for the Omani national team, participating in several local and regional tournaments and achieving top positions. She was also part of the university team that represented Oman in the University Championship in Jordan in 2016. These experiences were not just milestones in her sports life but also additional motivation to excel in another field — refereeing.

After obtaining her international refereeing badge, Maryam began officiating indoor football tournaments in Oman, which increased her fame and status in the sports community. Despite facing challenges, especially those related to societal traditions, her determination to achieve her goals helped her overcome these obstacles. Maryam firmly believes that Omani women can excel in any field they choose.

She says, “Believing in one's personal abilities and persisting in achieving dreams gradually helps society accept women in new fields like sports refereeing.” As for the impact of refereeing on her career as a sports teacher, Maryam points out that it had a positive effect, making her more disciplined and accurate in managing her time and making decisions. “Refereeing helped me develop leadership and self-confidence skills, which greatly enhanced my job performance,” she adds.

In her message to ambitious Omani women, she says, “Opportunities today are more abundant than ever, and Omani women are capable of reaching global heights. The mandatory seat for women in sports federations has helped many female figures emerge, and we just need to persevere and continue to achieve our dreams.” Regarding her future ambitions, Maryam asserts that her next goal is to officiate in the Women's World Cup and participate in major international tournaments, noting that these goals are not far-fetched with hard work and determination.

These stories of resilience are sources of inspiration and motivation

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, OCT 16

A TEDx event celebrating the power and voices of Omani women took place recently at Downe House School in Muscat featured a diverse lineup of 10 speakers, coinciding with the celebrations of Omani Women's Day.

Held under the auspices of Her Highness Sayyidah Basma al Said, the event titled ‘TEDx Thaqafah Street Women’ threw light on important issues related to women.

Speaking to the Observer, organiser Al Anood al Wahaibi shared, “The main goal is to provide an opportunity for women in Oman to express

their ideas through their expertise or stories. The event aims to leave a lasting impact on attendees, allowing them to take away meaningful messages from the speakers. We ensured that every selected speaker would resonate with the individuals expected to attend the event.” The speakers addressed a wide range of topics, including sustainability, leadership, innovation, sports, psychology, finance, social media and the creative industry. Among the stand-out speakers was Ruqaya al Hasani, who shared her inspiring journey of battling cancer while pursuing her dream of becoming an athlete.

Diagnosed with a cancerous tumour in 2022, Al Hasani set herself



The event titled ‘TEDx Thaqafah Street Women’ threw light on important issues related to women

a remarkable challenge — to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. She explained, “The experience gave me a huge energy boost to continue with my life. All the negative feelings faded

away with sports; everything disappears with sports.” She continued, “People often ask me, ‘Don't you have cancer? Don't you have asthma? Can you even breathe? Why are you doing this?’ But these questions only fuel my happiness and determination. They make me realise my strength — that I am capable, resilient, and can live fully. Why shouldn't I embrace life and enjoy it? I've always dreamed of becoming an athlete, and I believe that illness doesn't mean life comes to a halt.” Al Hasani emphasised the importance of sharing her story on platforms like TEDx. “I decided to speak at TEDx to inspire and motivate girls—that illness doesn't mean the end of the world. It doesn't mean

that once you are sick, you stop and lie in bed. No, you can still work, go out, and live your life. In the end, life goes on, and I want girls to know that they don't have to feel like they're just living one day at a time.” Another keynote speaker, Rania al Khusaibi, shared her journey into the world of finance. After moving to Australia to study computer science, she found herself out of funds within a month. This experience ignited her passion for learning about personal finance, which she has pursued for over 20 years. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Al Khusaibi launched an online platform to share financial content, motivated by the economic impacts she witnessed.

WORLD

SHORTTAKES



Officials pose s during their trilateral meeting at the Foreign Ministry in Seoul. — Reuters

US, S KOREA, JAPAN UNVEIL NEW TEAM

SEOUL: The United States, South Korea and Japan on Wednesday announced the launch of a new multinational team to monitor the enforcement of sanctions against North Korea. The mechanism, named the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team, has been introduced after Russia in March rejected the annual renewal of a UN panel of experts that had, over the past 15 years, overseen the implementation of sanctions aimed at curbing North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes. The team is meant to continue the UN panel's work, including issuing regular reports on sanctions enforcement, and will involve eight other countries including Britain, France and Germany. Its launch was unveiled at a joint press conference by US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Hong-kyun and Japan's Vice Foreign Minister Masataka Okano, with ambassadors of the eight countries. — Reuters



Migrants and security officials walk as they arrive in Albania, in Shengjin. — Reuters

ITALY DELIVERS MIGRANTS TO ALBANIA UNDER NEW DEAL

SHENGJIN: A ship carrying the first group of migrants to be processed in Albania under a deal with Italy arrived in the port of Shengjin on Wednesday morning. The *Libra*, an Italian navy ship, docked at Shengjin, footage showed. Sixteen migrants were escorted into a newly built processing centre at the port, ringed by a high metal fence and adorned with Italian and EU flags. Rising tension in Europe over migration issues has seen many nations, including Germany and Poland, propose or adopt tougher policies. The UK's previous government had planned to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda, although Prime Minister Keir Starmer scrapped the plan after taking office in July. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said this week that her country was setting an example for the rest of Europe with the Albanian scheme. Italy has said only "non-vulnerable" men coming from countries classified as safe would be sent to Albania, to a limit of 36,000 migrants a year. — Reuters

RED ALERT

India issues flood warnings in south



Intense rain lashed southern India, with weather officials issuing a warning of flash floods and landslides. India's Meteorological Department warned of "heavy to very heavy" rainfall expected in parts of the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Kerala. Heavy rain and strong winds have battered the region since Tuesday, forcing many schools to shut. In the city of Chennai, people used boats to navigate the swamped streets. — AFP

ZELENSKY RULES OUT CEDING TERRITORY IN 'VICTORY PLAN'

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday unveiled his long-awaited Victory Plan to end Russia's attack, rejecting any territorial concessions and urging ramped-up Western backing, including an invitation to join Nato. , Kyiv is now facing mounting pressure to find an exit strategy as its troops suffer battlefield losses and Moscow intensifies its strikes on infrastructure. Russia has seized around a fifth of Ukraine's territory since the attack

began, reducing towns and cities to rubble and killing thousands of civilians. "Russia must lose the war against Ukraine. And this does not mean a freeze (in fighting) and it does not mean any trade in Ukraine's territory or sovereignty," Zelensky said in his speech to lawmakers, flanked by European Union and Ukrainian flags. The number one priority in the five-part so-called Victory Plan, the Ukrainian leader said, was closer integration with the US-led Nato

defence alliance. "The first point is an invitation to Nato, now," Zelensky said, claiming that Moscow had been undermining security in Europe for decades because Kyiv was not a member. Zelensky also said that his country's Western allies should lift restrictions on Ukraine's use of long-range weapons so Kyiv can target Russian military sites. The Kremlin immediately dismissed Zelensky's roadmap to end conflict. — AFP



Palestinians sit at the site of an Israeli air strike which hit tents for displaced people, in Gaza. — AFP

UNRWA CHIEF WARNS OF GAZA FAMINE

BERLIN: The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees warned on Wednesday of the risk of famine in Gaza, a day after the US said Israel had been warned to improve aid deliveries to the Palestinian territory. UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini told a press conference in Berlin that "there is a real risk today... that we enter a situation where famine or acute malnutrition is unfortunately again a likelihood," pointing to the upcoming winter and the weakened immune systems of Gaza's population. Vast areas of Gaza have been devastated by Israel's retaliatory assault on the Palestinian territory during the ongoing conflict. Israel has been intensifying operations in the north of the besieged Palestinian territory. Lazzarini painted a dire picture of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, saying it had "become a kind of wasteland, which I would say is almost unliveable". — AFP

Israel strikes Lebanon after rejecting ceasefire

ISRAEL conducted strikes targeting a city in southern Lebanon on Wednesday, after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed calls for a ceasefire. The strike on southern Beirut was the first after several days of calm in the area, following an intense period of bombardment earlier in the war. Israel's army said its warplanes struck dozens of Hezbollah targets in the southern city of Nabatiyeh, where the Lebanese group and its ally Amal hold sway. The Lebanese health ministry said six people were killed and 43 injured in the strikes on two municipal buildings in Nabatiyeh, adding that rescuers were searching through the rubble for survivors. The mayor was among the dead, a local official said, adding that the strikes "formed a kind of belt of fire" in the area. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemned the attack, saying that Israel "deliberately targeted a meeting of the municipal council that was discussing the city's services and relief situation." In response to the Nabatiyeh strikes, UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert said that "civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected at all times." The strikes sent a thick plume of smoke billowing over houses, palm trees, and the blue-tipped minaret of a mosque in the city. Also on Wednesday, Hezbollah said it had targeted an Israeli army tank with a guided missile near a border village. Israel ramped up its bombardment, mainly of Hezbollah strongholds, in late September and sent ground troops across the Lebanese border on September 30. The war has left at least 1,356 people dead in Lebanon, according to



Civil defence rescue vehicles arrive at the site of an overnight Israeli air strike on the village of Qana in southern Lebanon. — AFP

Lebanese health ministry figures, though the real toll is likely higher. The latest strikes came a day after Netanyahu told French President Emmanuel Macron he was "opposed to a unilateral ceasefire, which does not change the security situation in Lebanon," according to his office. Netanyahu and the Israeli military have insisted there must be a buffer zone along Israel's border with Lebanon, free of Hezbollah fighters.

On Tuesday, Hezbollah's deputy leader Naim Qassem said the only solution was a ceasefire while threatening to expand the scope of missile strikes across Israel. The US government — Israel's top arms supplier — has criticised Israel's air strikes in Lebanon. "We have made clear that we are opposed to the campaign the way we've seen it conducted over the past weeks" in Beirut, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said on Tuesday. — AFP

WASTE CHAIN

Easter Island battles global vortex



Easter Island, the tiny remote speck of land in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, is stuck in an oceanic vortex of plastic. According to municipal data from Rapa Nui, it receives around 50 times more plastic and microplastic than the coasts of Chile. This is largely due to its location in the South Pacific Gyre, which brings in rubbish from Australia, South America and fishing vessels. This has led the island residents to lead several campaigns against plastic pollution. — Reuters

APPALLING TRAGEDY

Toll rises above 140 in Nigeria tanker



A fuel tanker explosion in northern Nigeria has killed more than 140 people, a spokesman for the national emergency agency said on Wednesday. Victims were burnt to death trying to collect fuel that had spilled from the crashed vehicle in the town of Majia. Nura Abdullahi, a spokesman for the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), said "more than 140" people have been buried in a mass grave. — AFP

A salute to genarians: Aging reimaged



SONIA AMBROSIO
@ambrosionelson

The writer is journalist, academic, researcher in media studies

IT SHOULD not be about nationality but about women of all ages. This is not a feminist-orientated article but an open-hearted reflection on something that is in front of our eyes. It is about aging gracefully while maintaining sharp cognitive abilities.

Women have never had so many alternatives for their physical appearance: face, body, surgical modifications, etc. The same can be said for intellectual development, but it requires more effort and discipline. While beauty salons and medical clinics provide practically instant beauty results, intellectual development (usually) cannot be bought over the counter.

The women of today, or at least some of them, have everything they need. But if there is one thing women overlook, it is that physical beauty is ephemeral. Over time, women are likely to go unnoticed, especially if they have nothing more solid to offer. The media bombards us with images of idealised youthful feminine beauty and vitality, while older women are linked with poor health and diminished appeal.

Like many others in my age group, there isn't much to celebrate, but let's age better by capitalising on our past accomplishments. Let's age with the ability to engage in physical activities, keep mental focus, and be financially secure.

Women's contributions to society are immeasurable, yet, as they age, their beneficial

impact becomes less likely to be recognised. We see the objectification of youth rather than validating older age.

Yesterday's experiences are not emphasised as a dynamic renewal. Still, they have been the path that brought technological and social development that is now cherished in modern society. Mothers and grandmothers have played important roles in shaping where we are today.

Narratives about the elderly highlight isolation and non-recognition, which together create structural disadvantages. Refereeing to them as 'grandma' or calling them 'dear' or 'darling' is deemed patronising of their identity: friendly, trustworthy, yet incapable.

Older women experience conflicting emotions between wanting to age naturally and feeling compelled to conceal signs of aging to compensate for the decreased social status associated with ageism.

The septuagenarians and octogenarians have no place in society; they barely have listeners to their stories. Loneliness is a modern mental trauma in a culture obsessed with social media; however, feeling lonely in today's digital age is not limited to the elderly.

However, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Lifestyle industries are creating an idealised culture of 'ageless' consumers as well as a positive cultural image of 'new aging'. The rise of anti-aging has revived ancient myths such as the 'fountain of youth', the

Women's contributions to society are immeasurable, yet, as they age, their beneficial impact becomes less likely to be recognised. We see the objectification of youth rather than validating older age

'formula of renewal of life', and a journey to the 'ambrosia' of the Greek gods.

Supporting this new commercial emphasis, an array of literature on the so-called "seniors' market" digs into the relationship between consumerism, successful aging, and physical health, highlighting retirement-fit desires, fashion, and trends. It is a language of 'empowerment' for a person's well-being.

Interestingly, female maturity has become a selling factor for commercial and marketing campaigns. While this is a lucrative segment of the population, the media is at fault towards older women. Mothers and grandmothers make significant contributions to their communities, yet they are rarely recognised or acknowledged as sources of human stories. Their tales are worth reporting.

The amazing accomplishments of older Omani women are buried in a few historical accounts. There isn't much literature, popular or otherwise, about the mothers of girls and sons who helped shape this country's growth.

To the elderly women, I want to emphasise, that like the 'louban dakar' or frankincense, you embody the essence of Oman. I tell the girls that they have the potential to generate economic growth and positive social transformation.

Happy Omani Women's Day and congratulations to all the other women who contribute to the country.

What could happen if Trump rejects election results

JAMES OLIPHANT

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump says that if he does not win the November 5 election, he will cry fraud and not accept the results - just as he did four years ago when he lost to Democratic President Joe Biden.

"If I lose - I'll tell you what, it's possible. Because they cheat. That's the only way we're gonna lose, because they cheat," Trump said at a Michigan rally in September. After Trump lost the 2020 election, he and his allies attempted to overturn the result through dozens of lawsuits that ultimately failed to alter or delay the vote count.

He also pressured officials in Georgia to find more votes for him; and his supporters stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021 in a failed effort to stop his vice president, Mike Pence, from certifying Biden's victory. One key difference this time is that Trump does not have the presidential levers of power that he did in 2020. And new state and federal laws have been put in place to make it more difficult to influence election results.

Still, Trump and his allies have been laying the groundwork for months to cry foul if he loses on November 5. He could contest a win by his Democratic rival Kamala Harris in the courts or raise

Republicans and Democrats expect that vote counting could drag on for several days after November 5 as mail-in ballots are tabulated and other votes are tallied and verified

doubts about the validity of her victory among supporters that could have unforeseen consequences.

Republicans and Democrats expect that vote counting could drag on for several days after November 5 as mail-in ballots are tabulated and other votes are tallied and verified.

If it appears Trump is losing, the delay will give him an opportunity to

claim fraud and attempt to undermine confidence in election officials, while also possibly encouraging his supporters to protest. He has already threatened to jail election workers and other public officials for "unscrupulous behavior," although he would need to win the election first. Trump can take his case directly to the American public without waiting for proof, using social media, press conferences and interviews.

"President Trump has been very clear that we must have a free and fair election," said Karoline Leavitt, a spokesperson for the Trump campaign. The Harris campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Republicans have already pre-emptively filed more than 100 lawsuits in the battleground states that will decide the election to seed the ground for post-election challenges, including claiming, without evidence, that non-citizens will be voting in large numbers.

Both parties plan to dispatch thousands of trained volunteers called poll watchers to monitor voting and vote counting with a mandate to report any irregularities. —Reuters



BADR AL ABRI

The writer focuses on issues of reconciliation and understanding. He is the author of the book Jurisprudence of Extremism



THE ABOLITION of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1922 marked the end of the Caliphate and the beginning of the nation-state era. The concept of the modern state, particularly in its territorial, national, and contractual sense, crystallised in the West following the Enlightenment. This development surpassed what Andrew Vincent outlined in his book Theories of the State, which described a belief that "authority was derived from God, vested in the church and clergy as the spiritual entity above civil authority."

In this framework, not only did religious authority outrank civil power, but the church and Christianity were synonymous with citizenship. Politics was an extension of theology, allowing the clergy to enjoy privileges, and the Pope to be viewed as both spiritual and temporal ruler.

Similarly, in the Islamic world, the Caliphate and the Imamate were also intertwined with divine authority. The Caliph was considered "the shadow of God on earth," while the jurist was seen as a representative signing on behalf of God Almighty.

Early critiques of this traditional structure emerged, notably by Ali Abdul Raziq in his 1925 work 'Islam and the Principles of Government.' Abdul Raziq argued that

"Muhammad (PBUH) was a messenger of a purely religious mission, untainted by ambitions of kingship or governance. He was not a king, nor the founder of a state, but merely a prophet like his fellow messengers."

However, despite the emergence of national states, such bold discussions did not gain

Leftist and nationalist movements, particularly in the first half of the 20th century, were more advanced in their vision for the civil state, focusing on modernising education, health, and agriculture

widespread traction in the Arab and Islamic world, largely due to the fear of religious backlash and its impact on political and social matters. Nonetheless, certain discussions about governance and the state did arise.

In the first half of the 20th century, colonialism united various ideological movements, and Islamists found common ground with leftists and socialists.

Islamic writings at the time reflected socialist sentiments, as seen in works like Social Solidarity in Islam by Muhammad Abu Zahra, Socialism in Islam by Mustafa al Sibai, Social Justice in Islam by Sayyid Qutb, and From Here We Begin by Khalid Muhammad Khalid. Ali Shariati even considered Abu Dharr, a companion of the Prophet, to be the first

socialist in Islam.

The Caliphate theory persisted within Islamic movements but became more open to secular methods in practice, though sovereignty remained rooted in the Islamisation of governance, as proposed by Abu Al A'la Al Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb.

Later, a faction of the Salafi movement declared the civil state apostate for reasons such as the suspension of Sharia, the persecution of Islamists, and the state's proximity to non-Muslims.

In contrast, leftist and nationalist movements, particularly in the first half of the 20th century, were more advanced in their vision for the civil state, focusing on modernising education, health, and agriculture. Despite this, leftist movements in the Arab world failed to deliver in practical terms. After a century since the fall of the Caliphate, no cohesive national project has emerged, nor has there been a unified spirit of national revival in the Arab world. Sectarian and civil conflicts, alongside issues like poverty, unemployment, and weakness in governance, continue to plague the region.

At the turn of the 21st century, critical re-evaluations of the state became more prominent, offering perspectives on citizenship and governance. To achieve meaningful progress, we must differentiate between revivalist thought and self-serving intervention, and between historical governance models and the contemporary nation-state.

The modern Arab nation must move towards a vision of revival that fosters unity and avoids sectarianism.

Regarding governance, past circumstances differ from those of the present. The values of justice and equality should now guide governance, rather than metaphysical concerns or ideological disputes, as noted by Hussein Al Khashen, who argued that the Prophet's rulings as a leader were circumstantial rather than eternal. This also applies to the concept of the comprehensive national state versus the contractual state.

Whether monarchies or republics, Arab and Islamic nations must adopt a contractual approach to limit tyranny, foster internal cooperation, and promote national revival. A true renaissance requires the participation and respect of all citizens.

Translated by Badr al Dhafari (The original version of this article was published in Arabic in the print edition of Oman newspaper on October 16)

SPORTS

NEW COACH



Tuchel hopes to deliver ‘missing trophies’ to England

LONDON: Thomas Tuchel said the offer to become England manager came at the right time as he aims to end the Three Lions' wait to win a major tournament for the first time since 1966.

The former Chelsea boss was announced on Wednesday as the permanent successor to Gareth Southgate, who led England to back-to-back finals of the European Championship.

Tuchel, who has been out of work since leaving Bayern Munich at the end of last season, will begin his role in January on an 18-month deal to the end of the 2026 World Cup.

“The offer came in the absolutely right time,” Tuchel said as he was unveiled at a press conference at Wembley. “Now I have to live up to it of course. I know that there are some trophies missing in the federation and, of course, I want to help to make it happen.”

Tuchel led Chelsea to Champions League glory in 2021 and has also won major trophies in a decorated coaching career at Borussia Dortmund, Paris Saint-Germain and Bayern Munich. However, the appointment of a third foreign manager of the England men's national team has drawn some criticism. Tuchel joked he was “sorry” for holding a German passport, but hopes to prove his doubters wrong with results. “Hopefully I can convince them and show them and prove to them that I’m proud to be the English manager,” added Tuchel.

“I will do everything to show respect to this role and to this country and the target for the next 18 months is (the World Cup), nothing else and the biggest one in football.”

England will be among the favourites for the 2026 World Cup in the USA, Canada and Mexico thanks to a richly-talented generation of players.

The Football Association chief executive Mark Bullingham said they had interviewed 10 candidates, including English ones, but that Tuchel provided the best shot at an elusive major title.

“Thomas was absolutely outstanding, providing a really clear vision for the role and how he would work with our players to get the best out of them, and to give us the best chance in the World Cup,” said Bullingham. — AFP



Coach Jaber rues costly mistakes against Jordan

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 16

Oman head coach Rasheed Jaber said that the team made several mistakes during their game against Jordan which ended for the latter by 4-0 on Tuesday.

“Congratulations to Jordan team for their crucial performance as they managed to win the game. My sincere regret to all the Omani fans and domestic football lovers for this negative result,” Jaber said during a press conference post the game.

Rasheed who replaced Czech coach Jaroslav Silhavy, suffered the first defeat in the Asian Qualifiers since his appointment.

“Jordan team managed to dominate the entire match. Our preparations for the match were very positive but we made several mistakes that cost the team a lot and suffered this defeat. All the players who began the match except Abdulrahman al Mushaifri were not on the right status including the substitutes.



Rasheed Jaber

This is the worst match for the team in the qualifiers,” he added.

The head coach commented on the team’s mental attendance as he said:” The

mental presence of the opponent team was very good and this allowed them to deliver an outstanding show.”

Despite the result, coach Rasheed reaffirmed that the team’s chances for securing a slot are still available. “The chances are still there but we need to change our mentality and the players are needed to be more positive in the forthcoming matches,” he concluded.

The 4-0 defeat against Jordan dropped Oman to fourth position and remained at three points while South Korea led the table by 10 points while Jordan are in the second position with seven points.

Iraq are in third place with seven points too. Kuwait and Palestine are in the fifth and sixth places respectively.

Oman will meet Palestine in Muscat on November 14 and they will host Iraq on November 19 at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. In both matches, Red Warriors are required to earn winning points in order to keep their hopes alive in the qualifiers.

Ilyas to lead Oman in ACC T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup

MUSCAT: Oman head coach Duleep Mendis has placed his faith in a core group of experienced players as Oman prepares for the highly anticipated ACC T20 Men’s Emerging Teams Asia Cup.

The tournament kicks off on Friday at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground in Al Amerat and features teams from eight nations, including A teams from Asia’s five Test-playing nations — Pakistan A, India A, Bangladesh A, Sri Lanka A, and Afghanistan A.

Aqib Ilyas has been named captain of the 15-member squad, which will compete against the strongest cricketing nations in the continent, along with teams from the UAE, Hong Kong, and the host nation Oman, representing the Associate nations.

In preparation for the

tournament, Oman faced Afghanistan A in a bilateral series and participated in a tri-series that included Hong Kong.

Despite a mixed performance — drawing the bilateral series and losing both tri-series matches — Mendis remains optimistic.

He emphasised the importance of tough competition for his players’ development, and said, “Playing against strong teams is the way forward for my players.”

Confident in his squad’s ability, Mendis believes Oman will rise to the challenge in the upcoming tournament.

The Omani team will lean heavily on seasoned players, with the return of opener Jatinder Singh and all-rounder Sufyan Mahmood offering a boost to the squad.

The inclusion of 22-year-old



Oman head coach Duleep Mendis

all-rounder Muhammad Muzahir Raza, the youngest player in the team, signals the team’s commitment to bringing fresh talent into the fold.

Raza has already made a name

for himself as a key member of Oman’s U19 squad and will look to make a significant impact at this higher level.

Oman’s batting strength lies with veterans Jatinder Singh, Kashyap Prajapati, and Khalid Kail, while the bowling attack will be spearheaded by Kaleemullah, Siddharth Bukkapatnam and Shakeel Ahmad.

A host of versatile all-rounders, including captain Aqib Ilyas, Zeeshan Maqsood, Ayaan Khan, Shoaib Khan, Muzahir Raza, Rafiullah and Sufyan Mahmood will offer the team crucial depth and balance.

Pratik Athavale and Hammad Mirza have been named as the two wicketkeepers in the squad.

Oman face a stiff challenge in Group B, drawn alongside defending champions Pakistan

A, former champions India A and the UAE.

Group A features Bangladesh A, Sri Lanka A, Afghanistan A, and Hong Kong. The tournament kicks off on Friday with Group A matches. Bangladesh A will take on Hong Kong in the afternoon at 1pm, followed by Sri Lanka A facing Afghanistan A at 5:30pm.

However, the spotlight will shift to Saturday’s blockbuster Group B clash between arch-rivals India A and Pakistan A at 5:30pm. Earlier in the day, Oman will open their campaign against the UAE at 1pm.

Oman squad: Aqib Ilyas (captain), Shakeel Ahmed, Pratik Athavale (wk), Siddharth Bukkapatnam, Khalid Kail, Kaleemullah, Ayaan Khan, Shoaib Khan, Zeeshan Maqsood, Sufyan Mehmood, Hammad Mirza (wk), Kashyap Prajapati, Rafiullah, Muzahir Raza, Jatinder Singh.

JERSEYLAUNCH



Guests pose with the jerseys of the under-16 and under-19 teams of the Boshier Sports Centre (BSC).

BOSHER SPORTS CENTRE LAUNCHES TEAM JERSEYS FOR U16 AND U19

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The Boshier Sports Centre (BSC) held the jersey launch for the U16 and U19 teams, which are gearing up to participate in the upcoming Oman Cricket League 2024-2025, representing one of Oman's premier sports clubs based in Athaiba.

At the launch event held at the Star of Cochin Banquet Hall in Ruwi, Neil Paily, owner of the team, announced that BSC Cricket will field different teams in the tourney while a formidable team will be placed in the U16 category, competing in 30-over and 20-over formats. Another specially selected team will contest under the U19 category, playing 50-over and 20-over formats.

While the U16 league will kick off on Saturday and last for six months, with matches to be held at Oman Cricket Academy in Al Amerat, the Under-19 matches will begin after the conclusion of the Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup, starting on October 18.

Santhosh Valappil, owner of Braveheart, expressed his pride, saying, "As an alumnus of Indian School Muscat (ISM), it's a proud moment to support children in sports. It's heartening to see kids come from afar to train and participate in these matches."

"We offer our full support to them. This highlights the growing opportunities for young athletes in Oman and the increasing recognition of sports as a vital career path," he said.

Deepthi Suresh, an official from The Dance Destination (DDA), added, "Professionals are no longer confined to traditional career paths. It's encouraging to see parents increasingly open to their children pursuing careers in sports and the arts. We are always here to support such initiatives."

Dr Anup Ayyappan, Group CEO of JBC EXPRESS, The Trust Oilfield LLC, and Al Maya International LLC, are joining hands to make this the most sought-after sports event of its kind in the country, the organisers said.

England on back foot after Sajid strikes for Pakistan



Pakistan's Sajid Khan bowls during the second day of the second Test match between Pakistan and England at the Multan Cricket Stadium in Multan. — AFP

PAKISTAN spinner Sajid Khan took three wickets in the space of 10 deliveries, including centurion Ben Duckett, to leave England on 239-6 in the second Test in Multan on Wednesday.

An absorbing second day's play on a turning pitch ultimately belonged to the hosts, who lead by 127 runs after their first innings of 366. England had been cruising nicely at 211-2 when Sajid removed Joe Root (34), Duckett (114), and Harry Brook (nine) in the final session. From the other end, fellow spinner Noman Ali dismissed England skipper Ben Stokes for one as a suddenly rattled England lost four wickets in the space of 14 runs. At the close, Jamie Smith on 12 and Brydon Carse (two) were at the crease.

With the Multan pitch—which was also used for the first Test—offering sharp spin, the home team will be looking for a lead in the first innings for a series-levelling win. England lead the three-match series 1-0 following their innings and 47-run win in the first Test.

In all, 11 wickets fell on the day, with Sajid taking 4-86 and Noman 2-75. Sajid bowled first Test triple century-maker Brook with a sharp turning delivery, while Root—who smashed 262 in the last match—was bowled off an inside edge while sweeping. "I watched the first Test at home on television," said Sajid, one of four Pakistan changes as they went with a spin-heavy attack. "I noted Brook plays on the back foot, so I bowled with a plan and got him out. Root is one of the best batters in the world, so both these wickets are precious, but the job is not complete, and we need 14 more wickets to win the Test."

AGGRESSIVE DUCKETT
Before England's slide, it was opener Duckett who dominated with his fourth Test century. "I've felt in good form for the past year and sat there and spoken about wanting to score hundreds; it's nice to get over the line," said Duckett. "That fourth innings is going to be tricky, and the pitch is going to continue to get worse."

Duckett scored aggressively before edging a drive off Sajid to the slip, where Salman Agha took a sharp catch. Duckett had swept spinner Agha for a boundary to reach his century off 120 deliveries, having completed his half-century off 47 balls. — AFP

OCRf concludes camel beauty contest with 36 rounds

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 16

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY) represented by the Oman Camel Racing Federation (OCRf) in cooperation with Royal Camel Corps (RCC), concluded camel beauty event on Wednesday which continued for five days at the Royal Camel race track in Barka.

The competition included 36 rounds in six different categories, OCRf provided six cars as prize for the main round of each category in addition to the cash prize for the top winner.

The Royal Camel Corps also purchased six camels at the pricing system in the first beauty competition, where one camel was purchased from each category.

The second race of 22nd edition of the annual camel races for the 2024-2025 season will begin on Friday and will continue for three days with 89 rounds to be held in Barka and Adam fields.

This race is the third event, that OCRf's Board of Directors recently announced, out of 23 local events:

The Royal Camel Corps also purchased six camels at the pricing system in the first beauty competition, where one camel was purchased from each category.



13 general races, three races sponsored by Shell Oman, three races sponsored by Occidental Oman, and four events featuring camel beauty contests, milking competitions and Ardah (traditional races).

The second race will include 46 rounds that will be held at RCC field in Barka, concurrently, 43 rounds will take place at Al Bashayer race track in the Wilayat of Adam. As many as 2,700 camels will compete in this race to get the race prize, cash prize for the top 10 and chance to sell the winning camels to the GCC countries, as some Omani owner sold some camels to Qatar and the UAE.

Ghanim bin Saif al Khamisi, camel owner and trainer, explained to Oman Observer, "we thank God for the wonderful achievements for us in this season, as we won in race and sold the camel to Qatar, 'Hejen

Al Shahaniyah' for RO 80,000."

The first day, Friday, will witness 36 rounds divided equally between Barka and Adam, that are dedicated to 'Hagayeg' category, two years old over a distance of 3 km.

On the second day of competition's 27 rounds, 12 rounds will be held in Adam and 12 rounds in Barka for the 'Laqaya' category, three years old over a distance of 4 km. The Barka field will host three rounds for human rider's race for 2 km.

The third day will witness 26 rounds divided equally between Barka and Adam, 12 rounds for 'Al Ythaa' category, four years old for 5 km, six rounds for 'Al Thanaya' category, five years old over a distance of 6 km, eight rounds allocated for 'Al Hawl' category, above six years for 6 km.

The Oman Camel Racing Federation announced some participating conditions, which is limited to pure-bred camels owned by Omani only and strictly prohibited to stimulate with blood or use stimulating substances and electric shocks. The participants have to pre-register online.



VINTAGE MESSI NETS HAT-TRICK AS ARGENTINA HIT BOLIVIA FOR 6

Brazil ease past Peru, Columbia and Paraguay earn full points in South American World Cup Qualifiers

Argentina's forward #10 Lionel Messi celebrates after scoring during the 2026 Fifa World Cup South American qualifiers match between Argentina and Bolivia at the Mas Monumental stadium in Buenos Aires. —AFP

Argentina are on top of the 10-team table with 22 points from ten games — three points clear of second-place Colombia, who crushed Chile 4-0 in Barranquilla.

LIONEL MESSI struck a vintage hat-trick as world champions Argentina romped to a 6-0 win over Bolivia in Conmebol World Cup qualifying on Tuesday. The 37-year-old provided an emphatic reminder of his enduring quality with three clinical finishes, two assists and some of his trademark creativity throughout the game as Lionel Scaloni's side dominated. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner opened the scoring in the 19th minute when Bolivian defender Marcelo Suarez was robbed by Lautaro Martinez, who sent Messi clear and he cleverly slotted into the bottom corner. The home crowd at Buenos Aires' Monumental Stadium were on their feet again in the 43rd minute when Julian Alvarez threaded a brilliant pass through to Messi, who unselfishly squared the ball to Martinez to finish. Three minutes later, Alvarez was on target himself when Bolivia were caught sleeping at a free-kick, Messi chipping the ball over the top and the Atletico Madrid forward slotted home. After the break, Nicolas Otamendi had a header ruled out for offside but the home fans didn't have long to wait for the fourth when Thiago Almada side-footed

home after a superb pull-back from Nahuel Molina. A classic Messi goal made it 5-0 in the 84th — the Inter Miami forward dribbling centrally before switching from his left foot to his right and burying the ball into the bottom corner. Two minutes later and some fans were in tears after Messi cut in from the right, played a smart wall pass off substitute Nico Paz and again put the ball beyond the reach of goalkeeper Guillermo Viscarra. Argentina are on top of the 10-team table with 22 points from ten games — three points clear of second-place Colombia, who crushed Chile 4-0 in Barranquilla.

COLOMBIANS CRUSH CHILE There was a different look to the team, wearing a special retro white kit, marking the Colombian Football Federation's centenary, featuring the national flag's colours in a hoop. It was a dashing design and the performance of Nestor Lorenzo's team was equally stylish taking apart a woeful Chile side that remain rooted last in the ten-team qualifying group. Defender Davinson Sanchez opened the scoring in the 34th minute, nodding home after Jhon Lucumi had headed a James Rodri-



Brazil's Andreas Pereira scores their third goal against Peru during the South American World Cup Qualifiers match at Brasilia, Brazil. —Reuters

quez corner goalwards. Jhon Cordoba slotted home a Diaz cross in the 45th minute but the effort was ruled out for offside against Diaz. Chile gifted the Colombians a second, seven minutes after the interval, when Benjamin Kusevic gave the ball away to Rodriguez, who squared to Liverpool winger Luis Diaz to convert. Substitute Jhon Duran made it 3-0 in the 82nd minute after another giveaway, this time in midfield,

allowed Sinisterra to break and then feed the Aston Villa forward, who made no mistake and Sinisterra then wrapped up the win in stoppage time. Brazil continued to ease any concerns about their qualification chances with a comfortable 4-0 win over Peru in Brasilia. A pair of penalties converted by Barcelona winger Raphinha put the record five-time World Cup winners on their way — the first coming in the 38th minute when

Carlos Zambrano handled in the box and the second in the 54th minute after the same defender brought down Savinho. But there was more to appreciate in the third goal, in the 71st minute, with Andreas Pereira producing a superb scissor-kick volley from a Luiz Henrique cross from the right. Luiz Henrique completed the rout in spectacular style with a brilliant left-foot drive from outside the box to make it 4-0 and leave Brazil in fourth. Paraguay boosted their chances of grabbing one of the six automatic qualification spots after substitute Antonio Sanabria scored twice in a 2-1 win over Venezuela. Full-back Jon Aramburu put Venezuela ahead in the 25th minute, bursting down the right and collecting a pass from Yeferson Soteldo that he buried in the bottom corner. Torino striker Sanabria was introduced at the interval and he brought sixth-placed Paraguay level when he slid in to meet a low cross from Junior Alonso. Sanabria then grabbed the winner in the 74th minute, leading a counter-attack before getting into the box to finish off the move with a header from close range. Uruguay and Ecuador played out a goalless draw. —AFP

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KEY CONTRIBUTOR

OMAN’S OIL AND GAS EXPORTS CLIMB BY 8% IN H1 OF 2024



Crude oil exports were the largest contributor to this growth, rising by 7.6% to RO 5.962 billion.

MUSCAT: Oman’s oil and gas exports surged by 8% by the end of July 2024, reaching RO 8.569 billion, compared to RO 7.931 billion in the same period the previous year, according to preliminary data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

This growth is part of a broader increase in total merchandise exports, which rose by 7.6% year-on-year, totalling RO 13.72 billion.

Crude oil exports were the largest contributor to this growth, rising by 7.6% to RO 5.962 billion. Refined oil products also posted impressive gains, with export values jumping by 30.2% to RO 1.163 billion. However, liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports experienced a slight decline, falling 3.6% to RO 1.444 billion.

Non-oil exports also saw a modest increase, rising by 5.1% to RO 4.152 billion. Key contributors included mineral products, which surged by 17.4% to RO 1.514 billion, and base metals, which increased by 2.8%. The chemical products sector saw a 2.9% rise in export value, reaching RO 608 million.

Meanwhile, the export of live animals and animal products dropped by 17.4% to RO 195 million.

TURN TO PAGE 14

Oman’s trade surplus exceeds RO 4 billion

OMAN recorded a trade surplus of RO 4.304 billion by the end of July 2024, slightly down from RO 4.324 billion during the same period in 2023.

According to preliminary data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the total value of commodity exports reached RO 13.72 billion, marking a 7.6% increase compared to last year, while imports rose by 11.7% to RO 9.416 billion.

The growth in exports was mainly driven by oil and gas, which accounted for RO 8.569 billion, an 8% increase year-on-year.

Crude oil exports rose 7.6% to RO 5.962 billion, while refined oil exports surged 30.2% to RO 1.163 billion.

However, liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports saw a slight decline of 3.6%, reaching RO 1.444 billion.

Non-oil exports also contributed to the overall growth, with a 5.1% increase to RO 4.152 billion. Mineral products were the largest segment in non-oil exports, valued at RO 1.514 billion, up 17.4% compared to 2023.

Metal products followed at RO 767 million, an increase of 2.8%, while chemical industry products reached RO 608 million, showing a 2.9% growth. Plastics and rubber exports grew by 6.3% to RO 549 million, while live animals and animal product exports dropped by 17.4% to RO 195 million.

Re-exports from Oman also grew by 14.7%, reaching RO 999 million by July 2024. Significant contributors were transportation equipment, valued at RO 278 million, and food and beverages, which rose 20.7% to RO 98 million. The re-export of mineral products surged by



Non-oil exports also contributed to the overall growth, with a 5.1% increase to RO 4.152 billion.

Non-oil exports also contributed to the overall growth, with a 5.1% increase to RO 4.152 billion. Mineral products were the largest segment in non-oil exports, valued at RO 1.514 billion, up 17.4% compared to 2023.

77.2% to RO 93 million.

On the import side, mineral products led the list, totalling RO 2.745 billion, a 23.6% increase.

Machinery and electrical equipment

imports grew by 22.1% to RO 1.578 billion, followed by metal products at RO 892 million, a slight decline of 3.5%.

The UAE topped the list of trading partners for non-oil exports, with a value of RO 558 million, up 14.9%, while Saudi Arabia and South Korea followed with RO 468 million and RO 392 million, respectively.

The UAE also led re-exports, valued at RO 377 million, while Iran and China ranked next. For imports, Kuwait and China were Oman’s top trading partners, with values of RO 983 million and RO 965 million, respectively. — **ONA**

Omani-Polish study explores hydrogen generation from wastewater

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT, OCT 16

RESEARCHERS from the German University of Technology in Oman (GUTech) are collaborating with Poland’s Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia (RIC – Pro-Akademia) in studying the feasibility of cost-competitively treating industrial wastewater alongside the simultaneous generation of hydrogen.

The joint study, dubbed ‘WASTE4H2’, has significant benefits for the Sultanate of Oman given the prodigious volumes of ‘produced water’ — oil-contaminated water that flows along with hydrocarbons during routine oil and gas production — that a number of oil companies have to routinely contend with here in the country.

Additionally, the technology could prove a game-changer in efforts to treat the significant quantities of industrial wastewater resulting as a byproduct of oil refining and petrochemical operations in Oman.

The title of the study is: ‘Simultaneous Wastewater Treatment and Hydrogen Generation by the Plasma-Driven Solution Electrolysis

The joint study, dubbed ‘WASTE4H2’, has significant benefits for the Sultanate of Oman given the prodigious volumes of ‘produced water’ – oil-contaminated water that flows along with hydrocarbons during routine oil and gas production – that a number of oil companies have to routinely contend with here in the country



Hydrogen generation as a byproduct of industrial wastewater treatment is a key goal of this study. Picture for illustration only.

Powered by the Hybrid Photovoltaic - Thermal Collectors’.

Currently in the third year of a 3-year study, it is funded by the Polish National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR) under the INNOGLOBO programme — an initiative to enable entities from Poland to establish research and development cooperation with foreign partners.

“As part of the Polish-Oman scientific and research cooperation, scientists from the Research and Innovation Centre Pro-Akademia and

the German University of Technology in Oman will develop a new technology for simultaneous treatment of wastewater in the refining industry and the production of hydrogen using plasma-driven solution electrolysis.

The technology under development will enable not only effective treatment of wastewater after the extraction and processing of crude oil and post-production wastewater from refineries, but also the simultaneous production of hydrogen using solar energy and process waste heat,” said RIC – Pro-Akademia in a statement.

WASTE4H2 seeks to unlock sustainable and cost-effective alternatives to convention treatment of industrial wastewater, particularly from oil refineries.

Those processes typically involve neutralisation, coagulation, flocculation, flotation, sedimentation, filtration, clarification and biodegradation techniques, most of which yield by-products that can be both volatile and toxic.

RIC – Pro-Akademia, as the consortium leader — is overseeing the design and construction of a lab technology demo to create an automatic cleaning system for hybrid photovoltaic-thermal collectors.

GUTech, for its part, is studying the components and basic subsystems of the technology in a near-real environment.

Recently, a team from GUTech, led by Prof Dr Najah al Mhanna, Head of the Engineering Department, travelled to Warsaw to attend a demo of a photovoltaic-thermal system integrated with solar panel cleaning.

Also on display was a complex plasma-ultrasonic reactor that offers advanced oxidation technologies enabling the purification of highly saline production waters from organic contaminants originating from oil extraction, while simultaneously generating hydrogen.

“The demonstration highlighted the significant potential of this complex technology to partially reduce the environmental impact associated with oil extraction and processing. Additionally, it opens up further opportunities in desalinating hypertonic waters and recovering valuable compounds,” RIC – Pro-Akademia added.

In the final stages of the study, the systems will be transported to Oman for testing at GUTech’s facilities. The goal is to assess the technology’s efficiency in a suitable environment.

BUSINESS



Em Sherif offers an unparalleled dining experience that blends tradition with contemporary flair.

EM SHERIF BRINGS THE HEART AND SOUL OF LEBANESE CUISINE TO OMAN

MUSCAT: Em Sherif, the celebrated Lebanese restaurant renowned for its exquisite cuisine and sophisticated ambiance, has opened its 24th location in Muscat, marking its debut in the Sultanate of Oman.

Located at the prestigious The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort, Em Sherif brings a taste of Lebanon to the heart of the Sultanate of Oman, offering an unparalleled dining experience that blends tradition with contemporary flair.

Founded by visionary chef and restaurateur, Mireille Hayek, Em Sherif has garnered international acclaim for its unwavering commitment to authentic Lebanese flavours and its ability to create an inviting and familial atmosphere. The Oman restaurant promises to continue this legacy, offering guests a delectable journey through the rich tapestry of Lebanese gastronomy.

“We are thrilled to introduce Em Sherif’s authentic Lebanese hospitality to Oman, offering a dining experience that blends tradition, elegance and genuine warmth,” said Mireille Hayek, Founder and Chef of Em Sherif.

“At Em Sherif, we celebrate the richness and diversity of our culinary heritage with every dish, and we are excited to share this passion with our guests in Oman, creating a space where family, friends, and communities can come together and enjoy the true flavours of Lebanon in a setting that reflects the heart of our brand.”

Joining Mireille Hayek in leading this venture is her daughter, Executive Head Chef Yasmina Hayek. Yasmina, a rising star in the culinary world, brings her innovative approach and passion for Lebanese cuisine to the table. Her expertise and creativity have contributed significantly to Em Sherif’s growing success.

Jason Xuereb, Hotel Manager at The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership, “We are delighted to welcome Em Sherif to The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort. This collaboration aligns perfectly with our commitment to offering our guests the finest dining experiences. Em Sherif’s reputation for excellence and its dedication to authentic Lebanese cuisine make it an ideal addition to our hotel.”

OQEP IPO gets strong investor confidence

THE Financial Services Authority (FSA) has approved the share allocation ratio for OQ Exploration and Production Company following a highly successful subscription period. The offering was oversubscribed by 2.4 times, with total subscriptions reaching approximately RO 1.814 billion, based on a share price of 390 Baisa.

Investors submitted bids for around 4.82 billion shares, far exceeding the 2 billion shares offered to the public. This overwhelming response highlights the strong confidence of both local and foreign investors in OQ Exploration and the broader Omani capital market.

It also signals the continuing attractiveness of Oman’s economy as a stable and growing investment destination.

The subscription process revealed robust participation across different investor categories. Large individual investors oversubscribed by three times, contributing RO 432 million, while small investors collectively contributed RO 179 million, oversubscribing by 1.3 times.

Institutional investors were particularly strong, with RO 1.047 billion committed and their offered shares also oversubscribed



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The FSA disclosed that the allocation for institutional investors stood at 29.77% of their subscribed shares, while large individual investors received 32.61%. Small individual investors were guaranteed a minimum of 8,000 shares, with 23.18% of the remaining shares allocated to them.

Abdullah bin Salem al Salmi, Executive President of the FSA, emphasised the importance of ensuring broad-based participation in the IPO. “We designed the allocation methodology to accommodate all investor segments,

thereby widening the participation base,” he said. He added that this approach underscores the pivotal role of the capital market in Oman’s national economy, providing critical funding for key projects.

Al Salmi also highlighted that the strong interest in the offering reinforces the confidence investors place in Oman’s initial public offering (IPO) market. This success paves the way for future public offerings that can further fuel the economy by supporting a diverse range of development projects across Oman. — **ONA**

BANK MUSCAT POSTS NET PROFIT OF RO 170.79 MILLION

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the flagship financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman, announced its preliminary unaudited results for the nine months ended September 30, 2024. The Bank posted a net profit of RO 170.79 million for the period compared to RO 158.88 million reported during the same period in 2023, an increase of 7.5 per cent. The key highlights of the results for the period are as follows:

- 1) Net Interest Income from Conventional Banking and Net Income from Islamic Financing stood at RO 293.91 million for the nine-month period ended September 30, 2024, compared to RO 280.98 million for the same period in 2023, an increase of 4.6 per cent.
- 2) Non-interest income was RO 110.33 million for the nine-month period ended September 30, 2024, as compared



to RO 100.23 million for the same period in 2023, an increase of 10.1 per cent. This increase was due to overall improvement in various business lines.

- 3) Operating expenses for the nine-month period ended September 30, 2024, was RO 154.64 million as compared to RO 146.48 million for the same period in 2023, an increase of 5.6 per cent.
- 4) Net Impairment for credit losses

for the nine-month period ended September 30, 2024, was RO 44.95 million as against RO 49.25 million for the same period in 2023.

- 5) Net Loans and advances including Islamic financing receivables increased by 4.1 per cent to RO 10,269 million as against RO 9,865 million as of September 30, 2023.

- 6) Customer deposits including Islamic Customer deposits increased by 6.6 per cent to RO 10,110 million as against RO 9,485 million as of September 30, 2023.

The full results for the nine-month period ended September 30, 2024, along with the complete set of unaudited financial statements will be released following the approval of the Board of Directors of the Bank at its meeting scheduled later during October 2024.

Economic workshop highlights GCC cooperation

MUSCAT: Muscat is hosting the eighth annual workshop on economic modelling, organised by the Central Bank of Oman in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The two-day event aims to strengthen cooperation across the GCC in building and applying economic models to support policy-making.

The workshop focuses on the latest developments in economic modelling and its significance in shaping fiscal and monetary policies.

It also assesses how these models help in evaluating economic diversification strategies, particularly in the context of global economic shifts.

The agenda includes discussions on how national visions and economic diversification programmes are evolving across the GCC, alongside the impact of climate change, geo-economic factors, and policy risks.

Experts and researchers from across the GCC are participating, sharing insights into energy economics, financial risk assessments,

The agenda includes discussions on how national visions and economic diversification programmes are evolving across the GCC, alongside the impact of climate change, geo-economic factors, and policy risks.



The two-day event aims to strengthen cooperation across the GCC in building and applying economic models to support policymaking.

and the influence of geopolitical tensions on non-oil exports.

The event is a platform to explore the increasing importance of green economies, technological innovation, and human capital investments for the region’s future growth.

Thursday’s session will focus on enhancing energy efficiency and evaluating the impact of global tensions on trade flows within the Gulf region.

It will also address the role of

innovation and the green economy in driving future economic growth.

This workshop is part of broader initiatives led by GCC central banks to promote knowledge sharing and expertise across government, academic, and research sectors.

Economic modelling remains a critical tool for policymakers, providing data-driven insights that can guide the region’s economic strategies in times of global uncertainty. — **ONA**

OMAN’S OIL AND GAS EXPORTS CLIMB BY 8% IN H1 OF 2024

FROM PAGE 13

The report highlighted a strong re-export sector, which rose by 14.7% to RO 999 million. Re-exports of transportation equipment, in particular, climbed by 12%, while electrical machinery and equipment dropped by 4.6%. Foodstuff, beverage, and tobacco re-exports increased by 20.7%, with significant growth in mineral product re-exports, which surged by 77.2%.

On the import side, Oman also saw growth, with total merchandise imports rising by 11.7% to RO 9.416 million.

Mineral products accounted for the largest share of imports, up 23.6% to RO 2.745 million, followed by electrical machinery and equipment, which grew by 22.1% to RO 1.578 million.

The UAE remained Oman’s largest trading partner in non-oil exports, with trade rising by 14.9% to RO 558 million, underscoring the continued strength of regional trade ties.

These figures reflect Oman’s resilient export performance amid global economic challenges and highlight the importance of the energy sector in driving growth.



This partnership aims to bring global financial expertise and solutions to enhance Oman's financial infrastructure in line with Oman Vision 2040.

INNOVATION IN FINANCE: ESTIDAMA SIGNS MOU WITH STATE STREET

MUSCAT: The National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector Development (Estidama), under the Ministry of Finance, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with State Street to promote innovation and growth in Oman's financial sector. This partnership aims to bring global financial expertise and solutions to enhance Oman's financial infrastructure in line with Oman Vision 2040. The MoU, signed by Mahmoud bin Abdullah al Owaini, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Finance and General Supervisor of Estidama, and Oliver Berger, Executive Vice-President of State Street, focuses on expanding the use of smart financial technologies and developing national skills through joint training programmes. The agreement also promotes cooperation in sustainable green finance.

Al Owaini noted that the MoU seeks to attract best practices and technical knowledge to raise the efficiency and competitiveness of the local financial sector.

This partnership will also explore investment opportunities, attract international investors, and provide financial solutions to support both the financial and broader economic sectors.

State Street's Executive Vice-President Oliver Berger expressed enthusiasm about leveraging the company's global expertise to support Estidama's initiatives. He highlighted the value of knowledge exchange in fostering economic growth and achieving sustainable development goals in Oman.

NCSI LAUNCHES SURVEY ON OMAN'S LOGISTICS SECTOR

MUSCAT: The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), in collaboration with the Oman Logistics Centre, has launched a comprehensive survey aimed at assessing the logistics sector in Oman.

The survey, backed by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, seeks to evaluate various aspects of the industry, from regulatory frameworks to operational challenges.

New law strengthens bank deposit protection

THE Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has introduced the Bank Deposits Protection Law, enacted under Royal Decree No. (47/2024), to enhance the security and stability of the banking sector.

This move aims to align the Omani financial system with international standards and protect depositors from potential risks, particularly in the event of bank defaults.

The new law is designed to safeguard deposits held at licensed financial institutions in Oman. It forms a critical part of the country's financial safety net, particularly for "small depositors" who are most vulnerable in case of a bank's insolvency.

By creating a compensation mechanism that ensures a quick and efficient response, the law aims to instil greater confidence in the banking system, encouraging savings and long-term financial stability.

One of the core features of the law is the establishment of two independent funds: the Takaful Fund for Deposit Protection at Islamic financial institutions, and the Insurance Fund for Deposit Protection at conventional banks.

Each fund will be managed and invested according to its specific requirements and nature, ensuring that both types of financial institutions are adequately covered.



The new law is designed to safeguard deposits held at licensed financial institutions in Oman.

Recent data from the CBO highlights a robust growth in Oman's banking deposits. As of August 2024, total deposits grew by 11.6% year-on-year, reaching RO 31.1 billion.

The compensation framework offers protection up to a maximum of RO 20,000 for eligible deposits that exceed this value.

Deposits valued at RO 20,000 or less are fully compensated. The law further stipulates that if a depositor holds multiple accounts with the same defaulting bank, the total sum of these accounts will be considered for compensation.

However, in the case of multiple banks, compensation will be calculated separately for each bank, with the maximum limit applying to each.

The CBO has emphasised that the law not only provides financial security but also reduces systemic

risks within the banking sector. By protecting deposits, the law promotes greater trust in the financial system and encourages more savings.

Recent data from the CBO highlights a robust growth in Oman's banking deposits. As of August 2024, total deposits grew by 11.6% year-on-year, reaching RO 31.1 billion.

Private sector deposits saw an 11.7% increase, amounting to RO 20.8 billion, with individuals contributing the largest share at 49.5%. This growth underscores the importance of maintaining a stable and secure banking environment for depositors. — **ONA**

OIL STEADIES AFTER FALL AS MIDDLE EAST UNCERTAINTY PERSISTS

MUSCAT: The official price of Oman oil yesterday for December delivery reached \$74.01. The price of Oman oil yesterday witnessed a decrease of 32 cents compared to Tuesday's price, which amounted to \$74.33.

The monthly average price of Omani crude oil for October delivery reached \$77.54 per barrel, down by \$6.31 compared to the price for September delivery.

Meanwhile, international oil prices steadied on Wednesday, supported by Opec+ cuts and uncertainty over what may happen next in the Middle East conflict, although an outlook for ample supply next year added downward pressure.

Crude fell more than 4% to a near two-week low on Tuesday in response to a weaker demand outlook and after a media report said Israel would not strike Iranian nuclear and oil sites, easing fears of sup-



ply disruptions.

Brent crude oil futures were down 33 cents, or 0.4%, at \$73.88 a barrel by 1110 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures lost 38 cents, or 0.5%, to \$70.25.

Still, concern about an escalation in the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah persists. Opec+ supply curbs remain in place until December when some members are

scheduled to start unwinding one layer of cuts.

"We would be somewhat surprised if the geopolitical risk premium has disappeared for the time being," said Norbert Ruecker of Julius Baer. "We see the market heading towards a supply surplus by 2025," he added.

On the demand side, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and the International Energy Agency this week cut their 2024 global oil demand growth forecasts, with China accounting for the bulk of the downgrades.

Economic stimulus in China has failed to give oil prices much support. China may raise an additional 6 trillion yuan (\$850 billion) from special treasury bonds over three years to stimulate a sagging economy, local media reported.

— **Agencies**

Oman marks World Food Day with focus on food security

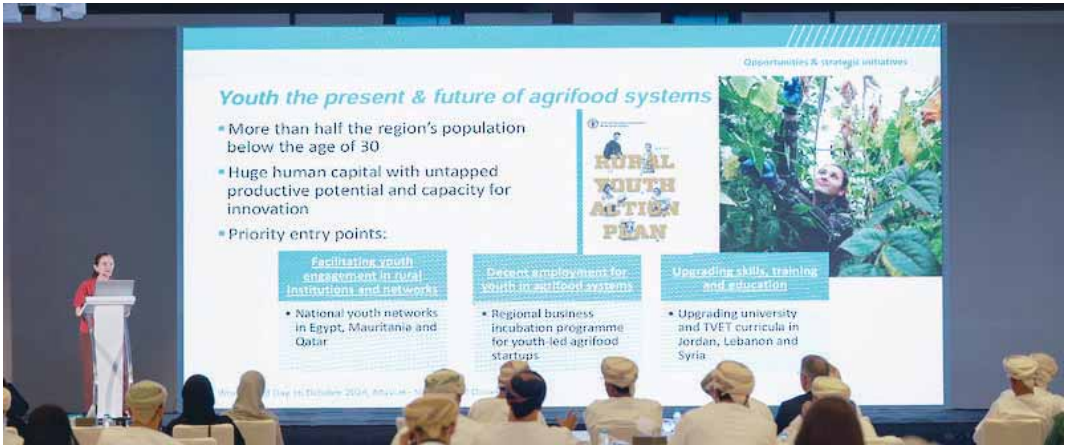
MUSCAT: Oman celebrated World Food Day with a focus on the theme "The Right to Food for a Better Life and Future," organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Oman Food Bank.

The event was held under the auspices of Salim bin Ali al Hakmani, Chairman of the Consumer Protection Authority.

Eng Khalisa bint Talib al Hadhrami, Director-General of Planning at the Ministry, highlighted Oman's comprehensive development policies aimed at ensuring food security for all.

She emphasised the country's commitment to enhancing agricultural, fisheries, and water resource sectors through modern technologies such as artificial intelligence, digital agriculture, and scientific research to boost productivity and

The gross domestic product (GDP) from these activities reached RO 451.2 million, up from RO 423.4 million in the same period last year. The sector's contribution to GDP also increased to 2.4%, compared to 2.3% in 2023.



According to the Global Food Security Index for 2022, Oman ranked 35th worldwide and third in the Arab world.

self-sufficiency.

The National Centre for Statistics and Information reported that Oman's agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors grew by 6.6% in the first half of 2024. The gross domestic product (GDP) from these activities reached RO 451.2 million, up from RO 423.4

million in the same period last year. The sector's contribution to GDP also increased to 2.4%, compared to 2.3% in 2023.

Oman has also made significant progress in global food security. According to the Global Food Security Index for 2022, Oman ranked 35th worldwide

and third in the Arab world. Ibrahim bin Abdullah al Hosni, Chairman of Oman Food Bank, shared the organisation's achievements, including saving over 100,000 meals and distributing 250 tonnes of vegetables and fruits.

The Food Bank has also provided over 10,000 food baskets, benefiting more than 6,000 families through various partnerships.

Dr Thaeir Yassin, FAO Acting Director-General in Oman, stressed the importance of addressing hunger and ensuring nutrition as critical to sustaining peace. He also emphasised the role of technology and innovation, such as artificial intelligence and biotechnology, in transforming agricultural systems and improving food security.

The event featured the announcement of winners of a chefs' competition and a drawing contest organised by FAO to raise awareness of food security issues among children. — **ONA**

OPINION

Beware of suspicious callers seeking sensitive banking information



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The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for CBO and OCCI

FROM time to time, we receive text messages from our local banks warning us: “Dear customer, we will never contact you to ask for your account number, request a password change, or inquire about your account details, etc.”

These messages undoubtedly raise customer awareness that banks do not contact customers for such sensitive information. If contact is needed, it occurs during official bank hours and through landlines, not mobile phones—except in cases of personal acquaintances.

This increased awareness helped me when, a few days ago, I refused to speak with a woman who called asking for my bank account details. Her number was not registered as one of the bank’s contacts on my phone.

The caller, who had an Omani accent, claimed my ATM card required an update and insisted she was calling from the bank’s main branch.

Since it was around 3 pm when she

called, I told her I didn’t have my card on hand and would visit the bank branch the next day to update the information.

However, she persisted and then transferred the call to another person, who spoke with an accent resembling that of someone from the Gulf region. He claimed to be the manager of the main branch and also insisted on getting my card number for the update.

Despite their persistence, I refused to give them any information and asked them to tell me the CEO’s name. They provided a name I didn’t recognise, which further fuelled my suspicion. Their call timing, coupled with their limited knowledge, made me wary. The next day, I visited my bank and they confirmed that neither the main branch nor the branch I use had contacted me.

Once again, I was reminded of the periodic messages from banks advising customers not to engage with fraudulent individuals who manage to steal funds from unsuspecting accounts.

Such incidents fall within the types of fraud methods that authorities, such as the Royal Oman Police and the Central Bank of Oman, frequently warn about.

Such incidents fall within the types of fraud methods that authorities, such as the Royal Oman Police and the Central Bank of Oman, frequently warn about.

These methods are also highlighted by various banking and financial institutions, emphasising the need to be vigilant against scams conducted either directly with individuals or through on-line platforms and websites.

The number of these calls seems to be increasing, with fraudsters insisting on obtaining personal information such as credit card details, PINs and other sensitive data to commit theft and extortion.

This situation calls for greater awareness, especially among new bank account holders.

It is also crucial to educate children about these risks, as they can be targets of fraud and blackmail through online games and social media.

No one should disclose information that could allow fraudsters to exploit them or their family members.

BANKS LOOK FOR NEW NORMAL, FIND THEY DON’T NEED IT

THE last few years have been kind to big US banks. Markets fuelled by pandemic-induced government spending and low interest rates created a deal frenzy; volatility helped trading; and the success was followed by a rate hike that created a lending windfall.

One question for CEOs like Goldman Sachs’ David Solomon and Bank of America’s Brian Moynihan is whether there’s a scarier “new normal” around the corner. Third-quarter results suggest, whether it’s a traditional bank or one that focuses more on dealmaking, they’ve found a way to make boom times last.

At the most basic level, high rates are good for banks, which take in people’s cash in the form of deposits and then lend it out for a fee. Net interest income, or revenue from loans and bonds minus the cost of liabilities, was on average 3 per cent higher at BofA, Citigroup, and JPMorgan than in the second quarter. That might not sound like a lot, but it’s hard to move the needle on this part of the business.

The trajectory suggests that lending income is relatively resilient to recent Federal Reserve rate cuts.

The good times continue on the trading floor, too. Goldman’s equities division posted \$2.2 billion of revenue in the three months to September, blasting past analysts’ estimates by 30 per cent, based on Visible Alpha data.

It’s part of a longer-term trend, where busier markets and heightened volatility have given market middlemen plenty to work with. Debt and equity traders at the big five US banks on average generated over \$25 billion of revenue per quarter between 2020 and mid-2024, according to Moody’s Ratings analysts, compared to below \$20 billion between 2014 and 2019.

Investment banking is patchier. Much of 2021’s deal boom has unwound. In that year’s third quarter, Goldman Sachs saw roughly \$1.2 billion in equity underwriting revenue, triple what it was in the last three months.

One hope is that falling rates will help dealmakers by spurring buyout barons and others to binge on transactions in 2025. That would add icing to the cake: already, earnings this quarter rose 45 per cent, to nearly \$3 billion, beating expectations.

The success has even taken the banks by surprise, and bosses are characteristically managing to low expectations, and perhaps being a little self-serving. Goldman’s Solomon just last month predicted that trading would drop off. It didn’t, but if that warning were to come true, there’s room for the Fed to cut rates.

JPMorgan’s boss Jamie Dimon is gloomy about the economy, too. But the bank reckons rate cuts will only lead to a few quarters of shrinking net interest income before the figure starts growing again in 2025’s second half.

The upshot, then, is that big banks could emerge from the most chaotic period in recent memory in a surprisingly solid state, ready for a merger and initial public offering frenzy when money becomes cheap once again. A much-feared new normal might never materialise. Banks may find that they don’t need it. — Reuters



NASRULAH AL AJMI

The author is a business reporter at Oman Daily Observer



Real estate is one of the best examples that showcases how investors can use OPM to generate passive income. Picture for illustration only.

FOR many, the goal of investing is to build sustainable passive income streams that allow them to earn money automatically. However, one key distinction that separates highly successful investors from the rest is their approach to funding these ventures.

Many of these investors don’t rely solely on their own money to generate passive income. Instead, they leverage other people’s money (OPM) to gain returns and enhance their income streams more effectively.

Using OPM wisely can enable investors to grow their wealth without the typical constraints of personal capital and to establish passive income channels that thrive on their own.

OPM not only benefits the investor but also provides returns and opportunities to those who fund the investment, like banks, lenders, or partners.

These contributors can earn interest, receive dividends, or gain equity stakes, aligning their interests with the investor’s success. This mutually beneficial structure fosters trust and enables growth, as everyone involved stands to gain financially from the investment’s success.

Real estate is one of the best examples that showcases how investors can use OPM to generate passive income. Many successful real estate investors start with upfront cash by securing financing from banks or private lenders.

By using these borrowed funds, they acquire rental properties that generate monthly income, often covering mortgage payments, taxes, and maintenance costs.

With the right property, the remaining income goes directly to the investor, creating a steady flow of passive income with little day-to-day involvement.

One property alone may yield a modest return, but by leveraging OPM to acquire

multiple properties, an investor can establish a substantial monthly income stream.

Over time, rental increases and property appreciation can further enhance these earnings, allowing the investor to scale their income passively, while the properties essentially pay for themselves.

Peer-to-peer lending and crowdfunding platforms have revolutionised the way people can invest without using their own money.

By pooling funds with other investors, individuals can participate in larger projects, such as real estate developments or startup ventures, without shouldering the entire financial burden. With just a small portion of personal capital, investors can spread their risk across various projects, earning passive income from multiple sources.

These platforms allow investors to earn interest or dividends passively, as their pooled funds support different ventures. Peer-to-peer lending, for example, lets investors lend small amounts to individuals or businesses in exchange for regular interest payments.

Similarly, real estate crowdfunding platforms allow individuals to invest in rental properties or commercial projects that generate passive income over time.

In both cases, the ability to diversify across many projects with minimal upfront capital makes it easier to cultivate a steady flow of income with little ongoing effort.

OPM practices involve securing funds from banks or private lenders, typically through formal agreements like loans or partnerships and often require collateral.

Crowdfunding, however, raises small amounts from many individuals via online platforms, offering backers perks or equity without formal obligations.

OPM is usually structured for larger,

private investments, while crowdfunding is more accessible and appeals to a wider audience.

Building passive income through business investments is another popular strategy.

Many successful investors are silent partners in businesses, where they provide capital (often borrowed) to entrepreneurs who then manage the day-to-day operations.

This setup allows the investor to receive a share of the profits without actively participating in running the business.

Silent partnerships are ideal for those seeking passive income because they don’t demand an investor’s time or expertise. By using OPM to fund their share in the business, investors can diversify into multiple ventures without needing a large amount of personal capital.

In return, they receive regular profits from the businesses they’ve invested in, freeing them to pursue additional income-generating opportunities.

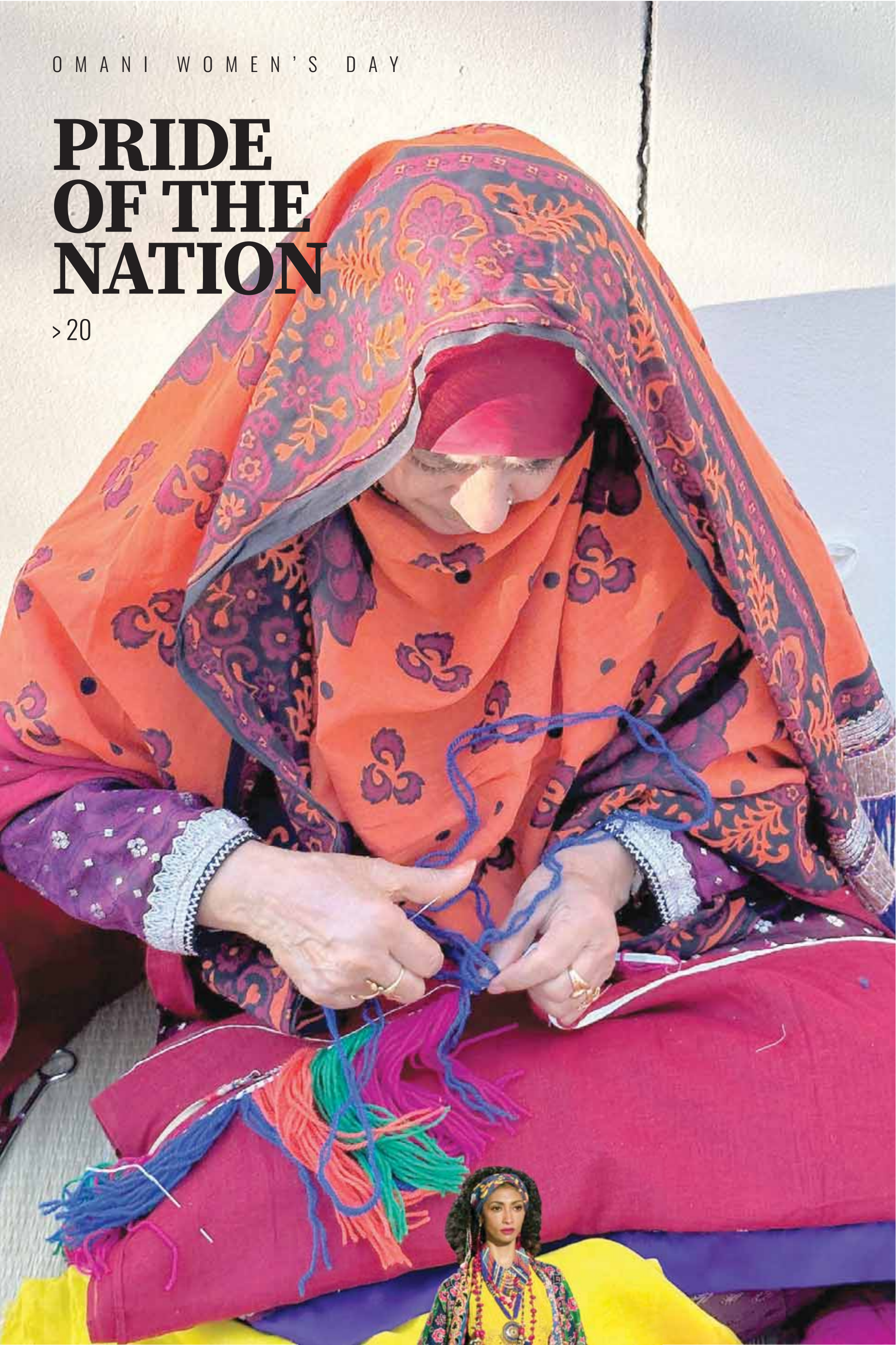
Investing with OPM isn’t just about creating passive income; it’s also about scaling that income over time. By using other people’s money, successful investors can grow their portfolios without being limited by their own resources.

This scalability is crucial because it allows them to expand their investments to a level that would be impossible with only personal capital.

Successful investors are not those who rely solely on their own money. They are those who recognise the potential in OPM to maximise returns, create multiple passive income streams, and achieve financial freedom faster.

By leveraging other people’s money, they can invest on a larger scale, diversify risk and generate passive income that supports a life of financial independence.

ART/LIFE



OMANI WOMEN'S DAY

PRIDE OF THE NATION

> 20

FASHIONTRENDS

Kim Jones Leaving Fendi



The fashion industry is experiencing significant changes, as evidenced by recent shifts in creative leadership. On Friday, LVMH announced that Kim Jones will be departing from his role as the womenswear designer at Fendi after four years but will continue his work as the artistic director of Dior menswear, a position he has held since 2018. This news follows just a week after LVMH declared that Hedi Slimane would be stepping down from Celine, with Michael Rider set to take his place. These announcements come in the wake of LVMH's decision to sell Off-White, the brand founded by Virgil Abloh, to Bluestar Alliance, which also recently acquired the celebrity magazine Paris Match and signed a significant 10-year deal with Formula One.

The news regarding Fendi provides clarity amid a flurry of speculation that has permeated the fashion world throughout the summer. Rumours about Jones' departure had circulated for months, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty that overshadowed the recent ready-to-wear shows. Despite being a highly regarded menswear designer who has significantly impacted Dior and Vuitton, Jones had little prior experience in womenswear when he took on the challenge at Fendi. He was also tasked with multitasking between two different fashion houses while following in the footsteps of the legendary Karl Lagerfeld, who had shaped Fendi for over five decades.

Jones faced unique challenges, including launching his first collection during pandemic restrictions and modernising a brand historically rooted in fur as the market increasingly moved away from it. Although he did not establish a distinct identity for Fendi womenswear, he proved capable of creating modern and relevant women's fashion. Notable achievements during his tenure included a mega-resort show celebrating the iconic Fendi Baguette bag, featuring a special appearance by supermodel Linda Evangelista, and successful collaborations with industry heavyweights like Donatella Versace and Marc Jacobs. In doing so, he laid the groundwork for his successor—rumoured to be Pierpaolo Piccioli, formerly of Valentino—but this remains unconfirmed as Fendi's announcement on Jones' departure only mentioned that a "new creative organisation would be announced in due time."

In a climate already filled with speculation about other designer positions, including those at Chanel and Dries Van Noten, the chaos of rumours has reached new heights on social media. The stability provided by Jones' ongoing role at Dior, alongside Maria Grazia Chiuri's continued design of women's collections, suggests that LVMH may not abandon its strategy of multiple creative directors for its luxury brands. —NYT



CULTURE

A dancer takes a photo as she performs during the annual pilgrimage of the Virgin of Zapopan in Zapopan, Jalisco State, Mexico. —AFP



FASHION

A model presents creations by Payal Jain during the third day of the FDCI and Lakme fashion week in New Delhi. —AFP



DAILY LIFE

Afghan children play over the ancient wall in Balkh province, located in northern Afghanistan and is known for its fertile land and high potential in the agricultural sector. —AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Wadi Adventure



The Meeting

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. To be selected, follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use **#OmanObserver** and **#BeAnObserver**.

A New Mini-Moon Is Being Captured by Planet Earth



When approaching Earth, asteroids tend to do one of two things: Most of the time, they miss. Sometimes, they hit, leaving a bright streak in our planet’s sky or a gruesome new wound in its crust. But very rarely, an asteroid is captured by Earth’s gravity and pirouettes around the planet, becoming, in effect, a moon — albeit an ephemeral one.

A space rock spotted recently with NASA-funded ground telescopes is about to do just that, temporarily becoming another lunar-like companion to planet Earth. The asteroid 2024 PT5 is just 33 feet long.

Astronomers calculate that from next Sunday to November 25, it will loop around the planet before breaking free of its gravitational tether and flying off into space.

Asteroids that fail to escape Earth’s gravity and end up orbiting the planet for a time are called mini-moons. Being so diminutive and speedy, they are difficult to spot and formally identify. Sometimes, they turn out to be artificial objects: the European Space Agency’s star-mapping Gaia spacecraft was once mistaken for an asteroid.

— ROBIN GEORGE ANDREWS



London’s Frieze art fair goes potty for ceramics

LONDON’S Frieze art fair, which opened last week, for the first time devotes a special section to ceramics, largely featuring Latin American artists.

And it was a Latin America gallery that picked up this year’s Frieze Gallery Stand Prize. The Guatemala City gallery won for its Proyecto Ultravioleta, featuring work by Guatemalan artists Edgar Calel and Rosa Elena Curruchich.

Some 60,000 gallery owners, collectors, influencers and visitors are expected in the British capital until Sunday for the annual event.

One of the world’s biggest and most prestigious contemporary art fairs, it offers visitors the chance to see works by both big names and emerging artists.

The ceramics showcase was the brainchild of Pablo Jose Ramirez, curator of the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.

Entitled “Smoke” — a reference to the process of drying out clay in a kiln — the section features the work of 11 indigenous or diaspora artists, mainly from Central and South America.

It aims to give “visibility to artists who probably otherwise would not be represented in an international art fair”, said the Guatemala-born curator.

ANCESTRAL STORIES

“Work on ceramics and on clay has been around us forever but it is not until recently that it was somehow kind of recognised as a form of art,” he said.

The section also unites artists who navigate between several worlds — “indigenous, ancestral stories” and globalised contemporary art, he said.

Lucia Pizzani, an artist “in exile” who arrived in London in 2007, said she was one of millions of Venezuelans who left the country because of a long political and economic crisis.

Her totems are made of black clay imprinted with Latin American

plants such as corn or eucalyptus — a link to “my personal history of migration”, she said.



Her other terracotta ceramics were made in the pottery community of El Cercado on the Venezuelan island of Margarita.

The clay collected from the mountains with the works finished over an open fire is a traditional technique passed down through the generations.

Running alongside the 21st Frieze London — for which some 160 galleries from 43 countries have reserved space — exhibitions, auctions and private parties will also take place each day across London.

Visitors will be able to discover the latest Francis Bacon exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery; works by Tracey Emin at the White Cube gallery; or Yayoi Kusama at the Victoria Miro exhibition space.

DYNAMIC

After an upbeat period in the wake of the Covid pandemic, this latest Frieze London opens against a more gloomy backdrop.

The global art market’s sales slowed by four per cent in 2023, according to a report from the bank UBS and Art Basel.

Cooled by economic uncertainties and geopolitical tensions, buyers are

now more reluctant to bet on contemporary works whose value can often fluctuate.

The UK, however, remains an art stronghold, with 17 per cent of the global market share in 2023, according to UBS and Art Basel.

Even so, it has lost some of its shine since Brexit due to extra red tape and tax, and was overtaken for the first time by China (19 per cent) last year.

First held in London in 2003 before expanding to New York, Los Angeles and Seoul, Frieze also faces competition from Art Basel Paris being held in the French capital in October.

Frieze London director Eva Langret, however, remains confident of London’s pulling power.

“We have many young galleries opening in London, many of those have participated in the fair in the last few years,” she said.

“It’s been a very dynamic sector... there is a lot of excitement, and London is still London,” she added.

“Frieze is about getting the entire art community together, we have collectors who have travelled across the world to be here... so many galleries with incredible presentations,” said.

“Great sales are already happening.” —AFP

Historically, women in Oman have held vital roles, exemplified by the women of Sur in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate. Khalid al Mukhaini, a historian from Sur, highlights how these women were integral to their families and communities during their husbands' long sea voyages.



Rural women in Oman are pride of the nation



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

WOMEN IN OMAN have made remarkable strides in various sectors, now comprising 42 per cent of the public sector workforce. “Women outnumber men in service industries like healthcare, education, and social work. Many work in the retail sector, and they also make up 88 per cent of the country’s craftspeople. Women in Oman are also leading the way in entrepreneurship, with more women than men now running their own businesses,” reports The Arab Center Washington, DC.

However, the centre points out that there are still areas for growth, particularly in women’s political leadership and the inclusion of rural women. Oman’s Basic Law, enacted in 1996, prohibits gender discrimination, but more policies are needed to foster women’s leadership in politics.

Historically, women in Oman have held vital roles, exemplified by the women of Sur in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate. Khalid al Mukhaini, a historian from Sur, highlights how these women were integral to their families and communities during their husbands’ long sea voyages.

“Women helped prepare their husbands for the journey, got their children ready for their first trip at sea, and maintained their homes and families in the men’s absence. They also sewed clothes and prepared complete travel kits,” explains Khalid.

The travel season from August to May meant that women managed their households for extended periods, handling finances and overseeing family matters. They even participated in the local economy, purchasing goods from the market and expertly mixing spices that remain popular today.

In Central Oman, Bedouin women are known for their skills in ‘Rahas’, a freshwater snail fishery. Using spears, they hunt rayfish, cuttlefish, and octopus, collecting oysters and clams to sell at local markets. However, the future of these traditional practices may depend on



culture, poultry, and dairy farming.

The ministry provides them with essential tools such as refrigerators, hatching devices, and packaging equipment. The “Rifi” programme, in collaboration with the Oman Development Bank, supports women’s entrepreneurship and promotes eco-friendly practices, while the brand ‘From My Home’ allows women to market their products effectively.

As urban women achieve entrepreneurial success, rural women too are making their mark. What they need now is access to larger markets, a stronger digital presence, and continued support to enhance their skills and knowledge. With sustained learning and support, women in both urban and rural Oman will continue to shape the country’s future.

access to larger markets and better urban opportunities. Recognising the importance of empowering rural women, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources has launched initiatives to enhance their financial independence. In Ibri, rural women are encouraged to build projects in vegetable cultivation, api-

