

OMAN OMAN DAILY

Observer

VOL. 44, NO. 334
PAGES 20 BAISAS 200

SUNRISE 06:03 AM
PRAYER TIMINGS
FAJR 04:48 AM
DHUHR 11:58 PM
ASR 03:19 PM
MAGHRIB 05:48 PM
ISHA 06:58 PM

2010000387405

12

GAUFF BEATS
PEGULA TO
WIN WUHAN
OPEN TITLE

INBRIEF

HM THANKED
BY SAUDI KING

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in reply to His Majesty's condolences cable on the demise of Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al Sheikh, Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Head of the Council of Senior Scholars. In his cable, King Salman expressed his utmost thanks for His Majesty's noble feelings and sincere prayers, praying to Allah the Almighty to protect His Majesty against all harms.

GDP UP 2.44%
TO HIT RO 20.66 BN
IN FIRST HALF

The Sultanate of Oman's economy expanded in the first half of 2025 as non-oil activity strengthened and natural gas output surged, while inflation stayed low and the country maintained a healthy trade surplus, according to the Ministry of Economy's latest Economic Performance Bulletin (September 2025). GDP at current prices rose 2.44 per cent to RO 20.66 billion from RO 20.17 billion a year earlier. In real terms, output increased 2.27 per cent, driven by a 4.14-per cent rise in non-oil activities. Within this, agriculture, forestry and fishing grew 11.72 per cent, services 4.39 per cent and industrial activities 2.50 per cent. Oil value added edged down 0.48 per cent in line with a 0.61-per cent dip in average crude output, while natural gas activities jumped 56.52 per cent.

DETAILS ON P13

COLD CHAIN ECONOMIC CLUSTER



The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has awarded the consultancy services tender for the Integrated Economic Cluster for Cold Chain Development in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). The initiative forms part of the Tatal Programme for Economic Diversification "Tanwea", supervised by the Ministry of Economy and aims to strengthen Oman's food and logistics sectors. The consultancy contract has been awarded to Egolisi Consulting for Modest Business Solutions, an Omani small and medium enterprise (SME) specialising in management and strategic consultancy.

DETAILS ON P15

280th anniversary of Al Busaid Dynasty marked



MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced the issuance of two commemorative coins in gold and silver to commemorate the 280th anniversary of the Al Busaid Dynasty (1744-2024 AD). This occasion marks a milestone in the history of the Sultanate of Oman, reflecting the depth of its political stability, attributed to the wise leadership of Al Busaid rulers and their role in consolidating the foundations of the state and building its renaissance. The coins feature a

unique design that reflects national identity. The obverse depicts a coloured image of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Sultan's Tughra, Al Alam Palace, and the Jalali and Mirani Forts. The reverse of the coin depicts colourful elements, such as Sohar Fort, a traditional Omani sailing ship, and the names of the Imams and Sultans of Al Busaid Dynasty. Fifteen gold coins and 1,000 silver coins have been minted, each with a face value of RO 1. These coins feature high-quality gold (0.927) and silver (0.999),

with a diameter of 75.00 mm and a weight of 113.40 grammes. The minimum selling price for the gold coin starts at RO 7,935 and for the silver coin at RO 134, subject to change based on global gold and silver prices. It is noteworthy that these commemorative coins are legal tender at their face value and can be purchased from the Central Bank of Oman (Ruwi, Salalah and Suhar), or through Oman Post sales window at the Opera Galleria starting from October 12, 2025. — ONA

SEE ALSO P3

Ceasefire holds in Gaza
ahead of hostage release

A CEASEFIRE between Israel and Hamas held in Gaza for a third day on Sunday, ahead of the expected release of Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners and an address by US President Donald Trump to Israel's parliament. Thousands of Palestinians continued to travel north towards Gaza City, the focus of Israeli attacks over the past two months, hopeful that the ceasefire would bring an end to the war. "There is a lot of joy among the people," said Abdou Abu Seada, adding that the joy was tempered by exhaustion after two years of war that has destroyed much of Gaza. Government spokesperson Shosh Bedrosian said that Israel expected the captives to start being released early on Monday morning, with the 20 living captives to be released together. In the event that captives were released earlier, Israel was ready to receive them, she said. Their release is to be followed later by the handover of the bodies of the remaining 28 deceased captives. Under the ceasefire agreement, Hamas is due by noon on Monday to release the remaining captives. Israel's captives coordinator Gal Hirsch last Thursday said a task force would be formed to help find the remains of any



A Palestinian girl sits by aid parcels after aid trucks entered from the Karem Abu Salem crossing, in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Sunday.

dead ones that Hamas could not locate. Trump is due to arrive in Israel on Monday to address the Knesset, the parliament, before travelling to Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt for a world leaders' summit on ending the Gaza war. Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner addressed a rally in Tel Aviv on Saturday, which many Israelis hoped would be the final one, urging the release of captives and an end to the war. The United States, along with Egypt, Qatar and Türkiye, mediated what has been described as a first-phase agreement between Israel and Hamas for a ceasefire and the release of captives by Hamas and prisoners and detainees by Israel. The Israel Prison Service said it had transferred some Palestinian prisoners to other facilities ahead of their expected release. The Israeli Ministry of Justice has released the names of 250 Palestinians who are to be freed under the deal. Israel is also to release 1,700 Palestinians who have been detained in Gaza since October 7, 2023, and 22 Palestinian minors, along with the bodies of 360 fighters. Israeli government spokesperson Bedrosian said the prisoners would be released once the living captives reach Israeli territory. SEE ALSO P6

Fresh rules set for recruitment of domestic workers in Oman

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 12

The Ministry of Labour issued a Decision No 574/2025, stipulating the regulations for the work of domestic workers and those in similar work. The decision aims to enhance the protection of domestic workers, clarify employer obligations, and strengthen oversight of employment practices in private households. Under the resolution, all

employers and workers covered by the new rules must regularise their employment status within three months of the date the regulation comes into force. The regulation applies to jobs such as child caregivers, private drivers, gardeners, agriculture workers, residential building guards, home health assistants, private nurses, home cooks and animal handlers, including camel, cattle and horse breeders. It defines domestic work relationships and



guarantees minimum rights for workers, declaring any agreement that reduces or waives such rights as void. Employers may, however, grant additional benefits beyond those stipulated in the regulation. According to the decision, employers are prohibited from imposing forced labour, harassment, or violence and from withholding passports or documents without the worker's written consent. They may not

employ anyone under the age of 21 or collect a fee for recruitment. The regulation also forbids advertising for workers based on creed or colour, and bars employment of unlicensed or undocumented workers. Employers must provide workers appropriate accommodation, food, healthcare coverage, and transportation, and maintain a dedicated record for each worker containing employment details and wage documentation.

TURN TO P2

OMAN



burjeel
hospital
By Burjeel Holdings



Visiting
18th
October
2025



Injured on the field?
We'll help you come back stronger, faster, and more resilient.
Dr. Jacob Varghese
Sr. Consultant - Sports & Joint Surgery
Burjeel Hospital, Al Khuwair, Muscat



24399777

Renowned Visiting Consultant from India

MOH 3347873/2025

SHORTTAKES



The workshop was held under the auspices of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism. — ONA

WORKSHOP
MEASURES TOURISM’S
CONTRIBUTION

MUSCAT: The regional workshop on ‘Measuring Tourism’s Contribution to the Economy’, organised by the Statistical Centre for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC-Stat), emphasised the necessity of adopting comprehensive methodologies to measure the total contribution of tourism.

This approach provides a more accurate and holistic picture of the sector’s true role in supporting Gulf economies and helps formulate effective policies based on evidence and reliable statistical data. The workshop was held under the auspices of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism. The workshop discussed concepts for measuring tourism and their methodological frameworks according to international standards, mechanisms for linking statistical data and administrative records. — ONA

MILITARY PENSION
FUND RECEIVES ISSA
CERTIFICATE



The certificate serves as an acknowledgement of the fund’s quality of communication practices. — ONA

MUSCAT: The Military and Security Services Pension Fund has received the Certificate of Excellence in Corporate Communication from the International Social Security Association (ISSA).

The certificate serves as a global acknowledgement of the Fund’s quality of communication practices and its commitment to the ISSA guidelines in corporate communication.

The ISSA is the prime global reference for institutions of pension and social security. Its membership comprises more than 320 institutions from 160 countries. The Military and Security Services Pension Fund joined the ISSA in 2019. — ONA

GCC 2025 Tour on investment in tourism kicks off

MUSCAT: An event titled ‘GCC 2025 tour for successful management and promotion of investment and tourism’ kicked off in Muscat on Sunday.

The launch ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour.

The tour explores the latest practices in management and institutional development of tourism promotion and investment.

Organised by the Ministry of Labour in cooperation with Media Thought firm, the event brings about government representatives and regional and international experts. It seeks to develop national competencies and devise flexible work environments capable of



The tour explores the latest practices in management and institutional development of tourism promotion and investment. — ONA

keeping pace with rapid economic developments.

The first day of the tour includes two panel discussions on efficient resource management. The first

focuses on success stories in the energy sector and highlighted the importance of investing in national resources as a means of realising sustainable growth. The

second panel discussion reviews the role of motivation in enhancing institutional performance and furnishing a work environment that encourages innovation and excellence.

The first day’s programme also includes a lecture on how a leader could practise self-empowerment. It deals with personal leadership strategies and measures on developing positive thinking in the workplace.

The second day of the event includes two lectures titled: “The Leader’s Rational in Grooming Omani Youth in Accordance with Oman Vision 2040” and “Foresight Analysis in Multidimensional Strategic Issues.” — ONA

Scholarships agreement to
meet labour requirements

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 12

THE Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) on Sunday signed a cooperation agreement with the Military and Security Services Pension Fund (MSSPF) regarding external scholarships.

The agreement was signed by Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Ahmed bin Salem al Busaidy, CEO of the Military and Security Services Pension Fund.

The agreement aims to provide highly qualified graduates to meet the labour market requirements. It comes in response to the MSSPF’s plan to employ a number of graduates of scholarship programmes specialising in actuarial studies beside other specialisations to be determined later.

Under the agreement, which extends from the academic year 2025/2026 to 2027/2028, a



The agreement was signed by Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Ahmed bin Salem al Busaidy, CEO of the Military and Security Services Pension Fund.

number of undergraduate scholarships will be allocated annually. The scholarship seats will be offered for competition through the Higher Education Admissions Centre under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The MSSPF will be responsible for conducting personal interviews and medical examinations, in addition to employing scholarship recipients upon graduation in accordance with its own requirements.

The agreement also stipulates a set of coordination mechanisms, including holding an annual meeting to follow up on the programme’s implementation, participating in awareness-raising programmes for General Education Diploma students, and cooperating on what would ensure the success of this national initiative.

This strategic partnership reflects the commitment of both parties to investing in Omani human capital and empowering them through quality education and employment in vital state institutions.

FRESH RULES SET FOR RECRUITMENT OF DOMESTIC WORKERS IN OMAN

FROM PI

Workers, in turn, are required to respect Omani laws, customs and traditions, perform their assigned duties diligently, maintain confidentiality, and safeguard the employer’s property.

The decision noted that employment contracts must be in writing and in Arabic, with translation in other languages as permitted. The contract must specify working hours, wages, rest periods and other terms, and must be electronically registered with the ministry.

A probationary period of up to 15 days may be agreed upon to assess professional competence and conduct of the worker. Either party may terminate the contract during this period after giving at least 7 days’ notice. A worker cannot be placed on probation more than once with the same employer unless employed under a different category of work. If the parties continue the employment after the contract’s expiry, it is deemed automatically renewed under the same conditions unless either party provides two months’ written notice of termination. Working

hours may not exceed 12 hours per day, including designated rest and meal breaks totalling at least 8 hours daily. Overtime of up to two additional hours per day may be agreed upon in writing, compensated at the equivalent daily wage rate, the decision pointed out.

Workers are entitled to one paid rest day per week, and paid sick leave up to 30 days per year upon presentation of a certified medical report. Annual leave must not be less than 21 days per year, with the option to divide or compensate unused days in cash.

Waqf forum to gather 200 participants from various sectors

IDRIS AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

The Third Waqf Forum, themed ‘Waqf: A Strategic Partner in Development’, begins today (Monday) at the Grand Millennium Hotel. The event is organised by the Imam Jaber bin Zaid Waqf Foundation and is under the auspices of Sheikh Salim bin Mustahail al Maashani, Adviser at the Diwan of Royal Court

The forum will gather senior

officials and prominent figures from the public and private sectors, as well as representatives from waqf institutions, charitable organisations and corporate social responsibility entities with the goal of discussing the current integration between waqf and charitable work and the importance of incorporating modern technologies into the waqf system to enhance performance efficiency.

The first panel discussion will



Prior to the official opening, two workshops took place in preparation for the forum.

focus on innovation and digital technologies to maximise the impact of waqf and charitable initiatives, while the second panel will address the integrative framework between waqf and social responsibility to enhance development. The third and final session will look at waqf as a strategic tool to support the economy and development.

Prior to the official opening, two workshops took place in preparation. The first workshop,

titled “Measuring the Return on Social Investment,” was presented by Abdullatif bin Rashid al Maamari and Zuheir bin Ibrahim al Sawafi. The forum is expected to gather approximately 200 participants from various sectors, including specialists from the government sector involved with waqf and charitable associations, as well as participants from the private sector working in corporate social responsibility departments.

SHORT TAKES



The Omani delegation was led by Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs. — ONA

OMAN AT GCC JUSTICE MINISTERS MEETING

KUWAIT: The Sultanate of Oman participated in the 35th meeting of GCC Justice Ministers, convened in Kuwait on Sunday. The Omani delegation was led by Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs. The ministerial gathering addressed several initiatives aimed at strengthening legal and judicial collaboration across GCC nations. Key discussion points included developing a comprehensive framework for enhanced cooperation between justice ministries, advancing Oman's proposal for greater judicial integration among member states, and establishing unified regulations to combat discrimination, hate speech and religious intolerance throughout the Gulf region. Delegates further examined draft legislation concerning unified cybersecurity crime regulations for GCC states, evaluated recommendations for judicial and legal training institutions within member countries, and reviewed the 2025 report on international cooperation and foreign relations conducted by GCC justice ministries. — ONA

SHABAB OMAN II HOSTS RECEPTION AT JEDDAH PORT



Reception for Shabab Oman II at Jeddah

JEDDAH: The Royal Navy of Oman's sail training vessel Shabab Oman II hosted a reception at Jeddah Port in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to mark its official visit. The event was attended by Sayyid Najib bin Hilal al Busaidy, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Saudi Arabia, along with several ambassadors and representatives from sisterly and friendly nations. The reception reflected the ship's role as a symbol of Oman's maritime heritage and its message of friendship and peace. — ONA

HOSPITAL GETS MOTHER-BABY FRIENDLY ACCREDITATION



AL BURAIMI: The Ministry of Health on Sunday celebrated Al Buraimi Hospital's obtaining the "International Accreditation Certificate", both for being the first hospital in the Sultanate of Oman in the "Mother-Friendly Initiative" and for occupying second place in the "Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative". Dr Aisha al Maqbali, Director of Al Buraimi Hospital, said that the accomplishment was the outcome of collective efforts and constant cooperation among all hospital staff, who, she added, did everything possible to provide the best care for mothers and newborns. — ONA

Coins mark 280th anniversary of Al Busaid Dynasty

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced the issuance of two commemorative coins in gold and silver to commemorate the 280th anniversary of the Al Busaid Dynasty (1744-2024 AD). This occasion marks a milestone in the history of the Sultanate of Oman, reflecting the depth of its political stability, attributed to the wise leadership of Al Busaid rulers and their role in consolidating the foundations of the state and building its renaissance. — ONA



Authorities warn against unsafe passenger transport

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

DESPITE Continuous national efforts to promote road safety, unsafe practices persist on Omani roads, notably carrying passengers in areas not designated for people, such as the backs of pickup trucks or cargo spaces. Some drivers justify these actions due to short distances or limited transport options, but safety experts warn that such behaviour dramatically increases the risk of severe injury or death. These areas lack essential safety features like seatbelts and airbags, leaving passengers vulnerable during sudden stops or collisions. Several tragic incidents in recent years have seen passengers fall from open trucks or cargo vehicles, resulting in serious injuries and fatalities that could have been avoided with adherence to traffic laws. The Royal Oman Police (ROP) Traffic Department confirms that carrying passengers in unsafe areas is among the most dangerous violations observed. Authorities have intensified monitoring to curb these practices and ensure public



Several tragic incidents in recent years have seen passengers fall from open trucks or cargo vehicles, resulting in serious injuries and fatalities that could have been avoided with adherence to traffic laws.

Recent statistics show a decline in traffic accidents in Oman, reflecting enforcement and public awareness efforts

safety. Oman's Traffic Law, under Royal Decree No 38/2018, explicitly prohibits transporting people in non-designated areas. Article 31 states: "It is prohibited to carry persons in areas not designated for passengers or to allow them to board or alight while the vehicle is moving." Article 32 requires drivers to ensure passenger safety and not exceed the vehicle's registered capacity. Violations may result in fines from RO 10 to RO 50, vehicle impoundment in repeated or severe cases, and criminal liability if injuries or fatalities occur. Employers, including business owners, contractors, and farm operators, are also responsible under occupational safety

regulations. The Ministry of Labour stresses that providing safe, suitable transportation for workers is mandatory, and using cargo vehicles or open trucks for passenger transport violates both traffic and workplace safety laws. The ROP emphasises that awareness is the first line of defence. Campaigns target the public, especially in industrial and agricultural areas, to highlight the dangers of transporting passengers in unsafe locations. Recent statistics show a decline in traffic accidents in Oman, reflecting enforcement and public awareness efforts. Yet, some unsafe habits persist, posing challenges to the nation's goal of zero road fatalities. Authorities warn that insurance companies may deny compensation for accidents involving illegally transported passengers, leaving drivers or employers financially liable. "Adhering to traffic laws is not just a legal obligation but a reflection of civic responsibility and respect for human life," the ROP stated. "Every seat in a vehicle is designed with safety in mind; any deviation poses a serious hazard. Road safety is a shared responsibility, starting with individual awareness and decision-making."

Oman and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in addition to other matters of common interest. The meeting was attended by Salim bin Mohammed al Busaidy, Consul-General of the Sultanate of Oman in Jeddah, and Saif bin Said al Shammali, Deputy Head of the Mission. — ONA

Initiative also serves as an economic solution aimed to enhance the income of livestock owners through environmentally sustainable solutions that improve the economic performance of pastoral communities. The first phase of the Initiative will be implemented from 2026 to 2030 in the wilayats of Dhalkout and Rakhkout in Dhofar Governorate. It will encourage foreign investment in industries related to livestock products and rain-fed farming of crops with high economic returns, making use of Dhofar Governorate's abundant seasonal climate that lasts three months a year. — ONA

OMAN ENVOY NAMED OIC PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

JEDDAH: Sayyid Najib bin Hilal al Busaidy, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on Sunday presented his credentials as the Sultanate of Oman's Permanent Representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).



Sayyid Najib presented his credentials in Jeddah during a reception held by Samir Bakr Diab, OIC's Assistant Secretary General for Palestine and Al Quds (who undertakes the tasks of the OIC Secretary-General). The meeting discussed means of consolidating relations between the Sultanate of

Meeting discusses 'Dhofar Pasture' project

MUSCAT: A meeting was held at the Environment Authority in Muscat on Sunday to review the final draft of 'Dhofar Pasture Resting Initiative', aimed to offer innovative and smart solutions to meet the objective of raising the added value of the livestock sector in Dhofar Governorate. The meeting looked into amendments proposed by various parties in the public and private sectors, society institutions and the business sector. The amendments dealt with means of meeting the objectives of protecting ecosystems, combating desertification and enhancing the productivity of natural pastures in the Sultanate of Oman.



The initiative focuses on transforming the livestock sector to a productive and sustainable sector. — ONA

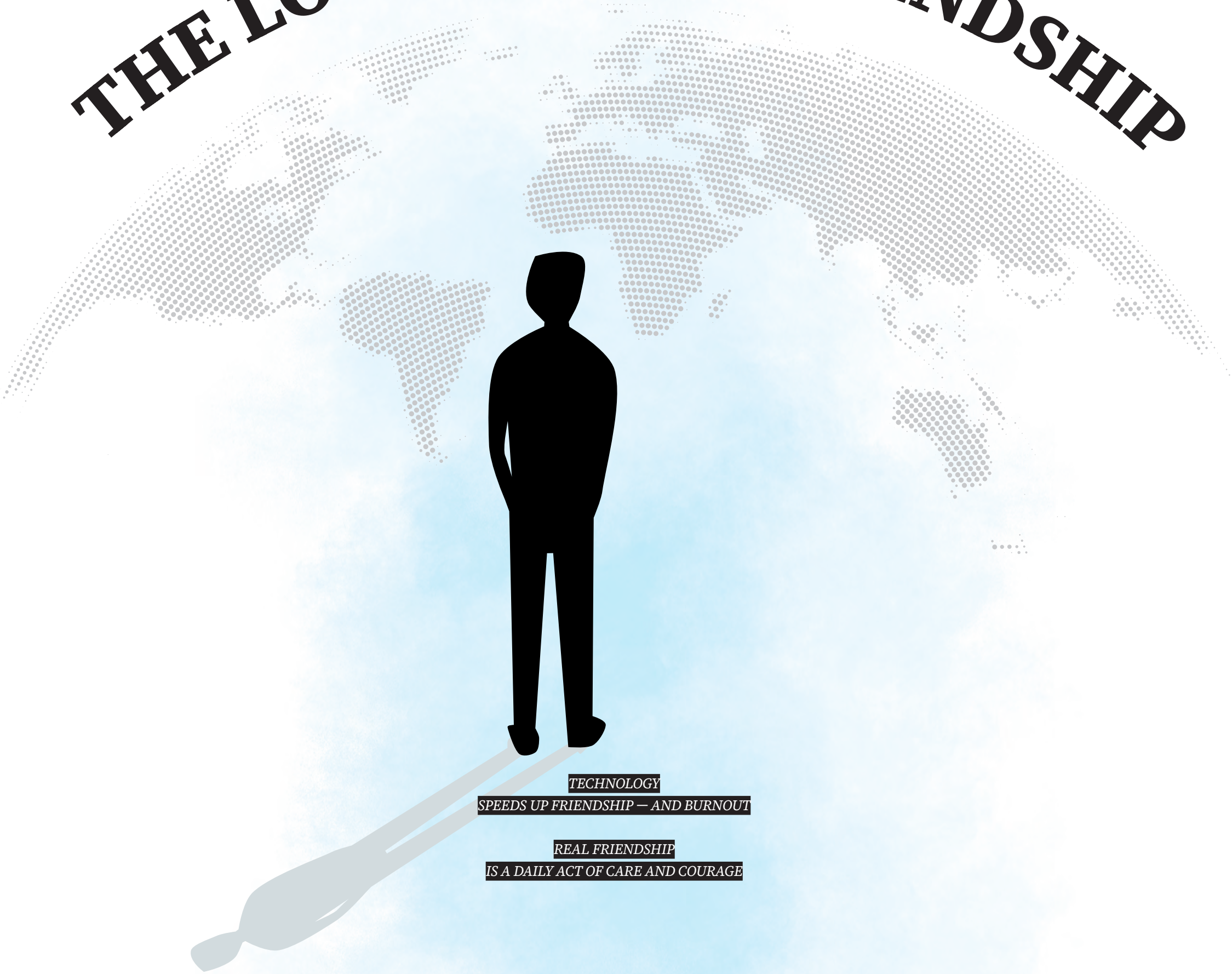
The initiative focuses on transforming the livestock sector from a consumer of environmental resources to a productive and sustainable sector, in line with the objectives

of Oman Vision 2040, Oman's Environmental Strategy and the country's commitment to achieve net-zero carbon neutrality by 2050. Dhofar Pasture Resting

SPOTLIGHT

D I G I T A L W O R L D

THE LOST ART OF FRIENDSHIP



TECHNOLOGY
SPEEDS UP FRIENDSHIP — AND BURNOUT

REAL FRIENDSHIP
IS A DAILY ACT OF CARE AND COURAGE

BALQEES AL ORAIMI

IN AN AGE of speed and screen-bound interactions, true friendship has become one of life’s rarest treasures. Messages travel across continents in seconds, emojis replace words and relationships often fade as fast as notifications appear.

What once took years to build — loyalty, trust and shared memories — now risks vanishing in the glow of digital convenience.

Once, friendship was slow and deliberate — nurtured through face-to-face conversations, long walks and unspoken understanding. Today, that warmth feels diluted, replaced by constant visibility and instant responses that leave little room for emotional depth.

Many young people now find themselves surrounded by hundreds of contacts, yet lonelier than ever. “I can chat with dozens of people online,” says Alaa al Riyami, 27, “but at the end of the day, there’s no one I can truly talk to. The more connected I am digitally, the more disconnected I feel emotionally.”

Social specialist Mohammed bin Salem al Nasri believes technology

“Digital communication has turned emotional exchange into information exchange. It’s made relationships faster, lighter — and often more fragile

MOHAMMED BIN SALEM AL NASRI,
Social specialist

has altered the essence of human connection. “We are emotional beings by nature,” he says. “But digital communication has turned emotional exchange into information exchange. It’s made relationships faster, lighter — and often more fragile.”

Modern life’s relentless pace has birthed what many call ‘no-time relationships’.

Between work, studies and endless digital feeds, there’s little room for long conversations or unplanned moments that once defined friendship. “Let’s meet soon” has become an empty promise, lost amid busy schedules and half-read messages. True friendship, however, has never been about frequency. It is about presence — a deep assurance that someone cares, listens and stays.

“I used to think having many friends meant being lucky,” says Maha al Harthy, a university student. “But I’ve learned that a real friend isn’t measured by numbers. She’s the one who checks on you for no reason, who senses your silence more than your words.”

Research shows people have never been more connected, yet report record levels of loneliness.

Psychologists describe this as the rise of ‘light relationships’ — effortless and entertaining, but shallow and fleeting. Friendships are now tested by response times and online reactions rather than distance or shared trials.

The result is emotional fatigue — a sense that friendships are easy to start but easier to lose. Yet, many still crave depth over speed, choosing meaningful bonds over fleeting ones. A handwritten note, a phone call, or an unplanned coffee — these small acts are quiet rebellions against a disposable culture.

True friendship demands attention, patience and intention — qualities no algorithm can mimic. It thrives not in shared selfies but in shared silences; not in constant messaging, but in genuine care.

As philosopher Erich Fromm wrote, “Love — and friendship — is not a feeling one falls into; it is an act of will.” To sustain friendship today is to choose it daily — with presence, honesty and empathy.

In the end, a real friend is not the one who reacts to every post but the one who remembers without a reminder, who stays when the feed goes silent.

SHORT TAKES



Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri at the UNEA meet in the UAE

OMAN, UK DISCUSS COOPERATION

MUSCAT: In a step towards advancing international environmental cooperation, Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority and President of the Seventh United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), met Ruth Davies, the United Kingdom’s Special Representative for Nature, on the sidelines of the 27th World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi. The meeting reviewed opportunities to enhance bilateral collaboration between Oman and the UK in the field of environmental governance, biodiversity preservation and sustainable resource management. It also discussed the priorities of the upcoming UNEA session, focusing on strengthening global commitments to address climate challenges. — ONA

TOP INDIAN CONTENT CREATORS HONOURED



MUSCAT: Areeb Events and Marketing hosted ‘Rhythms and Colours of India’, a landmark initiative in Oman, recognising Indian content creators for their outstanding contributions across diverse digital platforms. The event, inaugurated by G V Srinivas, Indian Ambassador to Oman, brought together over 300 content creators from across the Sultanate of Oman. Among them, 10 distinguished creators were honoured in categories including rising star, travel, lifestyle, food, fashion, aesthetics and motherhood. The winners were carefully selected by a jury of senior journalists. The award winners are, Rising Star: Abdul Muhaimin Sada and Jennifer Yedidi, Best Lifestyle Content Creator: Mohamed Laibu, Best Family Content Creator: Shamsheera, Best Food Content Creator: Mujeebudheen Khan, Best Travel Content Creator: Flora Ghainder, Best Luxury and Lifestyle Content Creator: Munazzah Sheth, Most Creative Content Creator: Antara Bose, Best Fashion Content Creator: Amita Singh Bhalla, Best Community Engagement: Oman Vartha, Content Creator of the Year: Rachel George. Inspiring Impact award winners included Suhail Khan, Shameer PTK and Tarini Agarwal.

NAMA ADVANCES WASTEWATER PROJECTS IN MAHOUT, AL JAZIR

MUSCAT: Nama Water and Wastewater Services announced steady progress in two major wastewater treatment projects in Mahout and Al Jazir, with both reaching 55 per cent completion. The facilities utilise reed bed technology, a sustainable, nature-based method of water purification. Project Manager Eng Hassan bin Abdullah al Farsi said the combined project cost is approximately RO 765,000, with each plant designed to treat 600 cubic metres



The combined project cost is approx RO 765,000

of wastewater per day. This marks Nama’s first use of this environmentally friendly treatment method, which depends on natural reeds to purify wastewater through biological and chemical processes. Eng Ahmed bin Hamoud al Rawahi, Director of Operations in Al Wusta, emphasised that the technology aligns with Oman’s sustainability vision, supporting water reuse, agricultural irrigation and the expansion of green zones. — ONA

Initiative to expand ethical AI governance

THE Sultanate of Oman launched the initiative to expand the scope of the comprehensive, rights-based Ethical AI Governance framework on Sunday, which represents the first global standard document for the ethical implementation, development and use of artificial intelligence based on human rights. This took place during the workshop on expanding the scope of comprehensive, rights-based Ethical AI Governance, organised by the Ministry of Education, represented by the Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, over two days. The workshop was held in cooperation with the Unesco Regional Office for the Gulf States and Yemen in Doha, and in partnership



The workshop aims to discuss mechanism for preparing national regulatory frameworks that govern the use of AI systems. — ONA

with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology. The workshop, inaugurated by Dr Jokha bint Abdullah al Shukailiyah, Chief Executive

Officer of Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA), targets specialists and professionals working in AI systems from both the public

and private sectors, as well as members of the Oman Human Rights Commission. Unesco has selected Oman as one of the beneficiary countries for the experience of implementing the AI Management System (RAM), within the framework of the Unesco Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. The workshop aims to discuss the mechanism for preparing national regulatory frameworks that govern the use of AI systems in institutional work, the challenges facing relevant authorities in developing these regulations, and the consideration of legal, social, cultural, scientific and economic dimensions when formulating these frameworks. — ONA

Key Arab statistical meetings today



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will host the 50th session of the Board of Trustees of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) and the 43rd meeting of the Permanent Technical Committee for Statistics of the League of Arab States (LAS) on October 13, Monday. The AITRS Board of Trustees meeting will review the Institute’s draft budget for 2026, the outcomes of the 2020–2030 Strategy Evaluation Study, and ongoing statistical activities and initiatives across Arab countries. Meanwhile, the Permanent

Technical Committee for Statistics will discuss progress on 2030 Sustainable Development Indicators, environmental metrics related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), tourism statistics, census developments and the integration of modern technology in statistical operations. These meetings aim to enhance Arab cooperation in the field of statistics, build and develop capacity to adapt to technological transformation in data and information production, and strengthen decision-making support for sustainable development across Arab nations. — ONA

Abstract art explores emotions

MUSCAT: Abstract art reflects the artist’s inner world — a translation of emotion into colour, feeling into form and memory into movement. It allows the artist to escape the limits of realism, creating a visual language that invites contemplation and personal interpretation. Duaa al Farsi, Professor in the Department of Arts at the University of Nizwa, said: “Since my beginnings, drawing has been my gateway to understanding art as a means of expression and contemplation, not merely as a visual craft. This passion shapes my teaching approach at the University of Nizwa, where I encourage students to think creatively, experiment freely and connect art with social awareness.” She explained that abstract art does not aim to mirror the external world but instead focuses on shape, colour and line as the essence of artistic communication.



Duaa al Farsi, Professor, Dept of Arts, University of Nizwa

“It gives the artist greater freedom to express emotion and invites viewers to interpret the work through their own experiences,” she added. Al Farsi elaborated that abstract art encompasses several styles — from geometric abstraction, based on structured compositions, to expressive abstraction, which emphasises emotion and movement through bold brushwork and vivid colours. Techniques such as collage, pointillism, and the use of mixed media add texture

and depth, transforming materials into emotional expressions. “Each form of art carries a message,” she said. “In abstract art, this message is often implicit — philosophical, humanistic, or political — conveyed through symbolism rather than direct depiction.” Al Farsi emphasised that engagement with abstract art is a spiritual and sensory experience, encouraging viewers to connect inwardly rather than seek literal meaning. Her artistic contributions include participation in the Lucidity online exhibition during the pandemic, Happy Vibes at the Omani Women’s Day exhibition, and From Idea Till Masterpiece art show. Internationally, she has showcased works such as My Family’s Salon at the Bonington Nottingham Gallery and Four Old Women at the Wirksworth Exhibition in London. — ONA

TENDER NOTICE

وزارة الزراعة والسمكية وموارد المياه
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tender:-

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Sales Start Date	Tender Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Companies that are Eligible to Participate	Tender Document Fee (R.O)
660/202/MAFWR/DGAWRM-17	Cleaning work for the administration building and its buildings in Muscat governorate for a period of 2 years 2026 - 2028	Sunday 05-10-2025	Sunday 19-10-2025	Wednesday 29-10-2025	Specialized companies in the field of services registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with Excellent, First, Second, Third and Fourth grades.	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

- Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.

- The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies.

- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.

- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: [+968 24402200](mailto:etenderhd@gstb.gov.om) or etenderhd@gstb.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

WORLD

SERIOUS VIOLATION



People stand at the site of an overnight Israeli strike in Lebanese village of Al Msayleh. — AFP

ISRAELI GRENADE WOUNDS PEACEKEEPER IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

BEIRUT: The United Nations peacekeeping mission in Lebanon said on Sunday that one of its members was wounded by an Israeli grenade dropped near a UN position in the country’s south, the third incident of its kind in just over a month. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been working with the Lebanese army to support a November ceasefire that sought to end more than a year of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah that culminated in two months of open war.

“Just before noon yesterday, an Israeli drone dropped a grenade that exploded near a UNIFIL position” in Kfar Kila, the force said in a statement published on Sunday. “One peacekeeper was lightly injured and received medical assistance.” Earlier this month, UNIFIL said Israeli drones had dropped multiple grenades near peacekeepers providing security for workers clearing rubble left over from the war. And in a similar episode in September, UNIFIL said Israeli drones had dropped four grenades near peacekeepers, with Israel insisting at the time that there had been “no intentional fire” directed at the force.

UNIFIL said Saturday’s incident represented “another serious violation of resolution 1701 and concerning disregard for the safety of peacekeepers”. UN Security Council Resolution 1701 ended a 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and formed the basis of the November ceasefire. “We again call on the (Israeli army) to cease attacks on or near peacekeepers, who are working to rebuild the stability that both Israel and Lebanon have committed to restore,” the UN peacekeeping force said.

UNIFIL has been deployed since 1978 to separate Israel and Lebanon, and numbers some 10,000 personnel from almost 50 countries. In August, the Security Council voted to end the force’s mission in 2027. Under the US-brokered ceasefire, Hezbollah and Israel were both required to withdraw from south Lebanon, while UNIFIL deployed there alongside the Lebanese military, in part to help dismantle Hezbollah infrastructure. Israel, however, has kept up regular strikes in Lebanon on what it says are Hezbollah targets, and has maintained its troops in five locations it deems strategic.

On Saturday, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned an overnight Israeli strike that reportedly killed one person and destroyed hundreds of bulldozers and excavators in Al Msayleh. Israel’s military said at the time that it had carried out strikes in an area “where engineering machinery used to re-establish infrastructure” was located. On Sunday, Lebanese Premier Nawaf Salam called on his foreign minister “to urgently file a complaint to the Security Council regarding the recent Israeli aggression that targeted civilian and commercial facilities in the Al Msayleh area”, calling it a violation of Resolution 1701 and last year’s ceasefire. — AFP

CHINA, PHILIPPINES TRADE BLAME OVER BOAT COLLISION

MANILA: The Philippines said a Chinese ship deliberately rammed one of its government vessels in South China Sea on Sunday, although Beijing blamed Manila for the incident. Confrontations between Philippine and Chinese vessels occur frequently in the contested waterway, which Beijing claims nearly in its entirety despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis. The Philippines said a Chinese coast guard ship “fired its water

cannon” at the BRP Datu Pagbuaya, a vessel belonging to Manila’s fisheries bureau, at 9:15 am on Sunday. “Just three minutes later... the same (Chinese) vessel deliberately rammed the stern” of the Philippine boat, “causing minor structural damage but no injuries to the crew”, the Philippine coast guard said in a statement. It said the incident took place near Thitu Island, part of the Spratly Islands where Beijing has sought to assert its sovereignty claims for years.

The Philippine National Maritime Council, a body in charge of strengthening maritime governance, condemned the incident and vowed to pursue “appropriate diplomatic action to convey its strong objections to the aggressive and illegal actions of China”. Angelica Escalona, a spokeswoman for the foreign affairs department in Manila, also told reporters that a diplomatic protest would be filed over the incident. — Reuters

Afghanistan, Pakistan border clashes kill dozens

AFGHANISTAN and Pakistan said on Sunday they killed dozens of each other’s troops during a night of heavy border clashes between the two countries. Afghanistan’s Taliban forces launched attacks on Pakistani troops along their shared border late on Saturday, in what it called “retaliation for air strikes carried out by the Pakistani army on Kabul” on Thursday. Islamabad has not directly claimed responsibility for the strikes, but has repeatedly stated the right to defend itself against surging militancy that it says is planned from Afghan soil.

The two sides have repeatedly clashed in border regions since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in 2021, but airspace violations deep into Afghan territory would mark a significant escalation. Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban government spokesman, said on Sunday that 58 Pakistani soldiers were killed and around 30 wounded in the clashes, while nine Taliban forces were killed.

The Pakistani military, meanwhile, said 23 of its soldiers and more than 200 Taliban and affiliated troops were killed. Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said on Sunday that the “situation is under control”. “Our operation last night achieved its objectives. And then our friends like Qatar and Saudi Arabia appealed that the war must stop now, and the war is ceased right now,” he said during a visit to India. An Afghan military unit described Thursday’s blasts in the capital as “air strikes”, but Mujahid instead said the incident was an “airspace violation”, adding that no damage had been found.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Sunday he “strongly condemns provocations” by Afghanistan. “There will be no compromise on Pakistan’s defence,



An armed Taliban security personnel stands guard near the closed gate of the border crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan at Spin Boldak district in Kandahar province. — AFP

and every provocation will be met with a strong and effective response,” Sharif said in a statement, accusing Taliban authorities in Afghanistan of allowing their land to be used by “terrorist elements”.

The Afghan military said on Saturday night that Taliban forces were engaged “in heavy clashes against Pakistani security forces in various areas”.

Several border security officials said that no further clashes had been reported at major crossings on Sunday morning.

Key border crossings between the countries were closed on Sunday, officials said. Extra troops have been sent to the major border crossing at Torkham, which sits on the frontier between Kabul and Islamabad. Pakistani officials at Torkham, who requested anonymity, said that there had been no casualties on their side of the

border crossing and that no further clashes had been reported in the area on Sunday morning.

The violence came while India hosted Afghanistan’s foreign minister for the first time since the Taliban returned to power. Wahid Faqiri, an Afghan international relations expert, said those warming relations have “angered Pakistan and pushed Islamabad towards aggression”.

Militancy increased in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since the withdrawal of US-led troops from neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021 and the return of the Taliban government. The vast majority of attacks are claimed by the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), whose campaign against Pakistan security forces has intensified this year, set to be the deadliest in more than a decade. — AFP



POPE URGES ‘ COURAGE ’ IN GAZA PEACE DEAL

VATICAN CITY: Pope Leo XIV called for “courage” from those forging a peace plan for Gaza, as world leaders prepared to attend a summit on ending the conflict. “The agreement to begin the peace process has given a spark of hope in the Holy Land,” the US-born pontiff said at the end of Sunday’s Angelus prayer. “I encourage the parties involved to courageously continue on the path towards a just and lasting peace that respects the legitimate aspirations of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples,” he said.

International leaders will discuss implementing the first phase of a ceasefire, two years after offensive by Israel that killed more than 67,000 Palestinians. — AFP

POLITICAL SUCCESS

Seychelles oppn leader wins presidential run-off



Seychelles’ opposition leader Patrick Herminie won the presidential run-off on Sunday, electoral commission results showed, after a race dominated by environmental and economic concerns. Herminie pledged in his victory speech to lower the cost of living, revive public services and unite the island nation. “I will be the president of all Seychellois, and I will end divisions by ceasing preferences and giving everyone the opportunity to thrive,” he said. — AFP

INCALCULABLE DAMAGE

Fire guts Italian Bernaga Monastery



A vast blaze has torn through the historic Bernaga Monastery in Italy, forcing the evacuation of 22 cloistered nuns. Founded in 1628, the monastery in La Valletta Brianza, near Milan, was where Carlo Acutis, the Catholic Church’s first millennial saint, took his First Communion. The fire broke out on Saturday and engulfed the entire building. Marco Panzeri, mayor of La Valletta Brianza, said that it was “a disaster, an immense, incalculable damage”. — AFP

DETECTING OVERSTAYERS

EU begins rollout of digital border system



European Union member countries began rolling out a new entry and exit system on Sunday at the bloc’s external borders, electronically registering non-EU nationals’ data. The Entry/Exit System (EES), an automated system that requires travellers to register at the border by scanning their passports, will be introduced over six months. The move is aimed at detecting overstayers, tackling identity fraud and preventing illegal migration amid political pressure. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES



President Emmanuel Macron speaks with Sebastien Lecornu, south eastern France. — AFP file photo

FRENCH PM FACES UPHILL TASK TO FORM GOVERNMENT

PARIS: French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu on Sunday was negotiating to form a government after losing a key political ally, with time running short before a fast-approaching budget deadline. France has been gripped by political instability since President Emmanuel Macron called snap polls last year that he hoped would consolidate power but instead resulted in a hung parliament and gains for the far right.

Macron reinstated Lecornu late on Friday, just four days after the premier resigned and his first government collapsed, triggering outrage and vows from opponents to topple any new cabinet at the first chance. The former defence minister must now assemble a government to present a 2026 draft budget before a Tuesday deadline, giving parliament the constitutionally required 70 days to scrutinise the plan before year’s end.

But the right-wing Republicans (LR), a key political ally, dealt a blow to his chances on Saturday by announcing they would not take part in the new government but only cooperate on a “bill-by-bill” basis. For his part, the premier has pledged to work with all mainstream political movements and vowed to select cabinet members who are “not imprisoned by parties”. — AFP

AT LEAST 41 DEAD IN MEXICO FLOODS



Floods caused by torrential rains have killed at least 41 people in Mexico in recent days and left behind a trail of destruction. Mexico’s civil defense authorities reported intense rainfall in 31 of 32 states, causing rivers to overflow, flooding entire villages, triggering landslides and collapsing roads and bridges. Around 80,000 people have been affected by the extreme weather in Puebla alone, the state government said. — AFP

Madagascar president warns of coup after soldiers join protests

ANTANANARIVO: Madagascar’s presidency said on Sunday that “an attempted illegal and forcible seizure of power” was underway in the African nation, without providing details, a day after some soldiers joined a protest movement that had begun last month. Troops from the elite CAPSAT unit that helped President Andry Rajoelina seize power in a 2009 coup, urged fellow soldiers to disobey orders and back the youth-led protests, which began on September 25 and pose the most serious challenge to Rajoelina’s rule since his reelection in 2023. A witness saw three people injured after shots were fired along a road to the CAPSAT barracks on Sunday. Other witnesses said there was no sign of ongoing clashes.

Rival forces claimed on Sunday to have command over security operations in the country, with one group - representing the CAPSAT soldiers - saying it would coordinate

all branches of the military from its base on the outskirts of Antananarivo. Spokespeople for the defence ministry and the military general staff declined to comment.

The gendarmerie, which has tackled the protests for the last few weeks together with the police and has been accused by protesters of using excessive force, said its orders would come “exclusively from the National Gendarmerie Command Center.” The protests, inspired by Gen Z-led movements in Kenya and Nepal, began over water and electricity shortages but have since escalated, with demonstrators calling for Rajoelina to step down, apologise for violence against protesters, and dissolve the Senate and electoral commission.

Thousands gathered in Antananarivo on Sunday to protest against the government and pay tribute to a slain CAPSAT soldier, whom the army unit alleged was



Protesters react as they breach a Malagasy gendarmerie formation during clashes, in Antananarivo. — AFP

killed by the gendarmerie on Saturday. The peaceful gathering was attended by church leaders and opposition politicians, including former president Marc Ravalomana, in addition to CAPSAT troops.

In a statement on the presidency’s official social media account, Rajoelina’s office said he condemned attempts to destabilise the country

and urged “dialogue to resolve the crisis. The African Union commission’s chief Mahmoud Ali Youssouf on Sunday welcomed “the government’s renewed commitment to dialogue” and called for calm and restraint.

Videos on social media on Saturday showed CAPSAT soldiers urging fellow troops to “support the people.” A video broadcast by local media showed that dozens of soldiers left the barracks later on Saturday to escort thousands of protesters into the May 13 Square in Antananarivo, the scene of many political uprisings, which had been heavily guarded and off limits during the unrest.

At least 22 people have been killed and 100 injured in the unrest, according to the United Nations. The Malagasy government has disputed the figures, with Rajoelina saying this week that 12 people were killed in the protests. — Reuters

UK SPEARHEADS POLAR CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH AS US DRAWS BACK

HARWICH: Britain’s flagship polar research vessel heads to Antarctica next week to help advance dozens of climate change-linked science projects, as Western nations spearhead studies there while the United States withdraws. The RRS Sir David Attenborough, a state-of-the-art ship named after the renowned UK naturalist, will aid research on everything from “hunting underwater tsunamis” to tracking glacier melt and whale populations.

Operated by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), the country’s polar research institute, the 15,000-tonne icebreaker, boasting a helipad and various laboratories and gadgetry, is pivotal to UK efforts to assess climate change’s impact there. “The saying goes ‘what happens in Antarctica doesn’t stay in Antarctica,’” BAS oceanographer Peter Davis told AFP during a tour of the vessel as it prepared to depart Harwich, eastern England, on Monday. He called it

“a shame” that the United States was “drawing back” from scientific exploration in the region.

But Davis noted that “lots of countries are stepping up to the plate and saying ‘we understand the importance of Antarctica and we’re going to drive our scientific research there’”. He is partnering with the Korean Polar Research Institute to maintain analysis of the crucial Thwaites Glacier and how melt from it is contributing to global sea level rise. — AFP

Ukraine evacuates cities in west as Russia nears

WHEN authorities ordered the evacuation of families and children from parts of Kramatorsk in east Ukraine, 34-year old mother of two Angela Bolonz was initially shocked. The city in the eastern Donetsk region has been a symbol of Ukrainian resistance for over a decade, battling a brief takeover by pro-Russia separatists in 2014 and resisting capture since Russia attacked in 2022. But with Moscow advancing to less than 20 kilometres from Kramatorsk and launching regular drone attacks, residents like Angela are grappling with the once unthinkable: that their city — like so many others in the east — could become unlivable. “When the evacuation was announced, people started leaving,” Angela said in a quiet voice, fixing her eyes on a heap of plastic bags filled with her possessions.

Russia controls almost 80 per cent of the Donetsk region and has been inching towards the city for months, hoping to take it over and sweep through Ukraine’s vast plains. Angela — together with her daughters aged five and 10 — decided to evacuate after Russia started flying explosive drones near their home, some of which set fire to cars.

On October 5, one drone guided by a thread of optical fibre several-dozen-kilometres-long struck a vehicle in the centre of Kramatorsk, a first for the city. While the streets in the centre of Kramatorsk were calm, tensions on its outskirts were palpable. On the road to Druzhkivka, a town about ten kilometers (six miles) to the south of Kramatorsk, cars sped under the cover of anti-drone netting. Stopping en route can be fatal. At the side of the road, soldiers were busy trying to fix an armoured vehicle whose bumper had been blown off by a drone.

Meanwhile, at a treatment centre for wounded soldiers, medics struggled to tend to all the patients. With his pants around his ankles, a tall man let out a volley of curses and jokes to lighten the mood as a doctor removed a piece of shrapnel from his bloodied buttock. Next to him, Yuriy, lying under a survival blanket, forced a smile. “We were returning from our position when an



Firefighters work inside the burned-out Sigma shopping mall, in Donetsk, Ukraine. — Reuters

FPV hit us... Like everywhere, it’s tough. Very tough,” he said. Sergiy, a 34-year old doctor, said the vast majority of injuries were from FPVs — first-person-view drones. “One guy had a leg wound that completely necrotised,” he said. As the range of the drones increases, the front line has become more like a strip — an area that some Ukrainians call the “lethal zone” — about 20 kilometres wide.

Russia has intensified its drone attacks ahead of winter, when the batteries on the drones will be colder and not as effective. According to one soldier in the area who wished to remain anonymous, rotating troops has become even more dangerous than having them stay in the combat zone. Troop rotations are now only carried out on foot, in ten-kilometre segments, while soldiers wear special cover to evade the drones’ thermal imaging cameras.

Russian saboteurs, disguised as Ukrainian soldiers or civilians, have also strayed beyond the front line to set up booby traps,

further blurring the line between civilian areas and the battlefield. “It’s discouraging when you’re fired upon by Russians while trying to reach your position,” the soldier said. As Russia continues its advances, Sloviansk, another major stronghold in Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region, also called on vulnerable residents to evacuate.

Angela left behind her mother, her older brother, and her mother-in-law, who refused to leave the home. She will join her sister in Zaporizhzhia, a southern city that came under Russian bombardment that same night.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky asked for more air defences and missiles in a call with French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Sunday, the Ukrainian leader said. “I spoke with President Emmanuel Macron... I informed him about our priority needs — first and foremost, air defence systems and missiles,” Zelensky said in a Facebook post. — AFP

OPINION

László wins Nobel for portraying a world in turmoil



SANDHYA RAO MEHTA

The writer is an Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University

It is Nobel Prize season and at no other time has this award been more discussed internationally. But the literature prize was less the focus of attention this year. Hungarian writer László Krasznahorkai won the 2025 Nobel Prize for Literature for being a “great epic writer in the central European tradition”. The Nobel committee further praised his work as belonging to a “compelling and visionary oeuvre that, in the midst of apocalyptic terror, reaffirms the power of art”. And perhaps that is the most important point of literature and the award recognised this power. As the world is confronted with more strife and challenges which force us to ask basic questions on the future of humankind, the role of art needs to be looked at from a new perspective. Krasznahorkai’s novels are not an easy read. They are not experimental in any new way, but deep, difficult and troubling. That is because they showcase a world that was finding its way from the rubles of the Second World War and communism. There are no easy answers for

Krasznahorkai. For example, his two famous novels, ‘Satantango’ and ‘The Melancholy of Resistance’ can be considered to be postmodern and even dystopic, depicting a world where the common people are the victim of larger forces which they can neither understand nor control. The translator of ‘Satantago’, George Szirtes, described the novel as ‘a slow lava-flow of narrative’, evoking the style and the difficulty of themes in it. The writer struggled with giving a voice to those who are defenceless against forces well beyond them. An answer that Krasznahorkai found to this turmoil was travel. His early work ‘War and War’ was written over the course of a couple of years’ stay in New York, China and Mongolia. Travel, he said, gave him perspective on the commonality of human experience. But the same travel also reminded him of the universality of struggle and pain. Stylistically, Krasznahorkai is experimental and unique. ‘Satantango’, for example, resembles a ‘tango’, with six steps forward and six behind, showing the lack of

Hungarian writer László Krasznahorkai earns the 2025 Nobel Prize for his powerful, visionary works that confront human struggle and affirm the enduring power of art

movement for common people. Each chapter is also a single, undivided paragraph, with no line divisions. This reflects the relentlessly tragic life of its characters. The Nobel winner’s work shows the literary influences of other European greats like Kafka and Samuel Beckett, both of whom also showcased the ludicrous nature of this world, using a style and form that reflected a distorted world. Krasznahorkai is no stranger to awards. His novel ‘Seiobo’ won the best translated novel award in 2014 and in 2015, won the Man Booker International Prize. His Nobel Prize places him at a level with such contemporary writers as Han Kang and Abdulrazzaq Gurnah. Literary awards are known to give writers more attention and readership. Krasznahorkai is not an exception, although his work is harsh and difficult to read. At the end, it is the power of literature to share hard truths, along with its capacity to hope and dream that makes us want to return to reading. Awards help to guide us into this world of art in more meaningful ways.

COURT CHANGE SOUGHT IN MADDIE SUSPECT TRIAL

CHRISTIAN BRAHMANN

German prosecutors are seeking a change of court for a possible new abuse trial of the man suspected of the murder of British girl Madeleine McCann in 2007, a spokesman said on Saturday. In addition to overturning the acquittal, the public prosecutor’s office has requested a new trial of the suspect, identified as Christian B, in line with German privacy rules, at the Göttingen Regional Court in northern Germany. The aim is to ensure that the trial material is handled as impartially as possible, said spokesman Hans Christian Wolters. In October 2024, the Braunschweig Regional Court acquitted the 48-year-old man of several serious offences. At the time, the presiding judge cited insufficient evidence to convict him of the five offences in Portugal, where the 3-year-old British girl disappeared in 2007 from an apartment complex in Praia da Luz. The public prosecutor’s office has appealed against the ruling, and the Federal Court of Justice is therefore reviewing the verdict for legal errors. The defence had described the acquittal as the only correct outcome of the proceedings. The Göttingen Regional Court has not been involved in the proceedings in any way, Wolters said, which is why the prosecutors believe that the case should no longer be heard in Braunschweig, also known as Brunswick in English. It is still unclear when the Federal Court of Justice in Leipzig will decide on the appeal. After the Braunschweig trial for three abuses and two cases, the public prosecutor’s office had demanded a prison sentence of 15 years followed by preventive detention. INTERNATIONAL FOCUS The suspect, who has several previous convictions, has long been the focus of international media coverage because German investigators suspect him of McCann’s murder. The case has attracted particular attention in the United Kingdom. With regard to public suspicions in the girl’s disappearance, defence attorney Friedrich Fülischer spoke of a “massive prejudgement campaign.” No charges were brought in the case and the presumption of innocence applies. In 2019, the Braunschweig Regional Court sentenced the man to several years in prison in Portugal. He has now served his sentence and was released from prison just under a month ago. While free, the man must comply with set conditions, including wearing an ankle bracelet and being required to contact a probation officer at least once a month. In addition, he must notify the court in advance of any change of residence or place of stay and obtain approval for such a change. — dpa

Can Europe guard against rising drone threats?

DRONES flying over airports, commercial sites and other sensitive infrastructure in Europe is a growing phenomenon which EU leaders blame on Russia, and preventing the disruption they cause will prove a tough technical challenge, observers say. Detecting the drones, making them non-operational by jamming them, or even shooting them down, are all complex and hazardous tasks. And while Russian involvement is suspected, it is difficult to prove. Concerns are growing that such disruptions could be part of Russian hybrid war tactics three-and-a-half years into its attack of Ukraine, as most European countries double down on their support for Kyiv including by delivering military hardware. In early October, drones spotted over the German city of Munich twice shuttered the city’s airport, with Chancellor Friedrich Merz saying, “our suspicion is that Russia is behind most of these drone flights”. This followed similar incidents around airports in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, Copenhagen and other Danish cities. In France, several drones were spotted flying over the military base of Mourmelon-le-Grand in the northeast of the country earlier this week, the French military said. The drones were small and not piloted by French military personnel, the regional branch of the army said, describing the incident as “exceptional”. European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen said the incidents amounted to a “coherent and escalating campaign”. “Two incidents are coincidence, but three, five, 10 -- this is a deliberate and targeted grey-zone campaign against Europe, and Europe must respond,” she told EU



A so-called hunter drone is presented at the National Test Centre for Unmanned Aerial Systems of the German Aerospace Centre (DLR) as part of a presentation of the ‘Custodian’ programme for drone defence in Cochstedt, eastern Germany. — AFP



FABIEN ZAMORA

The writer is a journalist at AFP in Paris

There are many sites that need to be protected — not just civilian airports, but also military sites, sensitive industries such as those involved in European support for Ukraine, and power plants

lawmakers. French forces earlier this month boarded a tanker off western France that has been linked to the mysterious drone flights. Its captain and first mate were detained but later released, and the vessel was able to head towards the Suez Canal. “At this stage, it’s just to annoy us, it’s part of the Russians’ displays of hostility. They’re trying to humiliate us,” said a French security source, requesting not to be named. At Mourmelon, a vast military site, “we could very well have a father who buys a Chinese drone that doesn’t include the ‘no-fly zone’ in its system, who doesn’t read the instructions and goes to the nearby forest for the weekend and ends up in the middle of a prohibited zone”, said Thierry Berthier, scientific director of the European professional federation for security drones, Drones4Sec. Not far from confrontation Whatever their origin, countering the drones is not going to be easy. There are many sites that need to be protected -- not just civilian

airports, but also military sites, sensitive industries such as those involved in European support for Ukraine, and power plants. Jamming is an effective but potentially fraught measure in populated areas. “You risk jamming a lot of things,” Berthier warned. A drone can be shot down or intercepted with another drone, but this is risky. At the end of September, the Danish authorities decided not to shoot them down for the safety of civilians. There are also legal constraints. In France, “only a government agency can neutralise a drone,” said the security source, meaning that a private company would not be allowed to disable a drone by jamming it. In Germany, the government must clear up a legal limbo to allow the police to shoot down threatening drones. Lorenzo, a French naval sailor on an exercise in the Mediterranean who did not give his last name in line with French military custom, said it was “very difficult” to shoot down a drone. — AFP

When peace comes as a phoenix...



ABDULAZIZ AL JAHDHAMI

The writer is author, translator and a communications professional

AFTER Years of bloodshed, broken homes, and broken hearts, a powerful stillness has returned to Gaza. There are days written in blood and there are days written in dust, but this day feels written in light. The war between Hamas and Israel has hopefully ended.

It is not the kind of ending that history books announce. It is quieter like a field of wildflowers blooming where a bomb once fell. The sky over Gaza today is not blue, it is not clear. It carries the ash of yesterday and the weight of years. And yet, for the first time in ages, it is not burning.

Children ask, “Why aren’t the planes here today?” Ceasefires are not unfamiliar in this region, but this time, something feels different. Children who once learned the sound of missiles before the alphabet are waking up to the sound of birds. Mothers who memorised escape routes are now wondering how to cook a meal with peace in their kitchens.

For too long, children on both sides of the border have grown up under the shadow of fear.

In Gaza, entire neighbourhoods vanished in seconds. In Israel, the trauma of sudden attacks, air raids and the haunting unknown of captives became a daily reality. The war was not just about

missiles and politics; it was about mothers burying children, fathers searching through remnants and children learning to recognise danger before they learned how to read.

Across Gaza, people emerged from the ruins not only to count their losses, but also to hold to whatever life they could find. Makeshift schools, community kitchens and underground clinics built not with weapons, but with resolve. That same spirit now fuels cautious celebrations in the streets: children flying kites where drones once hovered, families hanging laundry on broken balconies as if to tell the world, we are still here.

This is not peace yet. But it is an opening for dialogue over destruction, for recovery over revenge, for justice that heals rather than punishes, and for children who grow up dreaming instead of hiding. It marks the first breath after drowning.

When the news broke that the war was over, it did not come with fireworks or parades. It came with silence that followed grief. Mothers in Gaza washed their children’s faces not just of dust, but of fear.

Somewhere in the gray between, the ghosts of the last two years — buildings, names, stories — rose from memory, asking the living to do better. The war ended because people could not bear another

After years of bloodshed, broken homes, and broken hearts, a powerful stillness has returned to Gaza. There are days written in blood and there are days written in dust, but this day feels written in light. The war between Hamas and Israel has hopefully ended.

burial, another child lost, another night of anger and revenge. This ceasefire is not a finish line. It is a beginning. One reckless decision, one broken promise, and the fire could return. But for now, the guns are silent, and the talks are ongoing. This is the miracle of peace: not that it erases the past, but that it opens the door to a different future. Let the sky be blue again — not because we forget the gray, but because we choose to believe in the light.

Still, the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel is not a final call of peace, but a fragile pause in a symphony of conflict that has played on for decades.

It is a breath held in a room still thick with smoke — a whisper of silence between storms. For the civilians, it offers momentary relief, a chance to bury the dead, care for the wounded, and hope for something more than survival.

However, this fragile ceasefire cannot be taken for granted. It is not peace; it is the possibility of peace, and that possibility is as fragile as glass. The wounds remain unhealed, and the roots of the conflict are deep, raw, and unresolved.

Real peace demands vigilance, compassion and the courage to imagine a different future — not just from politicians, but from people on both sides of the border. Peace has not arrived, but it is knocking.

DRUG SHORTAGES FRUSTRATE EU PHARMACISTS AND PATIENTS

UMBERTO BACCHI

At a drug wholesaler warehouse in Belgium, shelves are emptier than they used to be. Like other EU nations, Belgium has increasingly experienced medicine shortages that vex pharmacists, exasperate patients and risk overloading public health services.

“There are often several dozen medications that are in short supply simultaneously, which makes our lives very difficult,” said Didier Ronsyn, a Brussels pharmacist. An EU audit last month found shortages were a “chronic headache” across the bloc. Its 27 states reported running critically short of 136 drugs, including antibiotics and medicines used to treat heart attacks, between 2022 and 2024, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) said. Belgium reported the most cases, with more than a dozen critical instances - meaning no alternatives are available - notified to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in 2024 only.

The cause partially lies in supply chain snags and Europe’s over-reliance on Asia for key drug components, the ECA said.

Cheaper prices mean that Asian producers now supply the EU with 70 per cent of the active pharmaceutical ingredients it needs, according to a study cited in the ECA report.

The dependency is particularly acute for painkillers, like paracetamol or ibuprofen, and drugs that ran critically low in recent years, including some antibiotics and salbutamol, an asthma drug sold under the brand name Ventolin. Yet, EU internal market inefficiencies are also to blame. Drug prices differ within the bloc as national authorities negotiate individually with producers, explained Olivier Delaere, CEO of Febelco, a wholesale distributor that serves about 40 per cent of Belgian pharmacies.

As a consequence, manufacturers tend to deliver more to countries that pay more, and just enough to those who drove a harder bargain - to avoid drugs being re-exported for profit, he said.

Additionally, the ECA said that most medicines are still authorised at the national level and packages differ significantly among countries, which makes internal EU trade “more costly and complex”. This causes so-called “local shortages”, when a product is not available in one EU country but can be found just across the border in another member state, said Delaere of Febelco.

“It’s a growing problem,” he said, as a massive automated dispenser stacked with medicine boxes filled green baskets - each corresponding to a pharmacist’s order - on a conveyor belt in the warehouse behind him. Some 70 per cent of the about one million client calls the firm receives a year “are focused solely on medicine shortages”, Delaere said. “It is an absolutely colossal workload and energy drain.” In 2024, EU pharmacists spent on average 11 hours per week managing shortages, according to PGEU, a pharmacists’ trade group. — AFP

EU must stand up to Trump

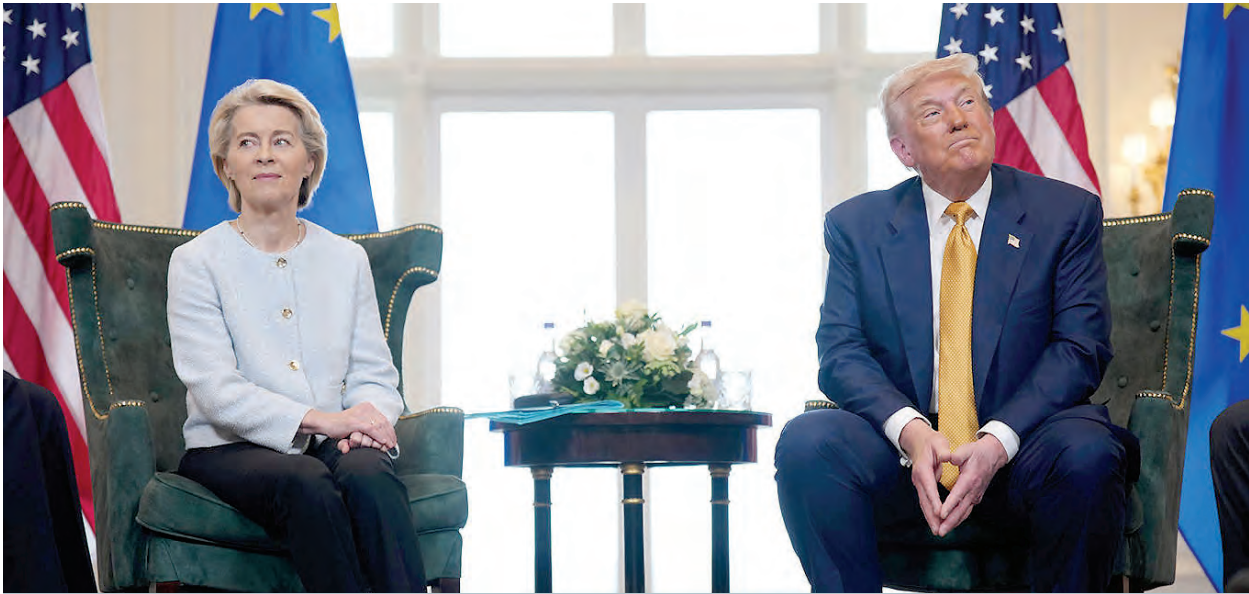
ON JULY 27, 2025, the United States and the European Union announced a preliminary trade and investment deal in Turnberry, Scotland. But nothing was actually signed, and even if it had been, it would not have been worth the paper it was written on. After all, US President Donald Trump did sign a formal trade agreement with Canada and Mexico during his first term, only to tear it up as soon as he returned to office.

Any agreement with Trump must be regarded as, at best, a temporary truce. Still, it is worth remembering the specifics of the Turnberry deal, because some were quite peculiar. Given that Europe has 30 per cent more people and only a slightly smaller economy (in purchasing power terms) than the US, standard bargaining theory would imply that any deal would be roughly symmetrical. Instead, it was entirely one-sided.

In addition to the US imposing unfair tariffs on European imports, Europe committed itself to investing in the US and purchasing US energy.

But, of course, the EU can promise no such thing. As I have jokingly pointed out to EU trade negotiators, Europe is not (yet) a centrally planned economy. The EU cannot force Europeans to make specific investments or purchases; the Turnberry numbers were offered merely to placate Trump, allowing him to boast that he had used America’s power to claim another scalp and extract more of the value from global supply chains. Who cares if international law was trampled? That is simply what great powers do. As I expected, the ceasefire did not last.

Less than a month later, Trump was back to threatening Europe, this time over its Digital Markets Act, which seeks to ensure market competition, and the Digital Services Act, which aims to mitigate harms imposed on Europe by digital platforms. Among other things, the EU requires some “content moderation” to prevent the kind of algorithmic amplification of incitement to violence and misinformation that had such disastrous consequences in Myanmar, and it insists on taxing big technology companies (which have deployed their brilliant minds not only to hook users but



In addition to the US imposing unfair tariffs on European imports, Europe committed itself to investing in the US and purchasing US energy.



JOSEPH E STIGLITZ

The writer is a Nobel laureate in economics and University Professor at Columbia University, is a former chief economist of the World Bank (1997-2000), former chair of the US President’s Council of Economic Advisers

also to avoid taxes). Contrary to what Trump seems to think, these regulations are not discriminatory against the US and its tech giants.

They are applied uniformly against all firms operating in the EU. They represent the outcome of a long deliberative process in which EU regulators and lawmakers carefully weighed the benefits and costs associated with alternative measures in the context of a rapidly changing world with rapidly changing technology.

As in all such processes, views differed, with some worrying that the rules were too restrictive.

But I worry that the rules are not restrictive enough. The tech giants still exercise too much market power, conduct too little content moderation and continue to abuse privacy rights. The situation is having serious adverse effects on European society, especially its young people and its democratic politics.

The question facing the EU now, however, is different. Whatever their views on existing regulations, Europeans must decide whether to surrender their sovereignty and democratic processes to a bullying authoritarian populist who is supported (and often directed) by America’s own tech oligarchs. Trump has consistently shown that he is acting in the interests of his closest backers and family members, not those of the American people, and certainly not those of Europe. By now, we should all know that capitulation will lead only to

more demands down the road. European values are too important to be traded away.

Yes, there may be short-run costs to standing up to Trump, especially for firms that depend on the US market. But while economists have long recognised that there are gains from trade when it is conducted on fair terms, Trump is trying to extort as much value added from global supply chains as he can, which means that the gains to Europe are greatly diminished – and may even be negative.

The EU has the economic strength to withstand Trump’s tariffs, especially now that it is investing in rearmament to win the war in Ukraine.

Moreover, the losses that come from giving in would be much larger.

The principles that have governed international trade since World War II are critical for trade to be broadly beneficial.

Without the rule of law, markets do not deliver efficient or fair outcomes. Investment would be discouraged, growth would suffer and democracy would be further undermined. When Chinese President Xi Jinping stood up to Trump, Trump backed down. And more recently, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has made it clear that some things cannot be compromised: his country’s sovereignty, dignity, rule of law and democracy. The EU should do the same. ©Project Syndicate, 2025

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Salim al Kemyani, Chief Executive Officer, Nama Supply Company, along with OAA officials, coaches and athletes attended the final ceremony.

BAUSHER EMERGE CHAMPIONS FOR OAA SWIMMING CUP

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

Bausher Club claimed top honours at the Oman Aquatics Association (OAA) Annual Swimming Cup after delivering a dominant performance and clinching 42 medals including 16 gold, 16 silver and ten bronze. The one day event took place at the Olympic swimming pool at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

Saham Club finished second overall with a total of 20 medals including: five gold, seven silver and eight bronze while Masirah Club came third with 18 medals including three gold, seven silver and eight bronze. The competition featured participation of 133 swimmers representing eight clubs including: Bidiyah, Al Nasr, Saham, Al Musannah, Al Suwaiq, Al Talia, Masirah, and Bausher, and all the teams competed across nine events showcasing impressive technical skill and commitment.

TOP COMPETITION

Dr Awadh al Ojaili, Chairman of OAA, expressed his satisfaction with the overall organisation and level of competition, noting that this year’s edition carried special significance. “Although this championship was initially scheduled for 2024, its conclusion this year gave it a unique energy filled with enthusiasm, challenge and determination to achieve positive results,” he said.

The chief of OAA commended the discipline and dedication shown by the swimmers, many of whom are members of Oman’s national teams. “We witnessed strong competition among the clubs, and the swimmers’ commitment inside the pool reflects the hard work being done at the club level. The results highlight the progress Oman is making in aquatic sports.”

“These championships serve as an important platform for talent discovery and development. The OAA remains committed to expanding participation and organising more specialised events that contribute to the growth of aquatic sports in the Sultanate of Oman,” he concluded.

The final ceremony concluded in presence of Salim bin Said al Kemyani, Chief Executive Officer of Nama Supply Company, and attended by OAA officials, coaches and athletes.



The competition featured participation of 133 swimmers representing eight clubs.



Vinayak Shukla in action

Oman begin ICC men’s T20 WC with win over Qatar

OMAN launched their Super Six campaign in the ICC men’s T20 World Cup Asia/East Asia Pacific (EAP) Qualifier with a confident 34-run win over Qatar at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground in Al Amerat on Sunday, powered by a captain’s knock from Jatinder Singh and a disciplined bowling effort.

After being sent in to bat, Oman posted a competitive 172 for six from their 20 overs, thanks to Jatinder’s blistering 66 off 40 balls, studded with seven boundaries and three sixes. After the fall of opener Ashish Odedara in the first over, the skipper set the tone early, attacking the Qatari pacers with intent before falling in the 15th over to Qatar captain Mirza Baig, who was Qatar’s standout bowler.

Nadeem Khan and Hammad Mirza perished in between as Oman found themselves in trouble at 53 for three midway through the innings. The middle order, however, provided strong support — Aryan Bisht (34 off 24) played a fluent hand, while wicketkeeper Vinayak Shukla’s unbeaten 30 off 15 balls gave the innings a perfect finish.

Bisht and Jatinder, who deservedly won the player of the match award, shared a crucial 55-run fourth-wicket stand off just 34 balls to give the team stability, before Bisht forged another 45-run partnership with the in-form Shukla to push Oman past the 150-mark. However, a double-strike by Baig in the 19th over curtailed Oman’s late surge, restricting them to 172 for six.

Baig’s four-wicket haul (4 for 28) was the only bright spot in an otherwise expensive bowling card for Qatar.

Qatar’s reply began with promise but soon unraveled under mounting pressure. They were restricted to 138 for nine in their 20 overs. Shariq Munir (34), Muhammad Asim (21) and Shahzaib Jamil (21 off 14) offered resistance, but regular breakthroughs derailed their chase.

Oman’s bowlers operated with precision and variety. Medium pacer Jitenkumar Ramanandi was the pick of the attack, claiming 3 for 22, including two wickets in successive deliveries to remove Jamil and Daniel Louis in the 19th over.

He was well supported by fellow medium pacer Sufyan Mehmood (2 for

26), who pulled off a terrific caught-and-bowled to dismiss Muhammad Tanveer. Spinners Nadeem Khan (1 for 19) and Shakeel Ahmed (1 for 23), along with opening bowler Shah Faisal (1 for 33), also chipped in as Qatar faltered against a disciplined attack.

Oman’s fielding, too, was sharp — highlighted by Shukla’s smart glovework to send back Asim and a sharp run-out by Hammad Mirza to remove opener Imal Liyanage, which set the tone early in the defence.

Oman’s victory took them to four points from two wins, including the one carried forward from the group stage against fellow Super Six qualifier Samoa.

Duleep Mendis’ men will next face UAE on Monday (October 13), followed by Nepal on Wednesday (October 15) and Japan on Friday (October 17).

BRIEF SCORES: Oman 172/6 in 20 overs (Jatinder Singh 66, Aryan Bisht 34, Vinayak Shukla 30*; Mirza Baig 4/28) beat Qatar 138/9 in 20 overs (Shariq Munir 34, Muhammad Asim 21, Shahzaib Jamil 21; Jitenkumar Ramanandi 3/22, Sufyan Mehmood 2/26).

Nizwa, Salalah claim victories in Youth Basketball League

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

The Seeb Club Hall hosted two exciting matchups in the Youth Basketball League for the 2025–2026 sports season, which ended with Nizwa defeating Seeb 71–36 and Salalah overcoming Al Bashayer 50–30, in games marked by high technical performance and great enthusiasm from all four teams.

NIZWA OUTPLAY SEEB

Nizwa delivered a strong performance against Seeb, securing a comfortable win after a balanced start in the first quarter, before taking full control of the remaining periods.

Leading Nizwa’s scoring were Al Mulhim al Obaidani, Ilyas al Obidani, and Adam al Hinai, while Saif al Yahyai and Jiyad al Kindi stood out for Seeb.

The first quarter ended evenly at 17–17, but Nizwa



Al Seeb player controls the ball.

began to assert dominance in the second quarter, finishing the first half ahead 32–25.

In the third quarter, Nizwa extended its lead through solid defence and fast transitions, scoring 21 points to Seeb’s 7, ending the quarter at 53–32.

The final quarter saw Nizwa maintain its offensive momentum, adding 18 points compared to Seeb’s 4, sealing a well-deserved 71–36 victory.

The match was officiated by Majid al Akhzami as the first referee and Al Mahdi al Alawi as the second referee.

SALALAH DEFEAT AL BASHAYER

In the second encounter, Salalah secured a convincing 50–30 victory over Al Bashayer after displaying organised play and clear dominance during the first three quarters,

while Al Bashayer showed improvement in the final period.

Salalah’s standout players included Fahad Beit Sanjour, Murshid Beit Abusnasel, and Ghanem Beit Farid, whereas Asid al Khusaibi, Mazen al Zeidi, and Riyadh al Riyami were the top performers for Al Bashayer.

Salalah started strong, taking the first quarter 16–8, and continued their offensive pressure in the second, adding 22 points to Al Bashayer’s 8, ending the first half 38–16.

The third quarter saw Salalah widen the gap further, scoring 13 points compared to 3 for Al Bashayer, increasing their lead to 51–19. In the final quarter, Al Bashayer attempted to narrow the gap, scoring 11 points against Salalah’s 9, but the result ultimately favoured Salalah, who won 50–30.

The game was officiated by Thabit al Hinai as the first referee and Wahib al Sinani as the second referee.

SHORT TAKES



Ahli Sidab player aims towards the goal.

MUSCAT, SEEB CLOSER TO JUNIOR HANDBALL LEAGUE FINAL

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

Muscat Club, the defending champion and Seeb Club have taken a major step toward reaching the final of the Oman Junior Handball League for the 2025/2026 season after earning important victories in the first leg semifinal matches held earlier this week.

In the first match, played at the Nizwa Sports Complex, Muscat claimed a hard fought 23–21 win over Nizwa in an intense and closely contested encounter, both teams entered the match with the same ambition to secure an advantage ahead of the decisive return leg, the first half ended in a tight 11–11 draw, reflecting the balance and determination on both sides.

The second half witnessed heightened intensity as both teams pushed for control, Muscat managed to maintain composure in the crucial final minutes, showing superior focus and shooting accuracy to seal the 23–21 victory and take a valuable lead heading into the return fixture.

Meanwhile, in the second semifinal played at Seeb Sports Hall, Seeb demonstrated clear dominance over Ahli Sidab, cruising to a comfortable 26–17 victory, Seeb took early control of the match, finishing the first half with a 14–9 lead and continued their strong form in the second half, using their physical strength and tactical awareness to widen the gap and secure a confident win.

The second leg matches are scheduled for Friday, October 24, both games will be hosted at Seeb Sports Hall, with Muscat facing Nizwa, followed by Seeb’s clash against Ahli Sidab, the winners of these ties will advance to the league final, set to take place on October 29 at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

The losing teams will compete for third place in what promises to be another round of high energy, competitive fixtures, with all four teams still eyeing a spot in the final, fans can expect intense battles and top level performances as the Junior Handball League nears its exciting conclusion.



The competitions saw wide participation from women’s clubs across the Sultanate of Oman, delivering impressive technical performances and spirited rivalries.

Omani women shine in 2025 sports games

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

THE second week of the 2025 Omani Women's Sports Games was filled with excitement and energy, featuring three new tournaments: Hockey5s, Table Tennis, and Athletics, held over two days at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. The competitions saw wide participation from women’s clubs across the Sultanate of Oman, delivering impressive technical performances and spirited rivalries.

HOCKEY5S RESULTS

Salalah Club dominated the Hockey Fives championship, clinching the title after a well-deserved 2–0 victory over Ahli Sidab in the final match. Ahli Sidab took the runner-up spot, while Masirah Club secured third place with a thrilling 4–3 win over Qurayat in the third-place playoff.

TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP

The Table Tennis competition witnessed strong individual performances, with Salma al Nassri from Ibri Club taking the gold in the singles category after a standout display. Shamsa al Abrawi from Masirah Club finished second, and Samah al Wahibi from Salalah Club came third.

In the team event, Masirah Club continued

its fine form, taking first place ahead of Al Amerat Club in second and Ibri Club in third.

ATHLETICS TRACK AND FIELD HIGHLIGHTS

Masirah Club maintained its momentum in the athletics competition, earning first place in the overall standings, followed by Salalah in second and Ahli Sidab in third.

In the junior track events, Azza al Hinai from Masirah excelled by winning both the 100m and 200m races. Fatma al Sinani from Al Amerat placed second in the 100m, while Sa’adah al Azoubi from Masirah finished third in the 100m and second in the 200m. Fatma al Sinani claimed third in the 200m.

In the 400m, Azza al Saqri from Masirah took gold, followed by Wiam al Umayri and Bayan al Sadiri from Salalah in second and third, respectively.

Masirah also triumphed in the 100m relay, ahead of Salalah and Ahli Sidab.

In the junior field events, Dana al Jawari from Masirah won the javelin throw, followed by Miraj al Balushi and Zahra al Balushi from Ahli Sidab. In the shot put, Fatma al Balushi from Masirah claimed gold, with Riham al Badi from Sohar in second place. Wi’am al Umayri from Salalah won the long jump, ahead of Sarah al Hajari from Al Amerat and Muzayyan al Balushi from Salalah.

SENIOR CATEGORY COMPETITIONS

The senior athletes delivered equally impressive performances. Muzoon al Alawi from Salalah won the 100m, followed by Azza al Yaarubi from Masirah and Alaa al Zadjali from Al Kamil W’al Wafi.

In the 200m, Azza al Yaarubi from Masirah captured first place, with Rawan al Manji from Salalah and Bayan al Umayri from Masirah finishing second and third.

The 400m title went to Hanaa al Qasmi from Salalah, followed by Hanan al Jahdhami from Sohar and Umaymah al Hinai from Masirah.

Hanaa al Qasmi continued her dominance by winning the 800m, with Umaymah al Hinai in second and Hanan al Jahdhami in third. Salalah also captured the 4x100m relay gold ahead of Masirah and Al Kamil W’al Wafi.

In the senior field events, Hibah al Asimi from Qurayat won the javelin throw, followed by Rufaydah al Umayri from Salalah and Ghaniyah al Nassri from Masirah. In the shot put, Asmaa al Sawai from Salalah took first place, followed by Maryah al Hinai and Ghaniyah al Nassri from Masirah.

Finally, Muzoon al Alawi from Salalah earned another gold in the long jump, with Alaa al Zadjali from Al Kamil W’al Wafi taking silver and Sheikha al Hinai from Qurayat earning bronze.

Thrilling week one action in HM Sultan’s Hockey Cup

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

The first week of preliminary rounds in the 55th edition of the His Majesty the Sultan’s Hockey Cup concluded on Saturday evening, featuring several thrilling matches across different venues. The games showcased strong attacking performances from several teams that opened their campaigns with convincing victories, signalling their readiness to compete for qualification spots.

SAHAM TOP GROUP 1

At Sohar Club Complex, Saham delivered a commanding 5–1 victory over Majees in Group One.

Saham started aggressively and opened the scoring in the 5th minute through Saeed al Maamari, ending the first quarter 1–0.

Majees equalised in the 22nd minute via Abdullah al Raisi, but Saham quickly regained the lead

through Al Mulhim al Mariki in the 28th minute to close the first half ahead 2–1.

Saham extended their dominance in the third quarter, with Al Maamari scoring again in the 36th minute, followed by Salem al Mariki’s goal in the 39th. Salem struck once more in the 50th minute to seal a deserved 5–1 victory for Saham.

SOHAR OVERPOWER AL SALAM

In another Group One clash, Sohar continued its strong form with a 4–0 win against Al Salam at the Sohar Sports Complex. Ibrahim al Maamari opened the scoring in the 10th minute, followed by Omar al Maamari in the 18th. Ibrahim netted his second from a penalty corner in the 23rd minute, before Shabeeb al Shibli capped off the scoring with another penalty corner goal in the 50th minute, securing Sohar’s place at the top of the group.



Qurayat and Nizwa players in action

OMAN DEFEAT MUSCAT

In Group Two, Oman Club claimed a valuable 3–1 victory over city rivals Muscat at the Oman Hockey Stadium.

The match was closely contested early on, but Oman’s superior attacking efficiency proved decisive, earning them the win and three crucial points.

DHOFAR DOMINATE AL ITTIHAD

In Group Three, Dhofar’s first team delivered a strong performance, thrashing Al Ittihad 4–1 at the Sultan Qaboos Youth, Culture and Entertainment Complex in Salalah.

The first quarter was evenly matched until Ahmed Akaak broke the deadlock from a penalty corner in the 6th minute. Mohammed bin Ghalib doubled the lead in the 22nd minute.

Akaak added his second in the 44th minute, and Abdullah Awad made it 4–0 in the 50th. Al Ittihad’s Fuad Rabeeh reduced the deficit

from a penalty corner in the 57th minute, but Dhofar secured an emphatic 4–1 victory.

GROUP STANDINGS AFTER WEEK ONE

At the end of the first week of the 55th His Majesty the Sultan’s Hockey Cup, the standings were as follows: Group One Saham leads with 3 points , followed by Sohar also with 3 points but lower goal difference; Majees and Al Salam remain without points. In Group Two, Qurayat tops the group with 3 points (+8), followed by Oman with 3 points (+2); Muscat and Nizwa have no points. While Group Three Dhofar and Mirbat share the lead with 3 points each (+3 goal difference), Al Ittihad and Fanja remain without points. Lastly in Group Four Masirah leads with 3 points (+2), followed by Al Rustaq and Al Nahdha with one point each, and Ibri in fourth place with no points.

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Coco Gauff of the US poses with the trophy after winning the final against Jessica Pegula of the US. — Reuters

GAUFF BEATS PEGULA TO WIN WUHAN OPEN

WUHAN, CHINA: Coco Gauff overcame Jessica Pegula 6-4, 7-5 on Sunday to clinch the third WTA 1000 title of her career in an all-American final at the Wuhan Open.

The third-seeded Gauff secured the trophy without dropping a set after a 1hr 42min battle in the central Chinese city.

In the first final between the former doubles partners, Gauff erased multiple deficits in the second set to improve her head-to-head record against Pegula to 3-4.

The 21-year-old in the process became the first player in the Open Era to win her first nine hard-court finals.

The pair had contrasting routes to the final with Gauff breezing dropping a mere 16 games while Pegula battled through three-setters in all eight of her previous matches.

Gauff won the first six points of the match and it set the tone for what was to come, as she leapt to a 3-0 advantage.

Pegula recovered from her slow start and went on the attack in game seven, breaking with a fierce backhand winner that helped her get back on level terms at 4-4. It looked like the sixth seed had swung the momentum her way but Gauff found a tiny opening two games later and broke to secure the opening set in 47 minutes.

Pegula had come back from 2-5 down in her deciding set against world number one Aryna Sabalenka the day before and was more than ready for another fightback.

Gauff has been reworking her serve with biomechanics specialist Gavin MacMillan since the end of August. And while her numbers have improved since she added him to her team, the shot remains susceptible to ebbs and flows during stressful situations. — AFP

Vacherot beats Rinderknech to win Shanghai Masters

WORLD NUMBER 204 Valentin Vacherot on Sunday beat his cousin Arthur Rinderknech to win the Shanghai Masters 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 and become the lowest-ranked champion in the history of ATP 1000 events. The all-family final between the 54th-ranked Frenchman Rinderknech and 204th-ranked Vacherot, from Monaco, is one of the tournament’s unlikeliest endings to date — the latter’s coach and half-brother, Benjamin Balleret, described it as a “fairytale”.

It was just the third ATP Masters 1000 final in history to feature two unseeded players.

“I want to thank someone without whom I wouldn’t be here — that person is obviously Arthur,” said Vacherot as he accepted his trophy.

“It’s completely mad, I can’t believe it,” he added in French.

“It would have been better to have two winners, but a whole family won today.

“What we did this week, it’s completely crazy, no one can take it from us.”

Elder cousin Rinderknech went ahead in the match first, breaking with a backhand in the third game after three unforced errors from Vacherot.

That was enough for the 30-year old to claim the set in an otherwise well-matched duel.

Watched on by Roger Federer, the second set continued in much the same vein, with neither player able to make headway early on. Rinderknech faced a break point in the eighth game and saved with an ace, but failed to convert a subsequent advantage to hold.

He found himself on the brink again after an unforced error when he hit the ball into the net, and Vacherot did not miss his chance this time to force a decider.

The third set went off with a bang, with Vacherot taking his cousin to break point almost immediately to snatch the first game.

The 26-year-old Vacherot looked increasingly dangerous as Rinderknech, seemingly flagging in the humidity, scrambled to save multiple break points in both the third and fifth games. The Frenchman received treatment on his back after the fifth game, having almost been



Monaco’s Valentin Vacherot celebrates with the trophy after his victory against France’s Arthur Rinderknech during the men’s singles final at the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament in Shanghai. — AFP

broken four times. The partial revival that followed made for some tense rallies that energised the crowd, but Vacherot broke again in the ninth game to seal the title, doubling over in disbelief.

TWO WINNERS

Rinderknech said after his semifinal that there would be “two winners” on Sunday whatever happened.

The two sat side-by-side, Rinderknech putting his arm around Vacherot’s shoulder at one point, as they waited for the prize ceremony to begin.

Both claimed some impressive wins on their path to the final.

Rinderknech took out world number three Alexander Zverev and Daniil Medvedev, while Vacherot ended Novak Djokovic’s chance at a fifth title, as well as defeating world number 11 Holger Rune.

According to the ATP website, the Monegasque should rocket from 204 to 40 in the rankings.

Both men were overcome with emotion during the ceremony, in tears, and Rinderknech keeled over and had to be helped into a chair. — AFP

youtube.com/toyotaoman

@toyotaomanofficial

facebook.com/toyotaoman

www.toyotaoman.com

CELEBRATING

50 YEARS

OF CUSTOMER HAPPINESS !

Bring home a New Toyota... bring home happiness!

Grand Raffle*

50 YARIS

50% VAT ON US®

SERVICE** 50,000 Kms / 5 YEARS

50% INSURANCE ON US*

50^{RO} WORTH THIQAH' LOYALTY POINTS

Campaign Period: 01.09.2025 – 29.12.2025. Benefits applicable for all purchaser except Government Organizations & Ministries. *50% of Insurance amount (Comprehensive 1 Year Insurance - Oman only, excluding diesel grades) on Yaris, Corolla, Camry, Camry HEV, Crown, Supra, GR86, Raize, Veloz, Urban Cruiser, Corolla cross, Corolla Cross HEV, RAV4, RAV HEV, Highlander HEV, Fortuner, Prado, Land Cruiser, Hilux SIC and D/C and Lite Ace Insurance benefit under the campaign would be 50% of Insurance amount for Private vehicles only. Balance amount is to be paid by customer. Additional premium as per Insurance norms will be collected from the RAC/ Taxi D/S etc... Discount in Lieu of Insurance (DI), equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of the applicable insurance amount, may be granted to all eligible customers as an additional special discount. Said discount shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number in the event of any decimal points. To avail of the DI, the customer expressly waives eligibility for any insurance coverage otherwise applicable to the model under the campaign. **5 Years / 50,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier Excl Del Grades) covering 5 services at 10,000 kms service interval based on normal operating conditions for Yaris, Corolla, Camry, Camry HEV, Crown, Raize, Veloz, Corolla cross, Corolla cross HEV, RAV4, RAV4 HEV, Highlander, Fortuner, Prado, LC wagon, Hilux 4X2 and 4X4. *5 Years / 60,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 5 services at 12,000 Kms service interval based on normal operating conditions for Supra **5 Years / 75,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 10 services at 1500 Kms service interval based on normal operating conditions for GR86, Urban Cruiser @ 50% of VAT amount would be provided for the following models (excluding diesel grades): Yaris, Corolla, Camry HEV, GR86, Raize, Veloz, Urban Cruiser, Corolla Cross, Corolla Cross HEV, Fortuner, Prado. Balance amount to be paid by Customer. Discount in lieu of 50% VAT may be given as an additional Special Discount. Said discount shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number in the event of any decimal points. Customer must request in writing to avail of the benefit. # Thiqah Loyalty Points: OMR 50 worth Thiqah loyalty points (500 Points) would be credited in the account of the customer. The points can be redeemed against any expense incurred on Service/Repair at any of the Toyota Service Centers of SBA in Oman until 31.12.2026. These loyalty points are not transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash. \$ Raffle: 50 Units 26 YM Yaris Deluxe (NGC102L-TEXMKV-V2); Colour - White. Vehicles may include dealer-installed items. For further details & to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Toyota showroom. Pictures and colours shown above are for illustrative purposes only.

Saud Bahwan Automotive LLC

ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED C.R NO:1703412

Tel: 24579027

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

5,193.161

BUSINESS

بنك ظفار

BankDhofar

*Terms & Conditions apply

[www.bankdhofar.com](#) | 2479 1111

CREDIT CARDS

=

50% OFF*

AT VOX & CINEPOLIS CINEMAS

APPLY NOW

Airport Cities to target \$800 million

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 12

A trio of Airport Cities under early development at Muscat, Suhar and Salalah airports is projected to collectively attract over \$800 million in investments by 2030, in line with a national strategy to transform Oman's air gateways into engines of economic growth and urban development.

According to Salim al Harrasi, Head of Airport Projects at the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), a road map for the development of the Airport Cities — also known as “aerotropolises” — has been completed. While Muscat Airport City is already taking shape, Salalah and Suhar Airport

Master plan for Salalah Airport City development.

Cities are also poised to attract substantial investments, he said in a post.

“Today, direct investments in Muscat Airport City have surpassed \$80 million, with projections to exceed \$500 million by 2030 and a total of more than \$800 million across the three Airport Cities (Muscat, Salalah and

Suhar) by 2030”, he stated.

“My sincere thanks to our strategic partners who have supported these initiatives and special appreciation to the Oman Airports Infrastructure Projects Team and our consultants Dar Al Handasah, SSH, F&M Parsons International, ECG (Engineering Consultants Group), NACO (Netherlands Airports Consultants) and Maysan for their dedication and commitment in delivering the master plan for Oman's Airport Cities from 2018 to 2025”, Al Harrasi added.

All three aerotropolis developments are designed to position Oman's leading airports as powerful drivers of regional growth rather than mere transit points. By leveraging their

connectivity and accessibility, these developments aim to create integrated ecosystems that attract logistics, trade, technology and service industries while generating significant non-aeronautical revenues.

Muscat Airport City, the largest of Oman's three aerotropolises, envisions a comprehensive mixed-use development featuring several key zones: a logistics portal of about 200,000 m² dedicated to air-freight and related services; a 1.1 million m² business district to accommodate airline headquarters and aviation-related offices; an aviation zone covering approximately 166,000 m² that includes terminal areas and former cargo facilities; and a 192,000 m² hospitality zone

earmarked for hotels, duty-free outlets and travel services.

In July, Oman Airports signed an MoU with Malaysian property developer WCT International Sdn Bhd to explore and develop strategic investment opportunities on land surrounding Muscat International Airport.

Also making headway is the Muscat Airport Free Zone (MAFZ), overseen by Asyad Group, Oman's global provider of integrated logistics services, under a concession agreement awarded by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) last year. The free zone is positioned to attract foreign direct investment, particularly in logistics, air freight, general trade and related sectors.

Oman’s GDP up 2.44% to RO 20.66 billion in H1 2025

By end-June, the FDI stock reached RO 30.28 billion, up 12.8% from a year earlier.

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

Oman's economy expanded in the first half of 2025 as non-oil activity strengthened and natural gas output surged, while inflation stayed low and the country maintained a healthy trade surplus, according to the Ministry of Economy's latest Economic Performance Bulletin (September 2025).

GDP at current prices rose 2.44% to RO 20.66 billion from RO 20.17 billion a year earlier. In real terms, output increased 2.27%, driven by a 4.14% rise in non-oil activities. Within this, agriculture, forestry and fishing grew 11.72%, services 4.39% and industrial activities 2.50%.

Oil value added edged down 0.48% in line with a

0.61% dip in average crude output, while natural gas activities jumped 56.52%.

Prices remained contained. Average inflation was 0.82% in January–June 2025, compared with 0.36% in the same period of 2024 and remains within the authorities' “safe” range.

Public finances softened as net oil and gas receipts fell, pulling total state revenue down 5.78% in the first half. External trade eased on weaker hydrocarbon exports but stayed in surplus. Total merchandise exports were RO 11.50 billion, down 9.5% year-on-year, as oil exports fell 16.08%.

Non-oil exports rose 9.1%. Imports increased 5.1% to RO 8.41 billion, leaving a trade surplus of RO 3.09 billion. Foreign direct investment

strengthened. By end-June, the FDI stock reached RO 30.28 billion, up 12.8% from a year earlier. Oil and gas extraction accounted for 80.7% of FDI, followed by manufacturing at 8.9% and financial intermediation at 4.5%. By source country, the United Kingdom led with 51.9%, followed by the United States at 26.7% and Kuwait at 4.5%. Credit quality held firm during the period. Standard & Poor's maintained Oman's sovereign rating at BBB- with a stable outlook, citing the economy's ability to preserve financial stability and meet obligations. The first-half profile points to steady, broad-based growth outside oil, low price pressures for households and continued investor confidence — key pillars of Oman Vision 2040.

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (OMR)
NESC/2025/023-2	Design and Communication Services Agency Contract for Nama Electricity Supply Company	20/10/2025	27/10/2025	Specialist	26.250

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply). - To obtain the tender document and payment procedure, please visit https://supply.nama.om/ , under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.
Enquiries	- Any inquiry can be sent to procurement@supply.nama.om, using the inquiry form found in the tender document (05) Five working days before bid submission date. - Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.
Tender Submission	Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER and supplier guidelines available at NESC Website https://supply.nama.om/ , under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.
Guarantee	- The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted. The value of bond shall be Omani Rial Five Hundred only (OMR 500/=) and shall be valid for a period of at least Ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE, Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C. - The hard copy of the bid bond should be deposited in the Tender Box at the Nama Electricity Supply Company Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 10:00 AM on the day specified for bid submission or any extended deadline. - Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.
Terms and Conditions	- The Tender shall be valid for a period of (90) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. - NESC is not bound to accept the lowest Tenderer. - The bidder must submit a valid Omanization certificate confirming a minimum of level of Omanization of 30%, issued by the Ministry of Labour (MOL), as evidence of compliance. Bidder, who fails to submit this certificate will result in exclusion from the tender evaluation process. - NESC gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. - Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.
Incentives and exemptions	- Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from Tender fees. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from bid bond requirements. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from registration fees on business opportunities platform and supplier registration with Nama Group.

نماء
SUPPLY للتزويد

Nama Electricity Supply Company SAOC

PO Box 1239, PC 131, Sultanate of Oman

Tel: +968 24250800 | CR 1/71235/7

records@supply.nama.om | www.supply.nama.om

ADVERTORIALS

GROWING ROLE



This milestone underscores Dhofar Islamic’s growing role in advancing the future of Islamic banking.

DHOFAR ISLAMIC EXPANDS NETWORK TO 30 BRANCHES ACROSS OMAN

MUSCAT: Dhofar Islamic, the Islamic banking window of BankDhofar, has announced the opening of five new branches in key locations across the Sultanate of Oman, strengthening its network to a total of 30 branches covering all governorates of Oman.

This milestone underscores Dhofar Islamic’s growing role in advancing the future of Islamic banking through innovative Sharia-compliant products and services that align with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The new branches are located in Sinaw, Al Bidaya, Al Qurum, Bahla and Khazaen Economic City. Through its expanding footprint, Dhofar Islamic continues to deliver comprehensive financial and investment advisory services and financing solutions for a wide range of projects.

The Bank places strong emphasis on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable economic growth.

Serving all segments of society, Dhofar Islamic offers tailored products and services for children and minors, youth, women, entrepreneurs and Al Riyadh cardholders, meeting their diverse financial needs.

The Bank remains committed to keeping pace with evolving trends in the Islamic banking sector, providing innovative, Sharia-compliant solutions that meet the highest standards of quality and transparency. It is also investing heavily in digital banking, enhancing customer experiences through mobile applications and electronic payment systems.

In response to growing demand for Islamic investment products, Dhofar Islamic has launched several Sukuk issuances as part of its Islamic treasury services, offering customers advanced financial solutions rooted in Sharia principles. Notably, Dhofar Islamic introduced a 10-year Musharaka Sukuk programme valued at RO 250 million, enabling access to Islamic capital markets and reinforcing its position as a trusted Islamic investment partner.

Reflecting its expertise, OQ Base Industries (OQBI), a Salalah-based petrochemicals company, has appointed Dhofar Islamic to review and certify the Sharia compliance of its financial and commercial activities.

Upon completion, a Sharia compliance report endorsed by Dhofar Islamic’s Sharia Supervisory Board will be submitted to the Muscat Stock Exchange and shared with investors and stakeholders.

OAB WELCOMES RUSAYL DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE AT ITS HEAD OFFICE

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) recently hosted one of its successful SME clients, Rusayl Diagnostic Centre (RDC), at the bank’s head office as part of its ongoing efforts to support local businesses and promote employee wellbeing.

The one-day activation saw enthusiastic participation from staff members across departments, reflecting OAB’s strong internal culture of engagement and community. The RDC stall showcased a range of specialised



diagnostic and healthcare services available in the Sultanate of Oman, offering OAB employees exclusive discounts and coupons for selected medical examinations and treatments. The initiative aimed to encourage preventive healthcare and promote easy access to quality medical services for employees.

A highlight of the event was RDC’s introduction of a remote examination service, offered exclusively to OAB’s senior management.

Sohar International wins Visa growth award

DEMONSTRATING its steadfast commitment to delivering robust and client-centric solutions, Sohar International has been awarded the distinguished Visa accolade for ‘Highest Growth in Corporate Card Business in Oman’.

The recognition, which benchmarks growth in corporate Visa card spend over the past 12 months against all local banks in the country, was presented during a ceremony on Tuesday, September 30, 2025, in the presence of senior Visa representatives Ali Bailoun, Visa’s Regional GM for Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman; Nasser Bdeir, Visa’s Country Manager for Oman; and Ganes RK, Head of Visa Commercial Solutions for the GCC.

The bank’s executives, including Sajeel Bashiruddin, Chief Technology & Digital Officer, Hisham Moosa, Senior Executive Vice President & Head — Project Financing and Global Banking, Ali Taqi, Senior Executive Vice President & Head — Commercial Banking, amongst others that attended on behalf of Sohar International. This achievement

The recognition, which benchmarks growth in corporate Visa card spend over the past 12 months against all local banks in the country, was presented during a ceremony on Tuesday, September 30, 2025, in the presence of senior Visa representatives Ali Bailoun, Visa’s Regional GM for Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman; Nasser Bdeir, Visa’s Country Manager for Oman; and Ganes RK, Head of Visa Commercial Solutions for the GCC.



This recognition reaffirms the pivotal role of the corporate sector within Sohar International’s strategic journey.

reaffirms Sohar International’s leadership in advancing corporate card solutions and its growing influence within Oman’s financial sector. Commenting on this achievement, Abdulwahid bin Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, stated, “This recognition reaffirms the pivotal role of the corporate sector within Sohar International’s strategic

journey, as a cornerstone of the Sultanate of Oman’s economic and commercial growth.

Guided by this conviction, we continue to anticipate the evolving needs of our clients and develop innovative solutions empowered by cutting-edge technologies, enhancing the efficiency and competitiveness of our products and services in an ever-advancing banking landscape.”

Oman Broadband inks pact to expand fibre network

MUSCAT: Oman Broadband Company has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Al Bandar Development Company to strengthen the Sultanate of Oman’s digital infrastructure and deliver innovative smart solutions for future projects.

The signing ceremony took place during the Al Omran, Home and Building Exhibition and Conference, held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The agreement was signed by Eng Sultan bin Ahmed al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Broadband Company and Eng Wasama bin Nasser al Harbi, CEO of Al Bandar Development Company. Under the agreement, Oman Broadband will provide fibre optic network services for Al Bandar Development’s projects, including the Al



The signing ceremony took place during the Al Omran, Home and Building Exhibition and Conference, held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Qurm project and future developments, in addition to offering advanced smart solutions. The network will remain open-access, ensuring that all licensed operators can benefit from it rather than being limited to a single provider.

Eng Sultan bin Ahmed al Wahaibi said: “This agreement marks a strategic step towards strengthening Oman’s digital infrastructure and enabling future projects to benefit from fibre networks and smart solutions. It also reaffirms Oman Broadband’s commitment to fostering a competitive environment open to all operators, which will positively impact the quality of digital services for consumers and support the Sultanate of Oman’s digital transformation journey”.

Phoenix Globnet celebrates 30 new ACCA graduates

MUSCAT: Phoenix Globnet marked another milestone in its journey of excellence with the Phoenix Globnet ACCA graduation and alumni ceremony held recently at Radisson Blu, Al Khuwair, Muscat.

The event celebrated the achievements of 30 newly qualified ACCA graduates, underscoring the institute’s growing contribution to Oman’s finance and accounting talent pool. Since its establishment in Oman in 2019, Phoenix Globnet has produced over 100 ACCA-qualified graduates, reinforcing its position as a key enabler of professional education and skill development in Oman.

The ceremony was graced by Zahra al Lawati, Deputy President of the State Financial and Administrative Audit Authority, as Guest of Honour,



Since its establishment in Oman in 2019, Phoenix Globnet has produced over 100 ACCA-qualified graduates.

alongside Tariro Masukume, ACCA’s Education Relationship Lead for Eurasia and the Middle East; Ahmad Bilal Manzoor, ACCA’s Regional Business Relationship Manager; Vignesh Sivakumar, Managing Director of Phoenix Financial Training; and Globnet leaders including Shaikh Hilal bin Amour Mohammed al Esry, Said bin Masoud Khalid al Esry and Sagar Bhattacharya.

In her keynote address, Zahra al Lawati commended Phoenix Globnet’s contribution to empowering Omani professionals through globally recognised qualifications, noting: “The success of these graduates represents more than academic achievement — it reflects Oman’s growing professional capacity

and commitment to excellence in governance and financial management”.

Phoenix Globnet’s role as a trusted training partner of Takatuf for the OIA’s National Mutamad Programme reaffirms its alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and the nation’s Omanisation and economic diversification goals. Through this partnership, the institute continues to bridge the gap between market needs and qualified national talent in finance and accounting.

Nikhil Vachani, Managing Director of Phoenix Financial Training, said: “Our vision has always been to bring international standards of finance education to Oman while nurturing local talent to meet national priorities.”

DOMESTIC TRAVEL



Duqm Airport maintained steady growth with passenger numbers reaching 40,173.

DUQM AIRPORT SEES 2.6% GROWTH IN PASSENGER TRAFFIC

MUSCAT: Passenger traffic through the Sultanate of Oman’s airports — Muscat, Salalah, Suhar and Al Duqm — reached 10,024,998 by the end of August 2025, reflecting a marginal overall decline of 0.1 per cent compared to 10,015,613 passengers during the same period last year, according to preliminary figures from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

At Muscat International Airport, passenger numbers fell slightly by 0.5 per cent, totalling 8,757,696 compared to 8,800,036 a year earlier. Flight movements also saw a decline of 5.1 per cent, registering 62,007 flights against 65,306 last year.

In contrast, Salalah Airport posted the strongest performance, recording an 8.5 per cent rise in passengers to 1,208,607 compared to 1,114,062 in 2024. The number of flights also increased by 4.8 per cent, reaching 7,769 compared to 7,410 last year — driven by growing demand during the Khareef Dhofar Season and expanding domestic travel.

Meanwhile, Sohar Airport witnessed a steep decline, with passenger traffic dropping by 70.3 per cent to 18,522 passengers, compared to 62,360 in the same period last year. Flight operations also decreased by 59.1 per cent, recording 202 flights versus 494 previously, indicating reduced connectivity and flight frequency in the northern region.

Duqm Airport, however, maintained steady growth, with passenger numbers increasing by 2.6 per cent to 40,173, compared to 39,155 during the same period in 2024. Despite the rise in passengers, the number of flights edged down slightly by 1 per cent, with 410 flights recorded compared to 414 the year before. The figures reflect Al Duqm’s growing importance as an emerging business and logistics hub supporting industrial and port development in Al Wusta Governorate. — ONA

WLGA MIDEAST LPG SUMMIT & EXPO TO HOST 2,000 PARTICIPANTS

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, OCT 12

The World Liquid Gas Association WLGA Middle East LPG Summit & Expo 2025, held under the auspices of the Oman Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), will be held from November 10 to 11, 2025 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC). Supported by the Oman Energy Association (OPAL), the event is expected to attract more than 2,000 participants from across the globe, alongside an international exhibition hosting over 80 leading companies.

WLGA is the authoritative voice of the global liquid gas industry, representing over 300 companies across over 125 countries.



WLGA is the authoritative voice of the global liquid gas industry.

Headquartered in Paris, WLGA advocates for safe, sustainable and innovative use of liquid gas across the entire value chain, driving collaboration and

supporting the global energy transition.

Experts from the US, Europe and across the Middle East will share insights into the future of LPG at the summit sponsored by major industry stakeholders including National Gas Company (NGC), Bharat Tanks Vessels LLP and Ragasco.

The 2025 edition, known to be the largest LPG-focused gathering in the Middle East combining a high-level international conference with a world-class exhibition, the summit and expo is aimed at uniting global leaders and industry stakeholders in Oman.

Some of the key themes will include harmonising the LPG market in the Middle East, technology-driven growth for the LPG industry, unlocking investment potential, infrastructure, innovation and trade.

Oman seeks investment in semiconductor venture

SAEED AL MASHARFI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

THE Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has announced an investment opportunity in the ICT sector, represented by a project to establish a semiconductor design company in Muscat, with a total investment cost of \$30 million. The project is expected to create between 30 and 100 direct jobs within a timeframe of one to two years.

Khulood al Hadhrami, Senior Technology Investment Specialist at the Ministry, emphasised that the semiconductor industry is no longer an option but a strategic necessity due to its vital role in enhancing the efficiency of electronic devices.

She explained that this industry is deeply integrated into several key sectors such



The semiconductor design project will help create between 30 to 100 direct jobs.

as computing, healthcare, transportation, energy, defence systems and artificial intelligence, stressing that “AI would not be able to process massive volumes of data without semiconductors”.

Al Hadhrami noted that the global market is heading towards unprecedented growth in this field, with forecasts projecting that global semiconductor sales will reach

\$1 trillion by 2030.

She added that the Ministry, in collaboration with government and private sector partners as well as international universities and companies, is working to transfer this technology to Oman by attracting foreign investments and preparing local talent to join the labour market.

She further revealed that one company has already

started its operations in Oman within this field and has successfully employed more than 100 Omanis specialised in semiconductor design, in addition to signing several strategic partnerships with leading international firms.

Al Hadhrami concluded by affirming that entering this industry requires patience, significant resources and long-term investment, while expressing hope that the coming period will witness more efforts and achievements in this promising sector.

The initiative falls within Oman’s broader efforts to strengthen the ICT sector by focusing on the semiconductor industry, which represents a cornerstone of the global digital economy.

The project leverages the Sultanate of Oman’s strategic location, free trade agreements and skilled human capital, supported by advanced infrastructure.

OPAZ awards consultancy tender for cold chain economic cluster

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 12

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has awarded the consultancy services tender for the Integrated Economic Cluster for Cold Chain Development in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). The initiative forms part of the National Programme for Economic Diversification “Tanwea”, supervised by the Ministry of Economy and aims to strengthen Oman’s food and logistics sectors.

The consultancy contract has been awarded to Egolisi Consulting for Modest Business Solutions, an Omani small and medium enterprise (SME) specialising in management and strategic consultancy.

Eng Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, CEO of



The contract has been awarded to Egolisi Consulting for Modest Business Solutions, an Omani SME specialising in management and strategic consultancy.

SEZAD, highlighted that the Duqm Cold Chain Project complements ongoing initiatives within the fisheries and food industries. He noted that Al Duqm’s advanced infrastructure — including the

multipurpose fishing port, logistics facilities and a well-developed road network linking key investment zones — provides an ideal environment for the project’s success.

“The cold chain cluster will further enhance Al Duqm’s appeal as a strategic hub for food and logistics industries, helping attract new investments and creating high-value opportunities”, he said. Meanwhile, Jamal bin Mousa al Wahaibi, Deputy Head of Integrated Economic Clusters at Tanwea, described the tender award as a significant milestone in activating the project.

“This step contributes to expanding the production and export base, empowering sub-sectors to raise their contribution to the GDP and reinforcing interlinkages between various economic sectors”, he stated.

Al Wahaibi added that the initiative aligns with Oman Vision 2040, which seeks to position Al Duqm as a leading regional logistics gateway for cold chain industries, supporting national efforts to diversify income sources and strengthen non-oil exports.

Expressing pride in the selection, Talib bin Amer al Hinai, CEO of Egolisi Consulting, said the project underscores the government’s trust in Omani SMEs to deliver complex and strategic initiatives.

“This consultancy offers us an opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of local firms in developing comprehensive, high-impact solutions”, he said. “Egolisi is particularly focused on building integrated strategies for cold chain and modern logistics systems that can serve Oman’s long-term

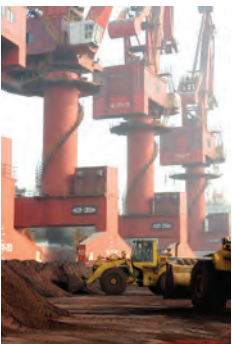
economic objectives”.

Al Hinai affirmed that the company will leverage national expertise and innovative approaches to prepare a comprehensive master plan aimed at positioning Al Duqm as a regional hub for cold chain industries serving the food, pharmaceutical and logistics sectors.

The Cold Chain Economic Cluster Project seeks to establish a robust and integrated logistics ecosystem in Al Duqm to enhance the efficiency, quality and reliability of temperature-controlled supply chains. It will contribute to improving export quality, maximising the economic value of non-oil exports and ensuring that Omani products meet international standards to compete effectively in global markets.

GOODS HYPOCRITICAL

Beijing blames US for raising trade tensions



China called US President Donald Trump’s latest tariffs on Chinese goods hypocritical on Sunday and defended its curbs on exports of rare earth elements and equipment, but stopped short of imposing new levies on US products.

Trump on Friday responded to Beijing’s most recent export controls by imposing additional tariffs of 100% on China’s US-bound exports, along with new export controls on critical software by November 1. — Reuters

APPLYING LEVIES

China hits back on US port fees



China will slap port fees on US-owned, operated, built, or flagged vessels on Tuesday as a countermeasure to US port fees on China-linked ships starting the same day, China’s transport ministry said on Friday.

There are relatively few US-flagged vessels conducting international trade, but China will ensnare more ships by applying levies to companies with 25% or more of their shares or board seats held by US-domiciled investment funds, analysts said. — Reuters

DEMAND OUTLOOK

Trump tariff threat pushes oil to 5-month low



Brent and US crude futures fell more than \$2 a barrel, or more than 3%, on Friday as US President Donald Trump’s threat to impose increased tariffs on China cast a shadow over the demand outlook in a market seen as oversupplied.

“The sell-off was driven by a shift to risk-off markets following Trump’s post threatening tariffs on Chinese goods”, said Giovanni Staunovo, an analyst with UBS. Brent crude futures settled at \$62.73 a barrel, down \$2.49, or 3.82%, the lowest since May 5. — Reuters

OPINION

Jane Goodall: Pioneering expert and conservationist icon



DR MYTHILI KOLLURU

The writer is an assistant professor at the marketing and management department of the College of Banking and Financial Studies.

AS a girl, she dreamed of living with the wild animals in Africa. From a very young age, she was interested in animal behaviour. Her dream was not well-received and was dismissed by her friends and family as ridiculous. She was asked questions such as: “Africa is dangerous!” You’re a girl! Africa is very far from Britain.

Nonetheless, her mother advised her that to pursue such a daring dream, she would have to be strong and work very hard. Nothing could deter this young lady, Jane Goodall, from becoming the legendary titan of primatology and anthropology.

In 1960, 26-year-old Jane Goodall took a flight from Britain to start working with wild chimpanzees in Tanzania’s Gombe Stream National Park. She was a curious, original and visionary whose research spanned 6 decades of dedication and resilience. She started with a cause and it turned into a mission.

She became the first person to receive a PhD in ethology from the University of Cambridge without a formal bachelor’s degree. She is acclaimed for her groundbreaking discovery that chimpanzees are omnivorous, use tools, express complex emotions, form social bonds and engage in

warfare, traits previously believed exclusive to humans.

Her pioneering work has been published in numerous articles in National Geographic and she has also authored over 30 books. She has won numerous prestigious awards and has been featured in over 40 documentaries.

In 1991, she founded “Roots & Shoots”, a youth outreach programme that has since evolved into a global movement connecting young conservationists worldwide. She was a voice for climate change, an active keynote speaker and an inspiration to women scientists worldwide.

She believed that through collaboration, a combination of technology and tradition is needed for climate action. She stated that age-old remedies and approaches could help solve half of the problems associated with the climate crisis.

She advocated for simple techniques, such as planting trees, forest restoration and protecting the Amazon and the Congo Basin. Jane Goodall stressed that people are not willing to accept the magnitude of the problem.

Her “Roots & Shoots” initiative aimed to bring people together to discuss the environment, conservation and

She believed that through collaboration, a combination of technology and tradition is needed for climate action. She stated that age-old remedies and approaches could help solve half of the problems associated with the climate crisis.

humanitarian aspects of life. According to her, each of us matters, we make a difference in this world and we must consciously decide the kind of difference we want to create.

She did not say, “Think globally and act locally”; she believed that would bring gloom. Instead, she stated that we should “think and act locally”. And each of our actions, when compounded, will reflect a better world. She always stressed that each one of us made a difference in the world—each of the 8+ billion people matters.

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), humans have destroyed one-third of the world’s forests by expanding agricultural land. Today, the world stands at a technological and environmental crossroads that will affect the planet Earth and all its inhabitants.

The world must acknowledge the climate crisis and work towards the restoration and preservation of the natural world. There are many lessons to be learned from a legend like Jan Goodall, who is no longer with us, but has left her fingerprints of goodness and resilience that will continue to create ripples of awareness in the world. She remains in people’s thoughts as an icon of dedication to science and nature conservation.

ARGENTINA BAILOUT IMPERILS THE US PURSE EITHER WAY

SEBASTIAN PELLEJERO

Uncle Sam’s gamble on Argentina will be hard to cut short. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Thursday unveiled a \$20 billion dollar-for-peso swap framework and began buying the currency outright. A shaky valuation peg puts risk directly on America’s books.

It also renders even these dramatic measures a stopgap to help President Javier Milei through tough mid-term elections. Even if it works, Washington may just be on the hook for more.

By contrast, Argentina carries over \$95 billion in short-term foreign-currency debt. A \$20 billion International Monetary Fund loan, approved in April, sought to rebuild those buffers. By August, however, Argentina had missed its reserve accumulation target.

This cash pot, opens new tab is not unfettered, spread between International Monetary Fund coffers, foreign-currency holdings and prior commitments, leaving only \$23 billion in direct US government assets as of August. It would be put in service of a currency that looks genuinely mispriced. At Thursday’s close of 1,418 per dollar, the peso trades about 9% above its purchasing-power-parity value of 1,544, according to CEIC Data. Analysts compute an even steeper overvaluation. Yet this is the target of official government policy.

The Banco Central has been spending scarce dollars to hold the exchange rate between a 1,000 and 1,400 peg, flattering apparent stability but bleeding scarce reserves.

Those reserves are now perilously thin: around \$13 billion, reports the Financial Times. By contrast, Argentina carries over \$95 billion in short-term foreign-currency debt.

A \$20 billion International Monetary Fund loan, approved in April, sought to rebuild those buffers. By August, however, Argentina had missed its reserve accumulation target.

Bessent, a former hedge-fund manager who once helped George Soros break the Bank of England, should well understand the self-defeating dynamic. Yet the peso peg is a central plank of Milei’s programme, which has wrestled persistent fiscal deficits into surpluses but been stymied by trade woes.

A friend of President Donald Trump’s political agenda at a time when the US is again intervening in Latin America, both the administration and creditors preaching fiscal rectitude have an interest in seeing his Liberty Advances party hold its congressional majority in this month’s election.

If he loses, the US will have funded a failed experiment, left holding billions that will plunge whenever confidence does, mostly to the benefit of lenders paid out in the meantime. — Reuters

London closes in on New York but race is tough

LONDON is now within a whisker of ousting New York as the world’s leading financial hub, new rankings reveal, but risks remain over the capital’s fintech prospects. The UK capital is at the heels of the Big Apple with just a singular rating point between the two.

New York once more topped the rankings in Z/Yen’s 38th Global Financial Centre’s Index (GFCI 38) but lost three points whilst London gained three. While none of the top ten changed their rank, there was just a singular point separating each member of the top four.

The GFCI ranking also showed London held onto its European crown towering above Frankfurt and Geneva — which took second and third place — by nearly 20 points. But elsewhere, London took a tumble in the fintech rankings — an area where it previously looked like it could seize New York’s crown.

When it comes to fintech, Hong Kong and Shenzhen have now claimed the top spot with London’s rating dropping by five points sending the UK capital to fifth place.

Janine Hirt the chief executive of fintech’s industry body Innovate Finance said: “The risks posed by international competitors are very real. Countries around the world are increasingly vying to be the destination of choice for innovators and as our recent half year investment report found, the UK has for the first time in nearly a decade slipped from second to third place in terms of securing global Fintech investment”.

London has battled a series of dreary news in the fintech sector — despite attempts from Chancellor Rachel Reeves to bolster the sector — with money transfer firm Wise ditching its listing and Klarna snubbing London’s financial district (known as the ‘City’) for Wall Street.

Whilst the industry remains a European leader, its global status had faced renewed threat.

A spokesperson for the Financial Conduct Authority said: “Supporting growth and competitiveness is a corner stone of our strategy to help maintain London and the UK’s position at the forefront of global finance across sectors such as fintech, banking and investment



Workers cross London Bridge, with the City of London financial district seen behind, during the morning rush-hour, in London. — Reuters



ANDY JALIL andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK.

London has battled a series of dreary news in the fintech sector — despite attempts from Chancellor Rachel Reeves to bolster the sector — with money transfer firm Wise ditching its listing and Klarna snubbing London’s financial district (known as the ‘City’) for Wall Street.

management. “This year alone we are working at pace to deliver nearly 50 initiatives to support the growth mission.

This includes rebalancing our approach to risk to unlock innovation, attracting more inward investment, encouraging the export of UK financial services and making it easier for firms to establish here and create jobs, while maintaining standards that underpin our global reputation”.

Chairman of the Z/Yen and former Lord Mayor of London, Michael Mainelli, said: “The extreme close ratings of centres in the index shows the intensity of competition among leading financial centres from the highest rated to the lowest.

Cyber security: Cyber attacks in the UK and on the continent is becoming a major issue. Almost half of businesses in four of the largest European economies reported at least one cyber attack over the last four years, resulting in costs

exceeding 300 billion euros (£261 billion).

According to a new report by British insurance broker Howden, the cyber attacks on businesses in France, Germany, Italy and Spain over the past five years equated to over 307 billion euros in direct costs.

Despite this, cyber insurance remains relatively low across Europe, with more than 70 per cent of companies in the four countries uninsured, which is higher than the UK’s 61 per cent rate. The UK topped Howden’s table of most cyber insurance offerings, with 39 per cent; the next on the table is France, Spain and Germany tied on 29 per cent.

Head of cyber international, Howden, Jean Bayon de la Tour, said: “Cyber insurance is not just a protective measure, but a strategic enabler of resilience that accelerates recovery, strengthens risk management and reduces financial losses”.

CLASSIFIEDS

ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC
The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Panchakarma, Yoga, Kalari, Massage Dhara etc.... Rehabilitation, Marma Therapy & Post Delivery Care
Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair Service Road, Near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-King
Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com

PTC Rent A Car
Travel & Tours

Daily, Weekly, Monthly Car Rental Available

9345 3444

UMP
UNITED MAWA PROJECTS

Auditors & Accountants
• Audit & Accounting • CFO Services • Secondment
• VAT & Tax Return Filing • VAT Refund Assistance
Contact: 92182750 • Email: contact@umpauditors.com

PROJECT ASSISTANT
Female, well-versed in **Project Administration** with 13 years of proven experience in training, recruitment, administration, finance, and secretarial support.
As an **Executive MBA** holder, I can contribute effectively to your organizational goals and looking forward to an interview call and the opportunity.
Contact: 98260708 | meena.v24@gmail.com

■ ANNOUNCEMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CAPITAL REDUCTION

IN accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company GET CONSULTANTS (LLC), which is registered with the Commercial Registration No. 1343728, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials 150,000.000 to 10,000.000. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry within 30 days from the date hereof.

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (Cockroaches), Public Health Chemicals, Agriculture Chemicals, Snake Repellent, Rodent Baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

Driving School
Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)
Contact No: 99074072

■ SIT. VACANT

Job Vacancy:

Operations Manager (Lifting Inspection Company)
Required
Qualifications:
-ASNT Level II (minimum requirement).
-LLEA or ASNT Foundation certification.
-Diploma in Lifting Accessories.
-Diplomas in the following equipment:
Mobile Crane
Overhead Crane
MEWP (Mobile Elevating Work Platforms)
Forklift
Gantry Crane
Additional Advantage:
ASNT Level III certification
Send all your CVs & certificates on below email:
pipe2566@yahoo.com

CENTRAL
Electrical Trading LLC

OFFICIAL ADDRESS :
P.O. Box: 397, P.C.: 117
Tel: +968 24832308 / 24832053
Fax: +968 24832309
Mob.: +968 99252965 / 99491438
E-mail: sales@cetoman.com
Web: www.cetoman.com

Switchgear Division:- Tel. +968 24830952
Equipment Division:- Tel. +968 24830947

Sohar Division:-
Tel: +968 22405243
E-mail: sohar@cetoman.com

■ SIT. WANTED

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

SRI LANKAN Male — (CGMA ACMA+ CPA+BBA) Asst. Finance Manager/ Chief Accountant, 12+ Experience in Oman & GCC, Expert in Finan. Reporting (MIS), VAT, Audit, Cashflow, Budget, AR AP Recon, IFRS, Payroll, Banking.
Contact: 78773250.
Email: ali.mohamedown@gmail.com

LOOKING for site supervisors, having minimum 2 year's experience in erection of steel structures, mainly industrial building & warehouse.

Diploma in Mechanical / civil/ having Omani driving licence will get preference.

please send CV to : hrjob191@yahoo.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

We Are Hiring

A reputed Organization is looking for a **Property Manager & Real Estate Developer**
✔ Experience not less than 5 years

Apply Now
Send your C V to **recruitmentalf70@gmail.com**

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

اوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

FOR RENT/SALE

Fish Plant & Accommodation Building FOR RENT/SALE
LOCATION: MULANDHA INDUSTRIAL AREA
3511 sqmt Plant with Cold Store / Blast Freezers / Office & Other facilities
1663 sqmt with number of Offices
3084 sqmt Accommodation Block with Flats, Restaurants, Stores & other facilities.
Contact Nos.: 99643760/ 92192020

OMAN DAILY

Observer

FREE* CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

*** NOW FREE CLASSIFIED IN OMAN DAILY OBSERVER ON THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ONLY**

Send your advertisement (Only one per coupon & no photocopies), either by mail or in person, with your local identity.

To advertise please contact:
Tel: 71455532/ 71455531/ 71455530
Email: adv@omaninfo.om

ART/LIFE

MEMORIES OF PLACE



OMANI ARTISTS EXPLORE IDENTITY, HERITAGE AND TIME > 20

MUSIC

COMPOSER WINS GLOBAL MUSIC ACCOLADES



KABEER YOUSUF

Music transcends borders, speaks without words and fosters peace, unity and harmony — a philosophy embodied by Muscat-based composer Farhad Harati.

His latest achievement underscores this universal truth: Harati recently received the Platinum Medal for Best Composer at the LIT Music Awards 2025 in the United States for his album 'The Knots of Mystery', which previously won two Gold Medals at the Global Music Awards 2025.

Set to perform at the W Hotel in Muscat on November 7 for an elite audience, Harati believes music needs no language. "People embrace music from across continents, regardless of words or lyrics", he says, noting how regional sounds can reach global audiences.

Muscat-based composer Farhad Harati has earned international acclaim, winning multiple awards including the Platinum Medal at the LIT Music Awards 2025 and Gold Medals at the Global Music Awards, for his groundbreaking choral and instrumental albums

A versatile artist with a background in Music Science, Harati is a composer, conductor, choir master, pianist, singer and music educator. Founder and CEO of Immortal Music Company, he has produced nearly a dozen albums and numerous singles, while establishing and conducting the Naamira Choir.

His works range from choral and archaic music to instrumental piano-driven albums, often featuring his own vocals.

Harati's societal contributions extend beyond Oman. Collaborating with the United Nations and organisations in Iran, he has produced music addressing Aids, humanity and war, performing in prestigious venues across the region.

His global recognitions include a Silver Medal at the Global Music Awards 2020 for 'Hidden Beliefs', Gold in 2022 for 'The Sacred Earth' and additional silver awards for subsequent works. Earlier albums like 'Zero Limitation' (2006), 'Grey Lone' (2007), 'The Pacific Sun' (2010) and 'The Silence Season' (2018) have cemented his place in world music.

Reflecting on his approach, Harati says, "I respect all types of music. Anything that helps you express your feelings is art. My focus is on music that moves people. Oman's young generation has tremendous potential in music and fine arts".

Looking ahead, he is eager to collaborate with Omani artists, guiding them towards the international music scene and continues to create compositions that bridge cultures and hearts worldwide.

QUICK FEATURES



CULTURE

A crafts woman paints diyas, or traditional earthen oil lamps, ahead of 'Diwali', the Hindu festival of lights in Amritsar, India. — AFP



TRAVEL

An photograph shows the Sir Nigel Gresley steam passenger locomotive travelling along The Watercress Line, in Southern England. — AFP



FASHION

Fashion designer Victoria Beckham during the world premiere of the documentary series 'Victoria Beckham' at The Curzon Mayfair in London. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



hanadyalhashmi • Follow
Jabal shams, grand Canyon, oman



Life on the edge



klourand • Follow



High fliers

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 and every time you upload or share your photos, make sure to tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

Oscar-winning actress Diane Keaton, 79, dead



Actress Diane Keaton, known for her Oscar-winning performance in 1977’s “Annie Hall” and her role in “The Godfather” films, has died at age 79.

Details were not immediately available, and Keaton’s loved ones have asked for privacy, a family spokesperson told People, which confirmed that the actress died on Saturday in California.

Keaton was a frequent collaborator of director Woody Allen, portraying the titular character in “Annie Hall”.

The film also garnered Oscars for best picture, best director, and best original screenplay, cementing Keaton’s place as one of the industry’s top actresses and an offbeat style icon as well.

The actress made her mark co-starring in eight Allen movies, from “Play It Again, Sam” (1972) to “Manhattan” (1979) and “Manhattan Murder Mystery” (1993).

Apart from the Allen cannon,

fans adored her portrayal as Steve Martin’s wife in the comedy “Father of the Bride,” as the nervous and doting couple plan an extravagant wedding for their daughter.

Late in her career, Keaton starred in two movies about aging women: “Book Club” (2018), with its message that love has no age, and “Poms” (2019), the story of a terminally ill woman who moves to a retirement community to die, but winds up forming a cheerleading squad.

A BAFTA and Golden Globe winner, Keaton scored Oscar nominations three other times for best actress, for “Reds”, “Marvin’s Room”, and “Something’s Gotta Give.”

In 2017, she was honoured with a Life Achievement Award by the American Film Institute, which called Keaton “unconventional, iconoclastic and left-of-centre.” — AFP



Ali Akbar is originally from Rawalpindi in northern Pakistan

MEET THE LAST NEWSPAPER HAWKER OF PARIS

ALI AKBAR knows everyone and everyone knows him. The last newspaper hawkker in Paris zigzags each day from cafe to cafe, shouting humorous headlines in the heart of the French capital.

“France is getting better!” he cries, just one of the headlines he invents to sell his wares round the upmarket streets of Saint-Germain-des-Pres.

“(Eric) Zemmour has converted to Islam!” he shouts, referring to the far-right candidate at the 2022 presidential elections.

Locals and tourists on the Left Bank, the intellectual and cultural heart of Paris, look on amused.

“Even the walls could talk about Ali”, smiled Amina Qissi, a waitress at a restaurant opposite the Marche Saint-Germain, who has known Akbar for more than 20 years.

Now 73, Akbar, a slim, fine-featured “character” with newspapers tucked under his arm, is a neighbourhood legend, she added.

“Even regular tourists ask where he is if they don’t see him”, she said.

HARD LIFE
French President Emmanuel Macron has vowed to soon make Akbar a knight in the national order of merit in recognition of his “dedicated service to France”.

“At first I didn’t believe it. Friends must have asked him (Macron) or



maybe he decided on his own. We often crossed paths when he was a student”, said Akbar.

“I believe it’s related to my courage, because I’ve worked hard”, he added.

Akbar, who wears round spectacles, a blue work jacket and a Gavroche cap, mainly sells copies of the French daily Le Monde.

When he arrived in France at the age of 20, hoping to escape poverty and send back money to his family in Pakistan, he worked as a sailor then a dishwasher in a restaurant in the

FRANCE WILL HONOUR COUNTRY’S LAST NEWSPAPER HAWKER, ALI AKBAR, WITH THE NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT FOR HIS DECADES-LONG SERVICE OF DELIVERING NEWSPAPERS

northern city of Rouen.

Then in Paris he bumped into Georges Bernier, the humourist also known as Professeur Choron, who gave him the chance to sell his satirical newspapers Hara-Kiri and Charlie Hebdo.

Akbar has been homeless, experienced extreme poverty and had even been attacked — but despite the hardships, he said he has never given up.

“Emmanuel Macron is going to put a bit of antiseptic on my wounds”, he told his son Shahab, who at 30 is the youngest of his five children.

Shahab, who describes himself as “very proud” of his father, enjoys cataloguing the numerous profiles dedicated to his father in the foreign press.

When he started out as a hawkker in the 1970s, Akbar focused on the Left Bank of the river Seine, which was a university area “where you could eat cheaply”, he said.

On the rue Saint-Guillaume in front of the prestigious Sciences Po university, he recalled learning French from interactions with students like former prime minister Edouard Philippe and “many others who became ministers or lawmakers”.

‘A GOOD MOOD’
Paris used to have about 40 newspaper hawkkers — street vendors without a fixed newsstand — who were posted at strategic locations such as the entrances to metro stations.

Akbar stood out by choosing to walk around, selecting the Latin Quarter. In the 1980s, he started inventing sensational headlines.

“I want people to live happily. I do it to create a good mood, that’s all”, he said.

But he admitted that he is finding it increasingly difficult to come up with good jokes.

“Everything is such a mess”, he added.

Akbar, who receives a pension of \$1,175 a month, still works from 3 pm until 10 pm each day.

When AFP met him on a recent afternoon, clients were few and far between. On average, he sells about 30 newspapers every day, compared to between 150 and 200 when he started.

“As long as I’ve got the energy, I’ll keep going. I’ll work until I die”, he joked. — AFP

FEATURES

Today, Stal Gallery opens ‘**Memories of Place**’, featuring six Omani artists and a German guest. The exhibition explores memory, identity and heritage through painting, sculpture and calligraphy

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

STAL Gallery and Studio in Madinat Sultan Qaboos opens an exhibition that reflects on how memory, identity and belonging shape Oman’s artistic landscape.

‘Memories of Place’ brings together six Omani artists and one guest artist from Germany, each offering a distinct interpretation of place through personal and collective histories.

Anwar Sonya, one of the pioneers of Omani modern art, inaugurated the event and served as guest of honour. The exhibition explores how landscapes, both physical and emotional, carry traces of time and transformation.

At its centre is a panoramic oil painting by Hassan al Meer, one of Oman’s most established contemporary artists. Known for his explorations of memory and identity, Al Meer reconstructs the Corniche of old Muscat as it once stood between the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

His five-metre canvas, developed through archival photographs, oral histories and architectural documentation, evokes a city in transition where crumbling facades and fading maritime hubs float between luminous skies and a sea rich with memory.

Juma al Harthy focuses on Omani craftsmanship and architectural symbolism through his depictions of traditional carved wooden doors. Using simple and grounded compositions, he treats these doors as vessels of protection, time and cultural identity, linking tangible form with collective memory.

Anwar Sonya captures the raw dynamism of social life in a large-scale expressionist painting portraying a traditional chicken contest, a scene rooted in Omani rural heritage. The work radiates with energy and movement, translating a familiar event into a vivid study of community and resilience.

A quieter dialogue unfolds in the seascapes of Adnan al Raisi, whose warm ochres and deep blues explore the coastline as a site of emotional and physical balance. His paintings reflect on the relationship between stillness and passage; and the fleeting boundary between day and night.

Mohammed Mehdi al Lawati blends calligraphic abstraction into play, blurring the line between word and gesture. His layered compositions dissolve legibility, inviting viewers to experience Arabic script as rhythm and texture rather than text.

The exhibition also introduces an international perspective through Janin Walter from Germany. Her ongoing series Be (Have) draws from neuroscience and behavioural psychology to examine how urban spaces influence emotional memory. Walter’s interdisciplinary practice bridges art and science, using participatory methods to reveal how the body retains the social and emotional imprints of place.

Saleem Sakhi brings nature into the conversation with works inspired by the conservation of the Arabian Oryx. His paintings and sculptures reinterpret the Oryx as a symbol of endurance and renewal, transforming it into a vibrant emblem of preservation through art.

“Some works were created in 2025, others reach back a decade, marking ten years of inquiry into memory, identity and belonging”, says Volodymyra Sobolevska, an art researcher exploring contemporary Omani visual culture.

“What distinguishes Memories of Place is its depth. Each artist



OMANI ARTISTS EXPLORE IDENTITY, HERITAGE AND TIME



develops a unique vocabulary of memory, whether through Hassan al Meer’s coastal iconography, Juma Al Harthy’s architectural homage, or Janin Walter’s psycho-conceptual inquiry. Each artist develops a visual language through sustained research. They ask us to look longer, listen deeper and consider what lies beneath form”.
Beyond its artistic resonance,

Memories of Place is also conceived as a bridge between art and community. Stal Gallery and Studio, long regarded as a cornerstone of Oman’s contemporary art scene, will extend invitations to schools, universities and colleges, offering guided tours that connect younger audiences with the exhibition’s themes. Tourism groups with a cultural focus will also be welcomed, positioning the exhibition as part of Muscat’s growing creative and educational landscape.

As Oman continues to evolve, ‘Memories of Place’ serves as both reflection and reminder that progress and preservation can coexist; and that art remains one of the most powerful ways to record and reimagine who we are.

The exhibition remains open until October 31, with free public access daily (except Fridays). Accompanying events include artist talks and guided walkthroughs.