

OMAN
Observer
DAILY

SUNRISE 05:30 AM
PRAYER TIMINGS
FAJR 04:08 AM
DHUHR 12:09 PM
ASR 03:33 PM
MAGHRIB 06:42 PM
ISHA 07:59 PM

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HM VISITS
NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF
MOUDJAHID

OMAN AND ALGERIA TO ENHANCE COOPERATION



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Abdelmadjid Tebboune held a bilateral meeting at the Presidency of the Republic in the capital Algiers on Monday.

HM, PRESIDENT
TEBBOUNE HOLD
BILATERAL MEETING

ALGERIAN-OMANI
INVESTMENT FUND
ESTABLISHED

LEADERS DISCUSS
WAYS TO STRENGTHEN
RELATIONS

COMMITMENT TO
FURTHER ENHANCE
COOPERATION

ENCOURAGE JOINT
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
SECTOR PROJECTS

CALL TO INTENSIFY
EFFORTS TO BOOST
TRADE VOLUME

TWO SIDES WELCOME
THE SIGNING OF 4 MoUs

LEADERS DISCUSS
GAZA STRIP AND
US-IRAN TALKS

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK and President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria commended the establishment of the 'Algerian-Omani Investment Fund' as a mechanism to finance joint investments between the two nations, enhance their volume, and ensure diversification and expansion across all sectors.

This was stated in the joint communiqué issued on Monday on the occasion of the state visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on May 4-5.

It reads as follows: "At the invitation of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman, paid a state visit to Algeria on May 4-5, accompanied by a high-ranking delegation.

At the outset of the visit, President Tebboune welcomed His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, praising this renewed meeting that reflects the fraternal relations,

cooperation and solidarity binding the Algerian and Omani peoples.

On his turn, His Majesty expressed his pleasure at visiting Algeria and extended his gratitude for the warm reception accorded to him and his accompanying delegation. He highlighted the distinguished ties between the two nations, rooted in historical, cultural and solidarity-based bonds, as well as a shared destiny.

In an atmosphere of mutual understanding, the two leaders held in-depth and constructive discussions on bilateral relations and ways to strengthen them across various fields. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest and chaired an expanded meeting between the two delegations.

Both sides praised the progress in bilateral relations in recent years, particularly following President Tebboune's state visit to Muscat during October 28-30, 2024, and the eighth session of the Joint Committee held in Algeria on June 11-12, 2024. They

HIS MAJESTY RETURNS HOME

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has returned to the homeland after a two-day state visit to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

also commended the steps taken to implement the outcomes of these meetings. The two leaders affirmed their commitment to further enhancing cooperation and partnership, leveraging the vast potential of both countries.

The two sides encouraged joint public and private sector investment projects, building on the successful partnership in fertiliser, ammonia and urea production in the Arzew industrial zone - a \$2.4-billion project. They also welcomed ongoing discussions for



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Monday visited the Memorial of the Martyr or Maqam E'chahid in Algiers.

projects in automotive manufacturing, energy, pharmaceuticals, and other sectors, urging their swift implementation and the exploration of new areas for mutual benefit. They lauded the establishment of the Algerian-Omani Investment Fund as a tool to finance joint ventures, increase their scope and ensure diversification across all fields.

Regarding trade, the two leaders directed intensified efforts to boost trade volume, develop economic exchanges and utilise the commercial and economic capacities of both nations. They also highlighted the outcomes of the business forum held in Algeria on June 11, 2024, attended by entrepreneurs and companies from both countries. Additionally, they noted Oman's selection as the guest of honour at the 56th Algiers International Fair (June 23-28, 2025) and Algeria's participation as the guest of honour at the seventh Oman Agro Food Exhibition (December 1-3, 2025).

TURN TO P2

HM ACCORDED OFFICIAL RECEPTION PROTOCOLS



HM, Algerian President hold bilateral talks

HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK and President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria held a bilateral meeting at the Presidency of the Republic in the capital Algiers on Monday.

The meeting reviewed areas of bilateral cooperation and means of promoting them to serve the interests of the two peoples. The two leaders also exchanged views on a set of regional and international developments.

After that, an official session of talks was held under the chair of His Majesty the Sultan and the Algerian President.

The session explored opportunities for economic and investment cooperation between the two countries in various sectors, particularly renewable energy, pharmaceutical industries, agriculture, marine resources, food security, and financial and logistical investment.

The two sides also exchanged views on a set of matters of interest to the two countries.

The session was attended from the Omani side by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Dr Hamed bin Said al Aufi, Head of Private Office of His Majesty the Sultan, Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health and Saif bin Nassir al Badaai, Ambassador of Oman to Algeria.

Meanwhile, it was attended from the Algerian side by some senior officials. — ONA



ALGIERS: An official reception ceremony was held for His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq at El Mouradia Presidential Palace in the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on Monday, on the occasion of His Majesty's visit to Algeria. President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of Algeria led the welcoming party for His Majesty the Sultan.

Upon His Majesty's arrival to the Palace, he passed by the guard of honour, saluted the flag and inspected the guard of honour, while military bands played ceremonial music in honour of the esteemed guest.

Following this, the two leaders posed for a commemorative photo. His Majesty then shook hands with senior Algerian officials, while the Algerian President greeted the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan.

— ONA

His Majesty, Algerian President grace signing of MoUs

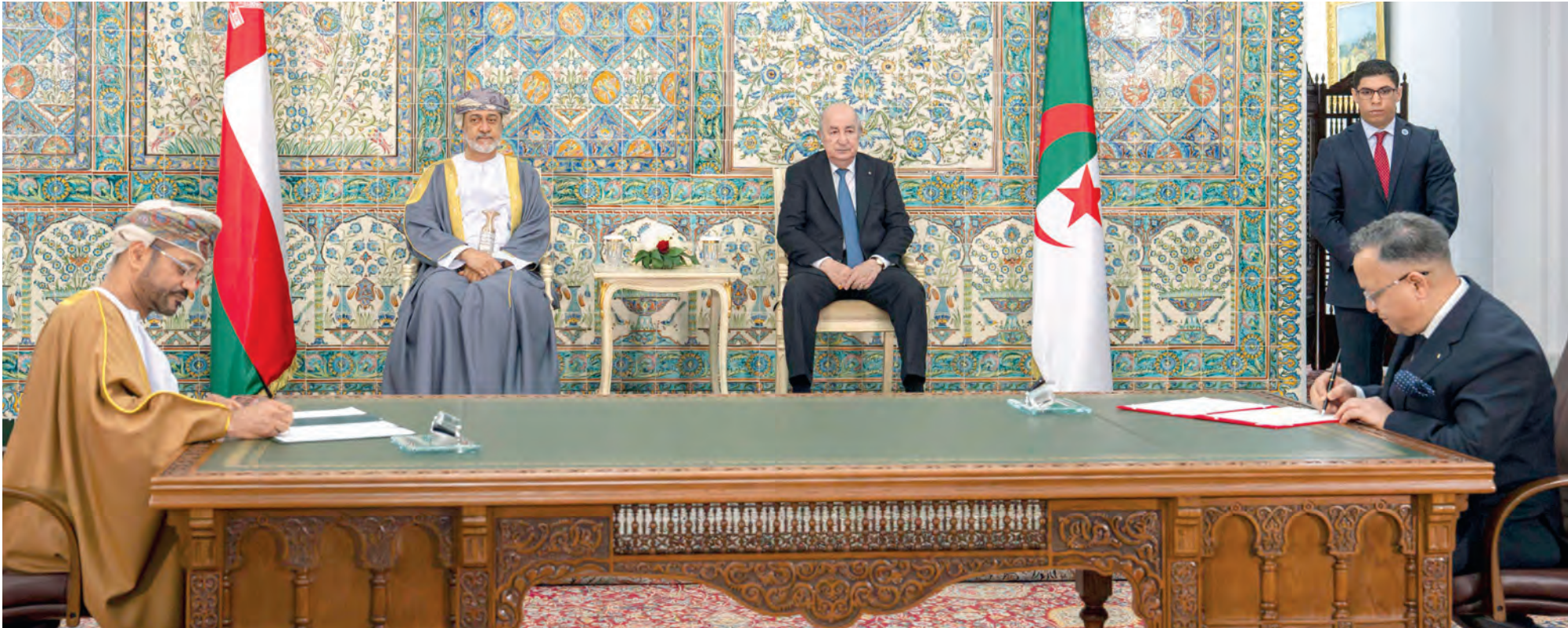
HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK and President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria graced at the Presidential Palace in Algiers on Monday the signing of a preliminary agreement, four memoranda of understanding (MoUs), two cooperation MoUs and four executive programmes.

These agreements include the establishment of a joint Oman-Algeria Investment Fund. They also spanned scientific, technical, educational, agricultural, investment, pharmaceuticals, judicial and legal cooperation, as well as plant protection and animal health fields.

Among the key agreements, Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Algeria's Ministry of Finance signed a cooperation MoU to establish a joint investment fund worth RO 115.4 million, equally shared between the two countries. The fund will focus on key sectors such as food security, pharmaceuticals, minerals and mining, with the aim of fostering mutual economic benefits.

In the mining sector, Minerals Development Oman — a subsidiary of Oman Investment Authority — and Algeria's National Company for Mineral Exploration and Production signed an MoU to expand bilateral cooperation in mining and related industries. The agreement facilitates knowledge transfer, economic diversification and job creation while adhering to environmental and social sustainability standards.

In the energy sector, Abraj Energy Services and Algeria's state-owned Sonatrach signed key terms for a joint venture based on a previously agreed MoU. The two sides also finalised two agreements earlier in 2025 to develop vocational training programmes in oil and gas and establish a framework for technical and managerial skill development.



A memorandum of understanding was also signed in the pharmaceutical industry between the Ministry of Health and Algeria's Ministry of Industry and Pharmaceutical Production, aimed at fostering cooperation in drug manufacturing under the applicable laws of both nations to serve the joint interests. This includes collaboration in pharmacovigilance, scientific research exchange, expertise sharing in drug evaluation, and promoting investment in pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Additionally, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and Algeria's Ministry of Justice to strengthen collaboration in judicial and legal fields. The two sides will exchange experiences, expertise and training programmes, as well as share best practices in studying the drafting of international conventions.

In the judicial field, the Supreme

Judicial Council and Algeria's Ministry of Justice signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to boost judicial cooperation, including the exchange of court rulings, joint training programmes for judges and staff, expert visits, collaborative research in legal studies and conducting specialised workshops and seminars.

Agricultural cooperation was also strengthened with the signing of an MoU between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources and Algeria's Ministry of Agriculture Rural Development and Fisheries. The agreement focuses on desert farming, modern agricultural technologies, biotechnology for crop resilience and food safety standards.

An executive programme was activated to implement an existing MoU on plant protection and animal health, enabling the exchange of regulations, technical expertise and training in phytosanitary measures, seed production and quarantine

procedures.

In fisheries, Oman Marine Science and Fisheries Centre and Algeria's National Centre for Research and Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture signed an executive programme to enhance scientific and technical cooperation in marine research, aquaculture and smart fishing technologies.

An executive programme in education, stemming from a 2006 bilateral agreement, was also signed to facilitate academic exchanges, joint research and scholarships between higher education institutions in both countries.

Moreover, the Ministry of Labour and Algeria's Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security signed an executive programme to enhance cooperation in labour inspection, including the exchange of best practices, dispute resolution mechanisms and joint training initiatives.

The agreements were signed on

behalf of the Omani government by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister; Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA); Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources; Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health; Eng Mattar al Badi, CEO of Minerals Development Oman (MDO); and Saif bin Said al Hamhami, CEO of Abraj Energy Services.

Representing the Algerian government were Dr Wassim Kouidri, Minister of Pharmaceutical Industry; Lotfi Boudjemaa, Minister of Justice; Abdelkrim Bouzred, Minister of Finance; Rachid Hachichi, CEO of Sonatrach; Youcef Cherfa, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fishing; Dr Kamel Baddari, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research; and Fayсал Bentalab, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security. — ONA

His Majesty concludes Algeria visit

ALGIERS: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq left Algiers on Monday evening after a two-day state visit to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of Algeria led the farewell party for His Majesty the Sultan at Houari Boumediene International Airport.

Upon the arrival to the yard of the airport, His Majesty the Sultan and the Algerian President ascended the dais as the Royal anthem of Oman and the national anthem of Algeria were played.

Then, His Majesty shook hands with members of the farewell party from the Algerian side and personnel of the Omani Embassy in Algeria.

On his turn, the Algerian President shook hands with members of the Omani official delegation.

Upon his departure, His Majesty the Sultan sent a cable of thanks to the Algerian President.

In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality.

His Majesty lauded the outcomes of his meeting with the Algerian President, as it was an opportunity to enhance areas of cooperation and promote the distinguished relations in various spheres in a manner that serves the interests of the two peoples.

His Majesty the Sultan wished President Tebboune success, and the Algerian people further progress and prosperity. — ONA





HM VISITS MEMORIAL OF THE MARTYR, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MOUDJAHID



ALGIERS: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Monday visited the Memorial of the Martyr, or Maqam E'chahid, and the National Museum of Moudjahid in the Algerian capital, Algiers.

This took place within the context of His Majesty's current visit to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Upon His Majesty's arrival at the site on Al Ham Plateau, he inspected the guard of honour who saluted His Majesty, accompanied by some Algerian officials.

His Majesty then placed a wreath of flowers at the Memorial of the Martyr.

Afterward, from atop the plateau, His Majesty listened to a briefing on the old city, the port and the surrounding areas.

His Majesty the Sultan then visited the National Museum of Moudjahid. He took note of its halls while receiving a detailed explanation of its history, collections and mission.

At the conclusion of his tour, His Majesty the Sultan inscribed a message in the VIP guestbook, expressing his delight at visiting this historical landmark that documents an important era for the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. His Majesty also extended his gratitude to the museum's administrators for their warm welcome and wished them continued success.

During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan was accompanied by members of the official delegation.

It is worth noting that the National Museum of Moudjahid was established in 1972 as a historical and cultural institution dedicated to preserving and documenting the memory of the Algerian Revolution. It also houses a scientific library containing thousands of references across various disciplines. — ONA

His Majesty the Sultan then visited the National Museum of Moudjahid. He took note of its halls while receiving a detailed explanation of its history, collections and mission.

Memorial, Museum of Moudjahid showcase Algeria's history

ALGIERS: The Algerian landmark, which includes Memorial of the Martyr, or Maqam E'chahid, and the National Museum of Moudjahid, recounts shining pages of Algeria's history.

The landmark, visited by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Monday, was built to commemorate the struggle and resistance of the Algerian people against foreign colonialism and was officially inaugurated on July 5, 1982, marking the 20th anniversary of Algeria's independence.

The El Hamma plateau was chosen for this monument due to its historical and strategic significance, as it overlooks parts of Algiers. In the past, Algerians used it as an observation post to monitor maritime activity and the city's coastline. It was also the site of battles against the Crusader campaign led by Charles V on October 23, 1541.

The Martyrs' Memorial spans one hectare and was designed by

Algerian artist Bachir Yellès (1921–2022). It consists of two sections: an upper section built in the form of three palm fronds, each 97 metres tall, which intertwine at a height of 45 metres in a cylindrical structure topped by a dome before branching out again to reach 92 metres.

Between the three fronds lies a platform dedicated to honouring the souls of the martyrs.

On the back of each frond stands a massive bronze statue: the first symbolises popular resistance, the second represents the National Liberation Army and the third signifies the National People's Army. The lower section houses the National Museum of Moudjahid, designed as arcades surrounding the memorial dome, with most spaces dedicated to exhibitions and the rest to administrative and service facilities.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Salah Eddine Ranem, Cultural Adviser at the National Museum of Moudjahid, explained:



"The museum carries out numerous tasks, the most important being the retrieval, restoration, preservation and display of archival documents and museum artefacts.

It also collects, classifies and archives firsthand accounts related to the national movement, conducts musicological research, collaborates with national and foreign researchers and institutions, gathers references, exchanges scientific and technical information, publishes journals and books, produces audiovisual materials, commemorates national holidays and historical events, and organises seminars and conferences."

He added that the museum consists of a main entrance leading to a space dedicated to temporary exhibitions, followed by thematic wings arranged as follows: The Popular Resistance Wing (1830–1919), the Colonial Settlement Policy Wing, the National Movement Wing (1919–1954), and the Liberation Revolution Wing (1954–1962). — ONA

SESSION WITH AMR MOUSSA LOOKS AT STRATEGIC ISSUES

MUSCAT: Maj Gen Hamid bin Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies (ASDS) received in his office at Bait Al Falaj on Monday Amr Moussa, former secretary-general of the Arab League.

Both sides discussed several matters of mutual interest, notably in academic fields.

The meeting was attended by Brigadier Nasser bin Abdullah al Qutabi, Head of the Centre for Strategic and Defence Studies and Commodore Khaliid bin Amer al Salti, Director-General for Studies and Academic Affairs at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

Moreover, the National Defence College (NDC) hosted Amr Moussa, former secretary-general of the Arab League for a dialogue session.

The session touched on topics in the regional and international arenas. It also covered strategic issues in light of regional and international changes and their effects on the Arab Nation in general and the Sultanate of Oman in particular.

Furthermore, the session underscored the Arab League's constant role in dealing with various types of issues. The dialogue session was attended by Maj Gen Hamid bin Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, Rear Admiral Ali bin Abdullah al Shidi, Commandant of the National Defence College, several senior officers of the Sultan's Armed Forces, senior retired officers and invitees from the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Information. — ONA



AMR MOUSSA
former secretary-general of the Arab League

ROP, NAIF ARAB UNIVERSITY FOR SECURITY SCIENCES DISCUSS TIES



MUSCAT: Lt Gen Hasan bin Mohsin al Shraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs received on Monday Dr Abdulmajeed Abdullah Albanyan, President of the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed several matters of mutual concern. They also explored means of enhancing cooperation in the academic and scientific research fields between Royal Oman Police (ROP) and the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences. — ONA

‘Align media messages with Vision 2040 priorities’

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, MAY 5

THE Government Communication Centre convened its 28th coordination meeting, bringing together representatives from media institutions and government entities across the Sultanate of Oman. The session forms part of a long-standing series of engagements aimed at fostering dialogue, aligning narratives, and enhancing institutional collaboration in the field of strategic communication.

The gathering comes at a time of fast-evolving media and communication technologies, offering a timely platform to discuss developments, share expertise, and explore integrated approaches to public messaging. The initiative aligns with Oman Vision 2040, which calls for modernising communication frameworks and reinforcing the role of media in national development.

Addressing the meeting, Dr Khamis bin



DR KHAMIS BIN
SAIF AL JABRI

Saif al Jabri, Head of the Implementation Follow-up Unit for Oman Vision 2040, underlined the need to tailor strategies to suit the distinct circumstances of each development phase. He noted that ongoing coordination among institutions is critical to showcasing progress and ensuring the visibility of national achievements.

“Each period comes with its own context, and we must adapt our performance monitoring and implementation efforts accordingly,” said Dr Al Jabri. “It is essential to highlight institutional accomplishments within a broader ecosystem, as most strategic projects are deeply interlinked.”

Dr Al Jabri further stressed the need for government agencies to synchronise their media content with national priorities,

ensuring coherence in messaging and programme delivery under the Oman Vision 2040 framework.

He also urged institutions to embed the economic dimension within their communication outputs, encouraging them to articulate their contributions to economic growth and national resilience. “Every government entity has an economic impact — it must be made visible. Moreover, economic risks must be factored into institutional performance to sustain effectiveness and inform policy outcomes,” he noted.

The Government Communication Centre’s ongoing meetings serve as a vital conduit for dialogue and policy alignment in a rapidly changing media landscape. By reinforcing inter-agency partnerships and updating communication strategies, the initiative supports transparent governance, informed citizen engagement, and the unified advancement of Oman Vision 2040 objectives.

SQU announces Royal Grant winners

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) on Monday announced the top 10 winners of the 2025 Royal Grant for Strategic Research Projects.

The announcement was made during a ceremony marking the 25th anniversary of University Day.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance.

University Day celebration coincided with the convening of the International Research Management Conference themed “Scholarly Research and Sustainability: A Vision for Change.”

The conference seeks to



explore ways to ensure the sustainability of research at institutional, national and international levels. It lays emphasis on upgrading sustainable funding strategies, strengthening research partnerships (between academic, industrial, and governmental institutions), building research capacities and using modern technology to update

research methodologies and effective research dissemination norms.

The ceremony included three documentaries that featured the Royal Grant for Strategic Research, the University Day and the achievements of the SQU in scholarly research and postgraduate studies.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Al Habsi and attendees toured an exhibition accompanying the University Day.

The exhibition showcased two platforms: one on the “Research Management System” and the other on the “Publishing and Journals Management System”. — ONA

Tanmia Liquidity Fund
Fund Management Body Report
For the quarter ended March 31st, 2025

Dear Unitholders,

We are pleased to present the report for Tanmia Liquidity Fund for the period ended March 31, 2025.

Throughout the first quarter of 2025, Tanmia Liquidity Fund maintained its strategic focus on enhancing liquidity and market depth within the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). In alignment with the key performance indicators (KPIs) established by MSX, the Fund actively supported initiatives aimed at strengthening the overall effort for a potential upgrade under MSCI classification standards

Market and Tanmia Liquidity Fund Performance

During the first quarter of 2025, the Muscat Stock Exchange declined by 5.8%, in line with global market trends. The total trading value reached approximately OMR 434.08 million, compared to OMR 304.33 million during the same period in 2024, reflecting a 42.6% year-on-year growth. The total value of trades for Tanmia Liquidity Fund during the quarter was approximately OMR 26.48 million. During the quarter, TLF's shareholders injected additional capital into the Fund and appointed United Securities as a fund manager under the TLF umbrella.

Brief Financial & Liquidity Indicators

Particulars	For the Quarter Ended 31st Mar 2025 RO
Total value – Buy	13,846,128
Total Value – Sell	12,631,826
Total value of trades during the period	26,477,954
Total Net Asset	68,549,124
Number of outstanding units	74,752,475

* Fund operations began on 16th May 2024

Outlook

Looking ahead, we are optimistic about the Muscat Stock Exchange's growth trajectory. The positive trends observed in liquidity and trading volumes support our belief in a resilient and evolving market environment. Tanmia Liquidity Fund remains committed to playing a leading role in these developments by ensuring active engagement and continued alignment with market-building objectives. Furthermore, the inclusion of other Fund Managers on the TLF will speed up the efforts for upgrading the market to Emerging status.

We extend our deepest gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik for his visionary leadership, which continues to guide the Sultanate towards economic resilience and prosperity. On behalf of the members of the Fund Management Body, we also thank His Majesty's government and our esteemed unitholders for their enduring support. We further extend our appreciation to the Fund Manager for their continuous commitment and professional service.

Chairman of the Fund Management Board

Managed By:
Oman National Investments Development Company S.A.O.C (Tanmia)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2025		
	Unaudited 31-03-2025 RO	Audited 31-12-2025 RO
Assets		
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	57,245,820	37,957,861
Cash and cash equivalents	12,327,712	7,705,619
Amount due from broker	-	226,557
Rebate receivable from Muscat Stock Exchange	-	68,000
Total assets	69,573,532	45,958,037
Liabilities		
Accruals and other payables	75,075	92,935
Accruals and other payables	1,549,557	-
Total liabilities	1,624,632	92,935
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	67,948,900	45,865,102
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	69,573,532	45,958,037
Net asset value per unit attributable to the unitholders	0.909	0.961

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2025	
	Unaudited 31-03-2025 RO
Income	
Interest/Dividend Income	401,108
Other income	114,955
Net realised (loss) on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(154,455)
Net unrealised (loss) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(2,706,777)
Net investment loss	(2,345,168)
Expenses	
Management and administrative fees	(60,060)
Custody fees	(7,507)
Other expenses	(10,452)
Total expenses	(78,018)
Loss and total comprehensive loss and decrease in net assets attributable to the unitholders for the period	(2,423,186)
Loss per unit	(0.032)



جامعة الشرقية
A' SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

ASU's Tender Committee is pleased to invite specialized companies to participate in the following tender:

Tender details:

Tender No.	Description	Document Collection Deadline	Site Visit	Deadline for Tender Clarifications	Bids Submission Deadline	Document Fees	Remark
MRQ-003084	STP Upgrade	11/05/2025	11/05/2025 at 10:00 AM	15/05/2025 at 12:00 PM	29/05/2025	OMR 60	The company must be classified as first grade or higher

- Specialized companies interested in participating in this tender should obtain the tender documents during official working days from Sunday to Thursday, between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM.
- Tender collection process:** The interested companies shall follow the following steps:
 - The payment should be made directly to ASU under the following bank account:

Account Name	AL SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY
Account Number	0423010693610011
SWIFT CODE	BMUSOMRX
 - After payment, send the receipt to yousuf.alsaadi@asu.edu.om or via WhatsApp at +968 25401116, along with the reference number, title of the tender and CR of the company.
 - Participating companies will receive the tender document via email or WhatsApp.
 - Companies that hold Riyadh certificate are exempted from tender document fees.
- ASU general terms and conditions of tenders shall apply on all submitted bids. http://www.asu.edu.om/downloads/purchase_terms_conditions.pdf
- ASU is not bound to accept the lowest bid.
- For further details, please don't hesitate to contact us at: yousuf.alsaadi@asu.edu.om or 25401116 / 25401115.

OMAN

SHORTTAKES



STUDENT COMPANY DEVELOPS DEVICE TO TRACK SHIPPING CONTAINERS

AL MUSANNAH: The student company “Servo” at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Al Musannah successfully developed a smart device designed to be placed inside shipping containers to monitor their condition during transportation and storage.

Shajan al Alawi, CEO of the student company, explained that the device is equipped with sensors to measure critical environmental indicators such as temperature, humidity, pressure and vibration to ensure the safety of the container’s contents. The device also features a tracking system that pinpoints the container’s location, whether transported by land or sea, enhancing shipment tracking accuracy.

She added that the device connects to an electronic platform that displays real-time data, including a 3D model of the container and a timestamped log of alerts in case of abnormal readings. — ONA

Over 245,000 firms employ zero Omanis

In a bid to ensure a balance between business sustainability and job localisation, the Ministry of Labour has announced a set of integrated regulations and incentives to enforce a decision requiring firms and companies that have completed one year since establishment to employ at least one Omani citizen. This comes in response to data revealing significant disparities in Omanisation rates across businesses.

While a limited number of companies employ the majority of Omanis, thousands of others do not hire any locals — despite benefiting from Oman’s business environment.

According to data, around 1,000 large firms employ nearly 200,000 Omanis and 245,000 expatriates, achieving an Omanisation rate of 44 per cent, averaging 200 citizens versus 245 expats per company.

Approximately 19,000 establishments employ about 60,000 Omanis, compared to 300,000 expatriates, with an Omanisation rate not exceeding 17 per cent — equivalent to just 3 Omanis for every 15 expats per firm.

Over 245,000 businesses employ no Omani citizens within their workforce, while relying on more than 1.1 million expatriates, resulting in a 0-per cent Omanisation rate. The wide variation in Omanisation rates highlights an imbalance that necessitates corrective measures.

The decision aims to realign the labour market, curb hidden trade, ensure fair distribution of opportunities, and promote competitiveness based on sustainable and equitable principles.



The Ministry of Labour has announced a set of integrated regulations and incentives to enforce a decision requiring firms to employ at least one Omani citizen. — ONA

As part of efforts to empower national talent and boost job localisation, the ministry has launched an employment package tailored to market needs. This includes: Training-linked employment programmes; On-the-job training initiatives; Wage support schemes; Flexible alternatives to meet Omanisation quotas, such as counting self-employed individuals and part-time workers towards the required ratios.

The ministry has adopted a flexible enforcement mechanism, accounting for the economic realities of businesses of varying sizes, capacities and sectors. Firms that have operated for one year without hiring Omanis

must submit an employment plan within one month of notification.

Companies with 10+ employees must comply within 3 months. Smaller firms are granted a 6-month grace period. Sole proprietors managing their businesses are exempt for one year from the decision’s effective date.

To ensure fair implementation and address sector-specific concerns, the ministry has formed a committee to review appeals, assess exceptional cases affected by the decision, monitor its impact, and submit observations and recommendations based on practical outcomes. — ONA

Investment Manager Report			
Ahli Islamic Money Market Fund			
On behalf of the Fund Management Board, I am pleased to present the reviewed financial results of Ahli Islamic Money Market Fund for the quarter ended 31 Mar 2025:			
FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31st MAR 2025	31/03/2025	30/12/2024	
Number of units	50,888,342	30,980,827	
Net asset value (RO)	53,658,156	32,299,473	
Net asset value per unit (RO)	1.054	1.043	
Dividend Paid Per Unit (RO)	-	-	
Net profit/(loss)	473,621	861,417*	
*10 Months 03/03/2024-30/12/2024			
Market Outlook			
In March, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) unanimously decided to maintain the federal funds rate target range at 4.25%–4.50%, reaffirming its cautious stance amid persistent inflationary pressures influenced by trade policies and supply chain constraints. While the Fed continues to project two 25-basis-point rate cuts this year (totaling 50bps), its measured approach underscores concerns over sustained inflation risk, with policymakers preferring to wait for further economic data before adjusting interest rates. The risk of stagflation is increasing as new U.S. trade tariffs raise concerns about slower economic growth and rising inflation. In response, investors shifted towards safer assets, pouring \$30.26 billion into global money market funds, reflecting growing fears of an economic slowdown.			
Bond yields saw further declines in March amid concerns over slowing economic growth and shifting investor sentiment. As of March 31, U.S. Treasury yields stood at: 1-month T-Bill: 4.38%, 12-month: 4.04%, 2-year: 3.91% and 10-year: 4.23%.			
Regionally, GCC central banks remained aligned with the Federal Reserve, keeping policy rates within the 4.25%–4.50% range. Looking ahead, we anticipate easing global interest rates are expected to support borrowing conditions and stimulate economic activity across the region.			
The Ahli Islamic Money Market Fund remains resilient, with expected returns of ~4.6% in the short to medium term, providing stability, liquidity, and attractive returns for short-term cash management.			

Financial Statements for the period ended 31 March 2025			
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
	31 March 2025	31 December 2024	
	RO	RO	
ASSETS			
Investments at amortised cost	30,356,797	22,277,140	
Cash and cash equivalents	22,922,660	9,701,961	
Accrued profit on investments	642,046	413,389	
Total assets	53,921,503	32,392,490	
LIABILITIES			
Accruals and other payables	263,347	93,017	
Total liabilities	263,347	93,017	
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	53,658,156	32,299,473	
Net asset value per unit	1.054	1.043	
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
	31 March 2025	31 December 2024	
	RO	RO	
	(3 months)	(10 months)	
INCOME	535,961	975,740	
Profit on investments Foreign exchange gain	1,098	-	
Amortization of premium on investments at amortised cost	334	-	
	537,393	975,740	
Expenses			
Management fees	51,711	86,036	
Custodian service fees	7,020	13,792	
Foreign exchange loss	-	2,822	
Fund Management Board fee	500	1,500	
General and administration	4,541	10,173	
	63,772	114,323	
Net profit and total comprehensive income for the Period	473,621	861,417	
Net profit per unit	0.012	0.043	
Note: The Fund does not have any item of other comprehensive income			

EXPAT FREE EXIT SCHEME TILL JULY 31: ROP

KABEER YOUSUF @kabiyousef

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has clarified the news circulating about free exit for undocumented workers and visitors staying in the Sultanate of Oman even after their visas have expired. They will not face any fines or legal proceedings.

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) previously announced that fines and legal proceedings have been waived for individuals whose visas have expired or are overstaying in Oman to help them leave the country, with the exception of those involved in criminal activity.

According to the MoL, this initiative is for illegal workers



with expired residency permits who wish to depart Oman. They can apply through the ministry’s website and follow the steps provided. Within a week, they will receive a notification from the ministry confirming their free exit, requiring only an airline ticket to their home country.

A senior ROP official told the Observer that the free exit of illegal workers is possible, as long as they have not committed any

criminal offenses and adhere to the Ministry of Labour’s conditions.

“The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has been monitoring reports of exemptions from fines and financial obligations for individuals and employers. It clarifies that the exemption includes specific cases mentioned in the Ministry of Labour’s announcement regarding correcting conditions and settling fines and financial obligations,” she said.

The ROP has ensured all technical systems are in place to facilitate transactions and encourages eligible individuals to take advantage of the period for correcting their status, which continues until July 31, 2025.

Omani-Russian business forum to develop commercial relations

MUSCAT: As part of the visit of Abdulmuslim Abdulmuslimov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Dagestan, to the Sultanate of Oman, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Monday organised an Omani-Russian Business Forum.

The forum was aimed to develop commercial relations between the two countries. It discussed ways to consolidate economic and investment cooperation and open up new vistas for investment and partnership in various vital sectors. It also elaborated on enhancing commercial exchange and exploring promising investment opportunities, notably in the sectors of agriculture, tourism, trade, fisheries, livestock and construction.

The forum targeted



investors, producers, exporters, importers, wholesale companies and government departments.

During the forum, Abdulmuslimov stressed that the Republic of Dagestan attaches great importance to strengthening cooperation with the Sultanate of Oman in various fields and such forums represent milestones in developing future partnerships between the two sides.

For his part, OCCI Chairman Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, said that the Omani-Russian Forum embodies the Chamber’s

vision for upgrading cooperation between Oman and Dagestan as part of the OCCI’s strategy to develop commercial and economic ties with different countries of the world.

Al Rawas pointed out that the forum constitutes a starting point for further fruitful cooperation, motivates businesses and companies and enhances the Chamber’s role in supporting entrepreneurship and achieving national economic goals.

During the forum, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Dagestan. The MoU seeks to expand cooperation between the two parties in several vital economic sectors. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



Britain's King Charles III waves to crowds, on the balcony of Buckingham Palace after attending the armed forces procession on Monday. — AFP

KING CHARLES JOINS VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY CELEBRATIONS

LONDON: Britain's King Charles and other senior royals joined veterans and crowds to watch a grand military parade and flypast at the start of four days of commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day. The government has planned a series of events in the run-up to the anniversary of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender that took effect on May 8, 1945. It is observed around that date in many countries, including France, the United States and Russia.

The celebrations, which come as US President Donald Trump is pressing for a deal to end the Russia-Ukraine war, kicked off on Monday when London's famous Big Ben clock struck at midday and extracts from British war leader Winston Churchill's VE Day speech were read out. "My dear friends, this is your hour. This is not victory of a party or of any class," actor Timothy Spall said, reciting the words spoken by Churchill to cheering crowds eight decades ago. "It's a victory of the Great British nation as a whole. We were the first, in this ancient island, to draw the sword against tyranny." More than 1,300 members of Britain's armed forces marched through central London from outside parliament to Buckingham Palace, watched by the king, who offered a salute as they passed, alongside Queen Camilla, Prince William and his wife Kate, Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and veterans of the conflict. Ukrainian armed forces also took part, carrying their nation's blue and yellow flag, in a gesture that underlined Britain's continued support for Ukraine in its war with Russia. Addressing the British veterans in an open letter, Starmer said: "I want you to know: the whole nation is inspired by the selfless dedication of your example." "This week, the country will show you just how thankful we all are. Because we know, that without your service, the freedom, peace and joy that these celebrations embody, would not be possible," he said in the letter published by the government. — AFP

FRANCE, EU TAKE AIM AT TRUMP'S ASSAULT ON SCIENCE

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen took aim at Donald Trump's policies on science on Monday, as the European Union seeks to encourage disgruntled US researchers to relocate to Europe. Von der Leyen told a conference at Paris's Sorbonne university that the EU would launch a new incentives package worth 500 million euros (\$567 million) to make the 27-nation bloc "a magnet

for researchers". "We have to offer the right incentives," she said. Without mentioning Trump directly, Von der Leyen told the "Choose Europe for Science" conference that the role of science was being put in question "in today's world" and condemned such views as "a gigantic miscalculation". Universities and research facilities in the United States have come under increasing political and

financial pressure under Trump, including with threats of massive federal funding cuts. "Nobody could have imagined that this great global democracy, whose economic model depends so heavily on free science,.. was going to commit such an error," Macron said. In the context of "threats" against independent research and "global apprehension", Macron said, "Europe must become a sanctuary." — AFP

Trump-Putin meeting is necessary, says Kremlin

THE Kremlin, asked on Monday about a possible meeting between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Saudi Arabia, said that a meeting was necessary but that Putin had no trips to the Middle East planned for mid-May. Trump, who pledged to swiftly negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine shortly after retaking office, said over the weekend that he and his advisers have had "very good discussions" about Russia and Ukraine in recent days. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, asked by reporters about comments by Trump that he might considering meeting with Putin during a trip to Saudi Arabia this month, said the Kremlin chief had no trip there scheduled, but that "such a meeting is clearly on everyone's lips." "And in many ways we think it is certainly necessary," Peskov said. "It has to be prepared accordingly and it requires efforts at various expert levels," including continued contacts between Moscow and Washington, he added. "But so far there are no specifics on this." Trump will travel to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE later this month to take part in a summit with Gulf leaders, Axios reported. Putin has not met a sitting US president since he held a summit in Geneva in June 2021 with Trump's predecessor Joe Biden. Putin and Trump have spoken by phone several times this year as the US leader works to broker an end to the war. Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces attacked Russia's western Kursk region on Monday,



Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin at the Kremlin in Moscow on Monday. — AFP

firing missiles, smashing through the border and then crossing minefields with special vehicles, according to Russian war bloggers. Russia's top general said last month that Ukrainian troops had been ejected from the Kursk region, ending the biggest incursion into Russian territory since World War Two, and that Russia was carving out a buffer zone in the neighbouring Ukrainian region of Sumy. "The enemy blew up bridges with rockets at night and launched an attack with armoured groups in the morning," The "RVvoenkor" war blogger said on Telegram.

"The mine clearance vehicles began to make passages in the minefields, followed by armored vehicles with troops. There is a heavy battle going on at the border." The Ukrainian attack in Kursk was reported by multiple other Russian bloggers including "The archangel of special forces" and Russian state television war correspondent Alexander Sladkov. There was no immediate comment from either Russia or Ukraine, but Russian war bloggers published maps showing Ukrainian forces trying to push over the Russian border in two places towards Tyotkino. — Agencies



ANNUAL BUN FESTIVAL

A child participates in the 'Piu Sik' parade on the island of Cheung Chau during its annual Bun festival in Hong Kong on Monday. — AFP

EU ‘concerned’ about Israel’s plans to take over Gaza Strip

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Monday expressed concerns about plans by the Israeli security Cabinet to take over the Gaza Strip and for the army to control the territory for an unspecified amount of time. "The European Union is concerned about the extension of these operations in Gaza, which will lead to further casualties and additional suffering for the Palestinian population," an EU spokesman told journalists in Brussels. "The EU urges for Israel to hold back," he added, reiterating the bloc's position "that negotiation is the only method, the only way forward for the return of hostages and the ceasing of all hostilities." The EU also urged Israel to lift its blockade on Gaza and to allow "immediate access to and the distribution of humanitarian aid, as well as the restoration of electricity to Gaza and the restoration of

critical services." "The Palestinian population has suffered enough in recent years and that it's time to put an end to the violence and suffering." Meanwhile, officials said that Israel may seize the Gaza Strip and control aid in an expanded offensive against Hamas that was approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet on Monday. An Israeli defence official said it would not be launched before US President Donald Trump concludes his visit next week to the Middle East. The decision, after weeks of faltering efforts to agree a ceasefire with Hamas, underlines the threat that a war heaping international pressure on Israel amid dwindling public support at home could continue with no end in sight. A government spokesman told journalists online that reserve



A Palestinian farmer inspects an olive tree, which was cut after an attack by Israeli settlers, in the village of Abu Falah, northeast of Ramallah. — AFP

soldiers were being called up to expand operations in Gaza, not to occupy it. A report by Israel's public broadcaster Kan, citing officials

with knowledge of the details, said the new plan was gradual and would take months, with forces focusing first on one area of the battered enclave.

Israeli troops have already taken over an area amounting to around a third of the Gaza Strip, displacing the population and building watchtowers and surveillance posts on cleared ground the military has described as security zones, but the new plan would go further. One Israeli government official said the newly approved offensive would seize the entire territory of the Gaza Strip, move its civilian population southward. The defence official said aid distribution, which has been handled by international aid groups and UN organisations, would be transferred to private companies and handed out in the southern area of Rafah once the offensive begins. The Israeli military, which throughout the war has shown little appetite for occupying Gaza, declined to comment on the remarks by government officials and politicians. — Agencies

OPINION

Oman’s creatives shine at Muscat Book Fair



**SANDHYA
RAO MEHTA**

*The writer is
Associate Professor,
Sultan Qaboos
University*

THE 29th edition of the Muscat International Book Fair has just concluded, with over 650,000 visitors having shared in the rich and vibrant atmosphere of the event, according to officials. The central theme ‘Cultural Diversity as a Pathway to Unity’ was truly reflected in the wide fare offered as well as the range of visitors who came from many parts of Oman and the world.

What most significantly stood out in the book festival was the interest shown by young Omanis towards fiction, translation and educational books.

The internationalisation of Omani literature is evident in author Ammar al Naaimi’s works. ‘Sarim’, ‘Hazim’ and ‘Mumeet’ can be seen to be a trilogy inspired by the Harry Potter series but firmly rooted in the Omani Jinn tradition. His exploration of the power of choice in the individual’s life combines deeper philosophical questions with racy narrative enjoyed by the Gen Zs.

Interest in Omani fiction has resulted in the translation of Jokha al Harthi’s ‘Celestial Bodies’ into 21 languages so far. Her other novels, ‘The bitter orange tree’ and ‘Silken gazelles’ have also been translated into

English, receiving rave reviews. Dr Claudia Ott, the translator of ‘Celestial Bodies’ into German, was in fact visiting the fair this year and spoke at length about the depth of the novel and its capacity to break established stereotypes.

Another translation on the anvil is Bushra Khalfan’s ‘Dilshaad’. Set in 20th century Muscat, the novel explores the everyday lives of Omani families, with the central character Dilshad, his daughter Maryam and grand daughter Fareeda. This award-winning novel now is being translated by Alice Guthrie. The novel is said to have been earlier translated into Persian.

Translations of Omani fiction into English, German and French languages create opportunities for the dissemination of Omani culture into contexts where Oman still remains a mysterious country steeped in traditions. It gives access to readers to understand the nuances of Omani culture which go beyond the struggles of tradition and modernity.

But Omani literature is not just being translated into western languages. The 2023 translation of Omani folktales into Malayalam, ‘Omanile Nadodikathakal’ is a

*The increasing
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continuation of attempts by Indian writers and researchers to bring Omani literature to an Indian reading public. The translation shares the rich folkloric tradition of Oman, with its legends and oral stories framed in morality, in a language that is closely associated with Oman in terms of historical cultural ties.

The increasing interest of international readership in Omani literature is a sign that the rich body of work in Oman is reaching a global audience.

There is a lot of potential for further translations as there is clearly a reading public which is curious about the intellectual and creative output of writers from this part of the world.

Whether writing in English or Arabic, Omani writing has gained an international readership.

The range of themes, the experiments in style and the exploration of its complex history make Omani literature a rich source of imaginative creativity. Wider dissemination of these works across international platforms will provide a larger audience and greater awareness of this untapped literary treasure.

WHO WILL BE THE
NEXT POPE? EVEN
THE CARDINALS
DON’T KNOW

JOSHUA MCELWEE

Catholic cardinals entering a conclave on Wednesday to pick a new pope do not yet have a clear idea of who will emerge as Pope Francis’ successor, several said, and speeches by individual clerics in meetings this week may be decisive.

The 133 cardinals are holding near daily meetings to discuss issues facing the 1.4-billion-member Catholic Church before the conclave, when they will be sequestered in a hotel and barred from contact with the outside world.

While there are a few cardinals seen as front-runners to succeed Pope Francis — two often mentioned are Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin and Filipino Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle — many of the clerics who will vote have not made up their minds. “My list is changing, and I think it will continue to change over the next few days,” British Cardinal Vincent Nichols, participating in his first conclave, said. “It’s a process which for me is far from concluded, far from concluded.”

As the cardinals are meeting this week in what are called “general congregations”, individual clerics can offer speeches to give their vision for the future of the global faith.

During the 2013 conclave, it was in this period that Argentine Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio gave a speech that, by many accounts, deeply impressed his peers. Days later, he was elected as Francis. Nichols, the highest-ranking Church official in England and Wales, said the speeches this time have again been pivotal in helping form opinions about who could be the next pope.

“There’ll be these moments when like a stone is dropped into a pond and the ripples will go out and I’ll sit there thinking, ‘Ah, yeah, that’s important,’” said the cardinal. Asked about whether there are cardinal front-runners who are more likely to become pope, Nichols replied: “I came with a few ideas... (and) they have changed.”

Cardinal William Goh Seng Chye, the archbishop of Singapore, said that he also did not know who the next pope might be. “It may seem strange, but we really do not know,” he said. “We have not yet begun to vote, so we don’t know. The game is still going on.”

The cardinals are meeting for two pre-conclave sessions on Monday and are expected to have at least one more on Tuesday. The conclave itself begins on Wednesday morning with the celebration of a special Mass in St Peter’s Basilica.

In the afternoon, the cardinals will formally process into the Sistine Chapel, where they will begin voting for the next pope. — **Reuters**

The changing landscape
of disability in Oman

TWO years ago, the Ministry of Social Development organised the first national symposium dedicated to people with disabilities - a landmark event signalling a shift in how disability is viewed and addressed in the Sultanate of Oman. I was honoured to participate in that gathering, where heartfelt stories, pressing concerns and bold visions for the future were shared. Today, I build on that experience by asking a simple but profound question: Has it become better for people with disabilities in Oman?

This question anchors a new research project I am preparing to submit to Discourse and Society, a leading academic journal with a special issue exploring global disability experiences. My study uses socio-linguistic interviews to investigate the lived realities of Omanis with disabilities across the country. It goes beyond policies and proclamations, and instead listens carefully to how people speak about their lives - how they describe themselves, how they express resistance or hope and how their words reflect wider cultural attitudes.

Oman has taken commendable steps in the direction of inclusion. We have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and introduced policies designed to increase accessibility and social participation. And yet, policy is only one part of the picture. The heart of inclusion lies in everyday interactions: in whether someone can access education without being pitied, find work without being underestimated, or enter public spaces without navigating physical and social barriers.

Through in-depth interviews with individuals from across the country - people with physical, visual and hearing disabilities, of different



Oman has taken commendable steps in the direction of inclusion.



**DR NAJMA
AL ZIDJALY**

*The writer is
Associate Professor,
Sultan Qaboos
University*

genders, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds - I have begun to piece together a nuanced portrait of disability in Oman today. These stories reveal a mixed reality.

In urban areas, there is growing awareness and better access to services. Several participants shared their joy at seeing ramps in government buildings, being invited to public forums, or connecting with peers through social media. Some felt empowered by the growing visibility of disability in national conversations. However, others - especially in rural regions - shared stories of exclusion, outdated attitudes and tokenistic gestures that do not reflect real change.

One young woman recounted how her community still viewed her disability as a punishment or shameful secret. Another participant, a visually impaired man in Muscat, described the challenges of applying for jobs where employers assumed he would be a liability. Such narratives remind us that even when laws exist, social transformation is often slow, uneven

and deeply cultural.

Language plays a powerful role in shaping these experiences. How people talk about themselves and how others talk about them matters. In my research, I analyse not just what participants say, but how they say it: the metaphors they use, the emotional tones they adopt, the silences they leave. For example, some participants describe their lives as a “journey through fog”, or refer to inclusion efforts as “doors with no handles.” These expressions give us insight into emotional and structural realities that numbers and policies often miss.

What stands out, however, is a generational shift. Younger participants, especially those who use digital platforms, are actively challenging old narratives. They are forming communities, documenting their daily lives and calling out injustices. Through Instagram posts, X (formerly Twitter) threads and TikTok videos, they are reshaping how Omanis think about ability, dignity and participation. This is a promising sign.

The money that disappears...



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

The writer is senior editor of Observer

LIFE online is not so fair. The Internet has made leaps and our lives have become unbelievably easier. From financial transactions to achieving educational qualifications to shopping online. We have even learned to work in a hybrid style, easily sliding from offline to online. There is a whole generation for whom it is a norm, and then there are the others who are still shy because they find it risky. Is it being old-fashioned? Apparently not. A young man wanted to sell a child car seat on an online platform for buying and selling. As usual, he posted the picture, and sure enough, he received a phone call. It so happened he was taking a nap. Not one of the best times to negotiate, but the caller was ready to close the deal and make the purchase right away. The buyer called back and said to give the details on the link he had sent. The seller did so. He got a notification immediately. Instead of money being deposited into his account, the notification read, “RO 300 has been debited from your account.” He has not recovered from his shock yet. Although he has blocked his card and informed the bank and authorities, he has no hope he will get back his lost money. I have another friend who used a common

platform to order food and later paid for a second bill but for a smaller amount. The small amounts can add up. Thanks to the notifications, yet another product of the digital age. The digital age might have left our minds preoccupied, but it keeps us informed, and others too. ‘Data’ is the keyword. If you are just curious, check out how much the AI knows about you. “It even knows about my gym activity,” said my friend. The banks, through their campaigns, have been educating their customers that no matter what, they will never ask for the bank’s details over a mobile number. Now, the pranksters also seemingly call from landlines. “And when you call back, the line never connects,” said a friend who regularly receives calls. But the biggest bluff she experienced was receiving the so-called calls from the hypermarkets congratulating her for winning the lucky draw, but they needed the middle part of the account number. So obviously they have data of the partial account number and phone number. The sad part is this also falls in the category of communication. At some point, one has to converse with a person whose intention is to cheat you of your money. Many of us think cybersecurity

The banks, through their campaigns, have been educating their customers that no matter what, they will never ask for the bank’s details over a mobile number

is something only the government and the corporate world have to deal with. Some of the concerned areas are network security, application security, information security, cloud security, cloud security, IoT security and identity and access management. Some people can think quickly on their feet and bounce back before they fall into the trap. Once bitten, twice shy, they say. But cyber threats evolve as well, with perpetrators catching up with new ways to catch the innocent. These types of crimes do fall into the category of Internet fraud and are cyber-dependent crimes. Most importantly, there are victims. Victims who might be vulnerable may not always know how to go about getting help or guidance. It is important to know and accept the fact that there might be people who do not have the best intentions. This is why there are still people who might shop online but prefer to pay cash on delivery or arrival. The digital wallet can be vulnerable. But the digital world is the reality, and the only way to move forward is to cope with the challenges and changes. Awareness of safety measures is a need that cannot be overlooked in this ever-changing sector.

ROMANIA FACES DECISIVE CHOICE IN ELECTION

ANI SANDU

Pro-EU Romania is facing a possible foreign policy shift, with a far-right leader -- and fan of US President Donald Trump -- topping the first round of a tense election rerun and now up against a centrist mayor for president. While politicians opposed to Trump’s policies have won in Canada and Australia recently, George Simion, who leads the nationalist AUR party, came first on Sunday in Romania. Simion will now face pro-EU Bucharest mayor Nicusor Dan in the May 18 second round, which will be closely watched by Brussels and Washington. The Nato and European Union member of 19 million has gained in strategic importance since 2022 when Russia declared war on Ukraine, which borders Romania. The president’s role is largely ceremonial but has some influence on foreign policy. Campaigning on a promise to put Romania first, Simion, 38, has said he wants to increase defence spending and reform the EU. “We are ready to shape our future,” Simion declared after winning close to 42 per cent of the ballots, double that of runner-up Dan. Dan, 55, has called on Romanians to vote in the second round so that the country keeps its “pro-Western direction”. “A difficult second round will come with the isolationist candidate,” he said. Far-right parties have made significant gains in many EU countries in the past years, while some EU leaders such as Hungary’s Viktor Orban have hardened their tone, most recently emboldened by Trump’s victory. French far-right leader Marine Le Pen on Monday said Romania had offered “a very nice boomerang” to EU chief Ursula von der Leyen, echoing far-right accusations that Brussels was behind last year’s vote cancellation. Romania’s constitutional court in a shock move in December annulled the vote after far-right politician and Nato critic Calin Georgescu unexpectedly won the first round. The cancellation came after claims of Russian interference and a massive TikTok campaign in favour of Georgescu, who was barred from the rerun. Authorities have stepped up preventive measures and cooperation with TikTok to avoid a repeat of the chaos, which led to several massive protests. Simion wants “what is best for this country”. Saleswoman Ana Ferbinteanu, 48, said on Monday in Bucharest. But others were hoping the eastern European would continue its pro-EU path. “I feel there’s still hope for us to remain in Europe and to have a pro-Western mindset... Because I wouldn’t want to live in a country where we’re forced to turn East,” copywriter Bogdan Daradan, 41, said. Simion, who has donned a cap with Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again”, has said he hoped to become Romania’s “MAGA president”. — AFP

One hundred days that shook US foreign policy

WE are barely 100 days into US President Donald Trump’s second term, but much is already clear. Trump 2.0 is starkly different: more confident and surrounded by a team determined to implement a far more sweeping agenda. Those staffing the administration – amplifiers more than restrainers, enablers more than guardrails – spent the past four years preparing for this moment. Trump 2.0 is an activist, imperial presidency, at home and abroad. He seems to be everywhere, dominating public space and private conversations alike in much of the world. The contrast with his predecessor President Joe Biden could not be starker. The administration’s principal policy goal thus far has been to make good on Trump’s campaign pledge to secure the United States’ southern border. But import tariffs – an across-the-board 10 per cent baseline levy, plus additional country-specific tariffs, reaching 145 per cent in China’s case – have become the defining initiative of his presidency. Foreign policy is also substantially changed. The US has shifted from being a steadfast supporter of Ukraine to tilting decidedly in Russia’s favour. The shift appears to be motivated by a clear dislike for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and an embrace of Russian President Vladimir Putin for reasons unknown. Trump, who boasted during his campaign that all he needed was a day to end the war, which he regularly blames on Biden and Zelensky, is now talking about walking away from diplomacy to end the war entirely. He is finding it difficult to make good on his campaign promise, in no small part because his pro-Russia policy fails to give Putin any incentive to compromise or Zelensky the confidence to do so. The agreement to establish a US-Ukraine Reconstruction Investment Fund should help, but, to achieve a cessation of hostilities, much more will need to be done to assist Ukraine.



US President Trump disembarks from Air Force One upon arrival at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland. — AFP



RICHARD HAASS

The writer is President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, senior counsellor at Centerview Partners, and Distinguished University Scholar at New York University

Europe and America’s other traditional allies receive no special treatment, either. Vice President J D Vance travelled to Munich in February to ignite a cultural clash with Europeans, while Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth openly raised doubts about the US commitment to Europe at Nato headquarters. This has spurred European preparations to support Ukraine if American assistance wanes and to achieve strategic self-sufficiency more broadly. In the Middle East, the administration launched what could well prove to be a promising negotiation with Iran. If the Trump administration is willing to allow Iran limited uranium enrichment – a concession that may be required to secure a deal – it can expect criticism from some in the US and Israel. But Trump is strong enough to weather the pushback if it comes. Otherwise, the Trump administration has essentially given Israel’s government a free hand to do what it wants in both Gaza and the West Bank. It seems to have lost interest in extending the Hamas-Israel ceasefire, as this would put it at odds with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who appears to prioritise his coalition’s survival. Gone is pressure on Israel to rein in its military operations or

to even allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, which is almost two months into a full blockade. Trump’s own proposal for Gaza, to empty it of its two million Palestinian inhabitants and to rebuild a new Riviera, went nowhere, but seems to have emboldened the Israeli government to depopulate, occupy, and potentially settle large swaths of the enclave. The most unexpected dimension of US foreign policy, one neither previewed in Trump’s first term nor during the campaign, has been the focus on the Western Hemisphere. Canada and Mexico were singled out for early tariffs over alleged failures to control their borders. There were also heavy-handed calls to assert US sovereignty over the Panama Canal, Greenland, and Canada. More than anything else, these goals have triggered an anti-American backlash – even flipping the outcome of Canada’s recent federal election. There is also what might be described as an amoral slant to US foreign policy. The biggest foreign-policy uncertainty remains in China. On one hand, Trump granted TikTok waivers that allowed it to remain on Americans’ phones, despite uncertainty about whether he has the authority to do so. ©Project Syndicate, 2025

SPORTS

OMAN HOCKEY LEAGUE



Al Amerat and Seeb players in action.

AL AMERAT STAGE COMEBACK TO BEAT SEEB

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MAY 5

Al Amerat Club kicked off their campaign in the preliminary round of the Oman Hockey League with a valuable 2-1 victory over Al Seeb Club in a match held on Sunday at the Oman Hockey Stadium in Al Amerat, earning their first three points of the new season.

The match began at a moderate pace with visible caution from both sides, given the importance of the encounter as the opening test of the league. As the minutes passed, Seeb gradually took control of the rhythm, with the first dangerous opportunity falling to Fahad al Lawati, whose powerful shot went just wide. His teammate Osama al Shibli followed with a run into the circle and a strike that was saved by Al Amerat’s goalkeeper.

Despite midfield efforts from Sami Awad for Al Amerat, trying to break through Seeb’s defence, the attacking advantage remained with Seeb. Their pressure paid off with a penalty corner awarded in the final minute of the first quarter, which Khalid al Hassani successfully converted to give his team a 1-0 lead at the end of the first period.

In the second quarter, both teams continued their efforts to extend the lead or equalise. Al Amerat’s Al Khadhir al Nawfali stood out with a strong performance, while Seeb maintained their offensive attempts, led by Al Hussain al Hassani. However, the score remained unchanged by the end of the quarter.

The third quarter was relatively quiet, marked by tactical caution and a slower tempo from both teams. Seeb focused on securing their backline and launched counterattacks through Osama al Shibli. Al Amerat, on the other hand, failed to capitalise on their chances, despite efforts by Abdullah al Nawfali, who attempted shots from outside the circle. With minimal real threats, the score stayed 1-0.

The final quarter witnessed a dramatic turnaround, as Al Amerat returned with renewed energy and determination to equalise. Just two minutes in, Ayman Faraj leveled the score after a well-orchestrated attack led by Sami Awad, who delivered the ball into the circle for Ayman to strike powerfully into the net.

Al Amerat gained momentum after the equaliser, with Abdullah al Nawfali leading several attacks, one of which hit the post. In the 57th minute, the team earned a penalty corner, which Ahmed al Nawfali converted to give Al Amerat a 2-1 lead. Seeb pushed hard in the closing minutes, mounting heavy offensive pressure, but Al Amerat’s defence stood firm to secure a thrilling and well-deserved victory, marking their first win in the league.



Al Amerat and Seeb players fight for the ball.

Oman win five medals at Arab Athletics in Algeria

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MAY 5

THE OMAN national athletics team delivered an outstanding performance at the 24th Arab Senior Athletics Championship, held in Oran, Algeria, from April 30 to May 4. The team clinched a total of five medals, three silver and two bronze. The event brought together some of the top Arab athletes in the region.

Sprinter Ali bin Anwar al Balushi emerged as one of the standout stars of the delegation, winning two silver medals in the 100 metres (10.21 seconds) and 200 metres, clocking a new personal best of 20.7 seconds. Fellow Omani runner Mulhim bin Darwish al Balushi also made his mark by winning a bronze medal in the 100 metres with a time of 10.36 seconds.

In the men’s high jump, Fatik bin Abdulghafoor Sanjour secured a silver with a leap of 2.14 metres, tying with his Qatari counterpart but claiming second place due to more failed attempts. Meanwhile, Alya bint Faiq al Mughairiyah earned a bronze medal in the women’s high jump, clearing 1.71 metres, underscoring the growing presence and performance of Omani women in athletics.

The national team delegation included a group of athletes who participated in various races and competitions. The athletes were Ali bin Anwar al Balushi, Mulhim bin Darwish al Balushi, Mohammed al Suleimani, Fatik Sanjour, Salim al Rawahi and Alya al Mughairi. The team was headed by Ahmed al Dhuhouri, accompanied by team administrator Abdullah al Jabri, physiotherapist Krassimir Petrov, and coach Saeed al Rashdi.

BOOSTING CONFIDENCE

In a statement, delegation head Ahmed al Dhuhouri emphasised the championship’s importance as a key step in the national team’s preparation journey. He noted that direct competition with elite Arab athletes greatly contributed to improving the players’ skills and boosting their confidence.

From a technical standpoint, Al Dhuhouri remarked that the championship witnessed very high levels of competition, both in terms of



Ali bin Anwar al Balushi won two silver medals in 100 and 200 metres. Fellow Omani runner Mulhim bin Darwish al Balushi claimed a bronze in 100 metres.



Fatik bin Abdul Ghafoor Sanjour secured a silver with a leap of 2.14 metres in the men’s high jump.

performance and tactical execution, providing a challenging environment that helped refine the athletes’ abilities and test their readiness under pressure. He praised the athletes’ performance, highlighting the five medals won as a reflection of the serious preparation and high-quality training programmes the team underwent.

He also commended the excellent organisation of the event and the warm hospitality extended to the Omani delegation by the organising committee and the Algerian people, saying it created an ideal atmosphere for athletic competition and knowledge exchange.

Al Dhuhouri concluded by lauding the achievements as a strong motivation for upcoming events and a clear indication that Omani athletes are capable of excelling at regional and international levels, provided they are given the right support and environment.

Oman meet Maldives in Asian beach handball opener

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, MAY 5

Oman beach handball team will begin their campaign at the 10th AHF Asian Men’s and Women’s Beach Handball Championships with an opening match against debutants Maldives in Group A. The match will kick off at 8 pm at the sands court in Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. India will take on Iran in Group B at 19:00 at the same venue while Pakistan face the Philippines in the other match of the group at 18:00.

Oman team, coached by experienced domestic coach Hamood al Hasani, will enter this event with high morale after they claimed the gold in the GCC Beach Games in Muscat last month. The Asian event will act as qualifier for the 2026 IHF Beach Handball World Championship. With the fans support, Oman will be one of top teams which will vie to clinch the title and secure a



The Oman beach handball team.

place in the global event.

Oman head coach Hamood al Hasani said the opening match is considered as an essential game to go ahead in the tournament. “Registering a comfortable victory in the beginning of any tournament will motivate and encourage the players to deliver their outmost in the rest of the games. The team is fully prepared and my advise to

the players always is to stay focused and leave no room for surprises,” he said.

“We played two successful friendly matches against Jordan. The matches were important to evaluate the physical and technical readiness of the players. Ten players were selected from the initial 13-man squad for the championship. Despite the physical differences at

the Asian level compared to the last GCC Games, I am confident in the team’s ability to compete fiercely for the title,” he added.

Oman line-up will be selected from Said al Hasani, Yasser al Harthi, Abdulhakim al Siyabi, Bashar al Hinaï, Hudhaifa al Siyabi, Asaad al Hasani, Ali al Jaami, Muhannad al Zarafi, Mahdi al Suleimani and Said Issa al Hasani.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony will take place on Tuesday at 8 pm at the sand court of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher under the auspices of Khalid Mohammed al Zubair, Chairman of International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest) in the presence of Moosa Khamis al Balushi, Chairman of Oman Handball Association and Chairman of the Organising Committee, besides other international officials.

EGYPTTOURNEY



The Boys U13 team include Yusuf al Rumhi and Taimur al Busaidy while the Boys U18 team is represented by Pransh Jagwani.

OMAN GOLFERS SET TO COMPETE AT PAN ARAB GOLF

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is set to participate in the 2025 Pan Arab Junior and Ladies Golf Championship, scheduled from May 7 to 10 in Cairo, Egypt. This tournament, organised by the Arab Golf Federation in collaboration with the Egyptian Golf Federation, will be held at two premier venues: Madinaty Golf Club and Katameya Dunes Golf Club .

Oman are among the 13 nations confirmed for the championship, alongside Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and host nation Egypt. Team Oman's inclusion underscores the country's commitment to nurturing golf talent and engaging in regional competitions.

The Oman team comprises of the following players in Ladies section: Huwaida al Barwani, Sheikha al Ghaithi and Wafa al Hadhrami.

The Girls U16 team include Miraeri Sampat and Yasmin al Kathiri.

The Boys U13 team include Yusuf al Rumhi and Taimur al Busaidy while the Boys U18 team is represented by Pransh Jagwani.

Board members Ahmed al Jahdhami and Nikhil Sampat will accompany the delegation.

Coinciding with the championship is a 'Golf Festival' at Madinaty Golf Club, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Arab Golf Federation. The festival aims to increase public engagement with golf and will feature performances by The Trick Shot Boys, appearances by international golf education experts, entertainment activities, prize giveaways, and food and beverage options.



Huwaida al Barwani, Sheikha al Ghaithi and Wafa al Hadhrami will compete in the ladies section. The Girls U16 team include Miraeri Sampat and Yasmin al Kathiri.

Tower Club champions, Ali Talib second in Muscat Academy karate

MUSCAT: Third Muscat Academy Open Karate Championship concluded at the Al Amal Sports Club Hall in Bausher on May 2.

The closing ceremony was held under the auspices of Shaikh Salem bin Hamad al Mahrouqi, Chairman of the Oman Karate Committee and Member of the Shura Council representing the Wilayat of Adam. Also in attendance was Mohammed bin Hamdan al Badi, President of the Arab Open University, along with a large audience of attendees, parents and karate enthusiasts.

The championship witnessed the participation of over 200 male and female athletes representing 19 clubs, academies and centres from Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran. The competitors

showcased their skills in a highly spirited environment through kata (imaginary combat) and kumite (free fighting) events, categorised by age groups and weight classes.

In General Championship results, Qatar's Tower Club emerged champions as Ali Talib Al Raisi Club of Oman claimed the runners-up trophy. Qatar's Al Fuhoud Sports Academy finished third while Muscat International Karate-do Academy took the fourth spot.

The closing ceremony was marked by a festive atmosphere, during which the guest of honour awarded medals to the winners and honoured the participating clubs, as well as the referees and organising committees. A commemorative shield was presented to the guest



Over 200 male and female athletes from Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran took part in the event.

of honour by the Championship Director, Shihan Ali bin Mohammed al Raisi, who expressed his satisfaction with the technical and organisational level of the event.

Shihan Ali al Raisi said the

championship was exceptional in terms of competitive intensity and diversity of participants. He said: "We witnessed passionate matchups and a high technical level that reflects the development of karate in the region. I extend my deep thanks to His Excellency Sheikh Salem bin Hamad al Mahrouqi for his generous patronage, to Mr Mohammed al Badi for his support and presence, and to everyone who contributed to the success of this championship - from organisers, referees, coaches, players, to parents. This success is the result of teamwork."

Notable Individual Results:

Girls' Kata - Age 10: Gold: Malak Ali al Badwani; Silver: Naiva Tanov; Bronze: Aisha al Hinai, Jude Mohammed Abdullah;

Boys' Kata - Age 14: Gold:

Mohammed Hassan al Tayyib; Silver: Aaron Rowe; Bronze: Nasser al Mazrouei, Al Ayyam Taj Mohammed al Balushi;

Boys' Kumite - Age 12 under 40 kg: Gold: Abdulrahman Hilal al Abdali; Silver: Himank Kaushik; Bronze: Osama Mohammed al Siyabi, Suleiman Al Hilali;

Boys' Kata - Age 15: Gold: Mohammed Hossam; Silver: Ghaith al Hashmi; Bronze: Issa Mohammed al Siyabi, Ritesh Sudarman;

Boys' Kumite - Age 16-17 over 60 kg: Gold: Alawi Tariq Baomar; Silver: Elias Ali al Jazzar; Bronze: Mohammed al Yahyaei;

Women's Kata - U30: Gold: Sarah Ali Babazadeh; Silver: Nandana Shachu; Bronze: Shaimaa Tariq Baomar, Najwa Suleiman al Adawi;

Men's Kumite - Under 30: Gold: Ayoub Mohammed Ayoub Neza; Silver: Saeed al Amri; Bronze: Ahmed Abdullah al Rahbi, Hossam Mohammed Zeiny



Rajasthan Royals' Riyan Parag makes a run against Kolkata Knight Riders during the IPL match at Eden Gardens in Kolkata. — Reuters

Parag's six sixes in a row not enough for Rajasthan

HOLDERS Kolkata Knight Riders survived a batting blitz including six straight sixes from Rajasthan Royals skipper Riyan Parag to win a high-scoring IPL thriller by one run on Sunday.

In the day's second match, Rishabh Pant again struggled to a low score as his Lucknow Super Giants team slumped to a fourth defeat in five IPL games, losing by 37 runs to the Punjab Kings.

Parag went on the attack as Rajasthan, chasing 207 for victory, slipped to 71-5. He struck 95 off 45 balls and hit six sixes in six successive legal balls — a first in IPL — across two overs. The 23-year-old's blitz, which included a wide in between the fourth and fifth six, began with him smacking England spinner Moeen Ali for five sixes in an over. Then, after his partner Shimron Hetmyer took a single, he hit one over the fence off Varun Chakravarth.

Parag joined an elite list of batters to have hit five sixes in an over in the IPL after Chris Gayle (2012), Rahul Tewatia (2020), Ravindra Jadeja (2021) and Rinku Singh (2023).

Parag, who is leading the team in the absence of regular skipper Sanju Samson, added 92 with Hetmyer, but after their departures Rajasthan finished on 205-8 after a tense last over. Needing 22 to win in the final over, impact substitute Shubham Dubey, a left-hand batter, hit two sixes and a four off Vaibhav Arora who defended three on the final ball with a run out of Jofra



Punjab Kings' Prabhsimran Singh celebrates after reaching his fifty against Lucknow. — Reuters

Archer as KKR celebrated.

"I was just too sad about myself getting out," said Parag. "Probably a miscalculation from my side. I should have finished it."

Kolkata remain in the hunt for the play-offs with their fifth victory in 11 matches. Rajasthan are already out of the final-four race. The top four teams from the league phase will move into the play-offs.

Andre Russell set up victory for three-time champions Kolkata as he struck form with his unbeaten 57 off 25 balls to steer Kolkata to 206-4.

LUCKNOW 'DREAMS STILL ALIVE'

In the late match, opener Prabhsimran Singh struck 91 off 48 balls to steer Punjab to 236-5, helped by several impressive cameos at the Kings' second home in Dharamsala.

Arshdeep Singh then returned brilliant figures of 3-16 as Lucknow could only make 199-7 in reply. Pant fell for a 17-ball 18 in another failure for the India star.

Pant, who was snapped up by LSG for a record price of \$3.21 million in the November auction, could not find any fluency despite hitting two fours and one six.

The wicketkeeper-batsman has mustered only 128 runs from 10 innings this season.

Lucknow sit seventh in the table, four points outside the fourth and final play-off spot with three games remaining.

"The dream is still alive," Pant said of his team's chances of moving ahead in the T20 tournament. "If we can win the next three matches, we can definitely turn around and do amazing things."

Punjab climbed to second behind leaders Royal Challengers Bengaluru after a seventh win of the campaign.

Lucknow were never in their chase after left-arm seamer Arshdeep struck twice in the space of four balls in his second over to send back Mitchell Marsh, for a duck, and then Aiden Markram, for 13.

He dismissed the dangerous Nicholas Pooran for six before Pant attempted to rebuild in a scratchy innings that was ended by Afghanistan all-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai. — AFP

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LUCKYSEVEN



Norway’s Casper Ruud poses with the trophy as he celebrates after winning the men’s final against Britain’s Jack Draper. — Reuters

RUUD DEFEATS DRAPER TO CLINCH MADRID OPEN

MADRID: Casper Ruud joked seven was his lucky number after claiming the most important trophy of his career in his seventh big final as he beat Jack Draper on Sunday to win the Madrid Open.

The Norwegian, a three-time Grand Slam runner-up, earned his first Masters 1000 triumph with a 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 victory over the Briton in a two-and-a-half hour tussle at the Manolo Santana stadium. Rising star Draper, who will move fifth in the world rankings on Monday above Novak Djokovic, was hoping to add to his Indian Wells title in March but Ruud outlasted him in his third Masters final.

“This was my seventh big final if you count them all, so seven is a lucky number, I guess,” laughed Ruud. “So it was worth the wait in the end. I’ve never really been too close in any of the finals when I look back — I’ve lost the majority of them in straight sets.”

After his prior struggles on the big occasion, also losing in the 2022 ATP Finals showpiece to Djokovic, Ruud was grateful to triumph in the Spanish capital.

“It is a mix somewhat of a relief and happiness and just pure joy,” he explained.

“I know, based on the last years that I’ve had on tour, how tough it is to do well at the biggest tournaments, and I’ve never been able to get over the finish line as a champion, but today I was able to.” Draper had been looking for the first clay court title of his career.

“Congratulations to Casper on this win, you really deserve it — you were braver than me in the key moments,” said Draper.

“This sport is brutal but I will keep trying, I think this loss will make me better.”

The 26-year-old Ruud, ranked 15th, blinked first with back-to-back double faults to give Draper a break for 2-1 in the first set.

However in a seventh-game hold the Norwegian upped his power and showed his quality, hinting at the fightback which was to follow. Serving for the set Draper was unable to polish off his opponent, who broke to tie the set at 5-5. Ruud held and then broke to claim the first set as Draper mishit a forehand. It was the first set Draper had dropped at the tournament and he ranted aloud to his team to release his frustration. — AFP



Al Faisal al Zubair and Jens Klingmann delivered a masterclass in pit strategy with outright victory in the Gold Cup category.

Al Faisal powers to Gold Cup glory at Brand Hatch

AL MANAR RACING by Team WRT’s Al Faisal al Zubair and team-mate Jens Klingmann delivered a sensational performance to win the second of the one-hour Sprint races at the opening round of the 2025 GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Sprint Series at Brands Hatch circuit in England on Sunday.

After finishing fifth in the first of the two short races, Al Zubair and Klingmann delivered a masterclass in pit strategy to kick start their season in the new series with outright victory in the Gold Cup category and sixth position overall in Sprint race two at the helm of the Al Manar Racing by Team WRT BMW M4 GT3 EVO.

Al Zubair said: “Starting off doing very minimal laps in the Sprint Championship was something to get used to. Brands Hatch is such a difficult track and we didn’t have much running time. There were a few red flags in practice. I think we did a total of 20 laps before we got into qualifying. It was not so easy.

“We started off with qualifying on the wrong foot. We finished fifth in class in the first race and then we won the second race. To jump so many people in the second stint and in the pit stop is something that we should be very happy of. It is good to get a

start like this and we can look forward to the rest of the season.”

Al Zubair began the opening one-hour Sprint race from sixth on the Gold Cup grid but was not able to make headway through the opening laps. Arthur Rougier drove the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari to give the CSA Racing McLaren a brief lead but Chris Lulham hit the front again in the Ferrari after the mid-race pit stop and driver change.

Klingmann took over from Al Zubair with the sole target of moving up the field and he managed to sneak ahead of James Kell in the CSA Racing McLaren following the driver changeovers after 23 laps. Lulham continued to lead from Louis Prette in the Garage 59 McLaren as the opening Sprint race headed into its closing stages and on to the chequered flag. Klingmann held on to secure a fifth-place finish for the Al Manar Racing by Team WRT BMW after 42 laps of racing.

RACE 2 HONOURS

Race two took place in similar cool and overcast conditions in the afternoon. Klingmann took the wheel for the first stint and quickly settled into fourth place behind the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari, the Sainteloc Racing Audi and the Tresor Attempto Racing Audi. Full course yellows failed to prevent

Klingmann from maintaining his position but the damage was done at the driver changeover when the Al Manar Racing by Team WRT delivered the strategy to perfection and Al Zubair hit the front.

The Omani continued to lead from the defending champions, Sainteloc Racing, and overcame another full course yellow to win race two with a margin of just under three seconds to Thierry Vermeulen and Chris Lulham in the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari 296 GT3 after 37 laps. Al Zubair and Klingmann carried out free practice on Saturday morning and ran the Al Manar Racing by Team WRT BMW for 30 laps. The team carded a best lap of 1min 24.186sec that put them fifth of the Gold Cup runners. The Emil Frey Racing Ferrari topped the times with a tour of 1min 23.178sec.

Pre-qualifying was next but the Al Manar Racing duo could only manage a best lap of 1min 24.720sec and the bragging rights from the Gold Cup session went to the Garage 59 McLaren with a time of 1min 24.122sec. Qualifying was split into two sessions and Al Zubair managed six laps in Q1. The Omani carded a best tour of 1min 24.626sec and that put him in sixth in the stint with Thierry Vermeulen winning Q1 for Emil Frey Racing with a lap of 1min 23.374sec.

Pacers shock Cavaliers, Warriors down Rockets to advance

LOS ANGELES: The Golden State Warriors punched their ticket to the second round of the NBA playoffs on Sunday, shaking off two straight defeats to grab a 103-89 game-seven victory over the Houston Rockets.

The Warriors were the last team to advance to the conference semi-finals, which got under way earlier on Sunday with the Indiana Pacers handing the Eastern Conference top seeds Cleveland a 121-112 defeat on their home floor. On a Warriors team stacked with post-season experience, Buddy Hield — playing in his 11th playoff game — drilled nine three-pointers on 11 attempts on the way to a game-high 33 points.

Stephen Curry scored 14 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter as the Warriors finally frustrated the second-seeded Rockets, who were coming off two dominant victories and had visions of becoming just the 14th team to rally from 3-1 down to win an NBA playoff series.

“A lot of resilience,” Curry said. “Everybody stepping up. Everybody’s been talking about our team the last two games in terms of our execution, our energy, all that.

“We blocked it all out and just understood we had 48 minutes to dig deep. Everybody contributed.

“Buddy Hield was unbelievable,” added Curry after the Warriors



Golden State’s Buddy Hield (7) shoots the ball and scores during the game seven of the first round for the 2025 NBA Playoffs against the Rockets. — Imagn Images

lined up a second-round clash with the Minnesota Timberwolves, who ousted LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers in five games.

“For us to build chemistry on the fly and build trust on the fly and perform like we did in a game seven, it means the world,” Curry said. “So mission accomplished — step one.”

PACERS PREVAIL

In Cleveland, Andrew Nembhard drilled five of Indiana’s 19 three-pointers on the way to a team-high 23 points and Tyrese Haliburton scored 22 points and handed out 13 assists for the Pacers, who had six players score in double figures.

“I thought we did a great job of starting the game the right way,” said Haliburton, who had delivered the game-winner in the 119-118 overtime triumph that clinched the Pacers’ first-round victory over the Milwaukee Bucks. Pascal Siakam scored 10 of his 17 points in the first quarter as Indiana took a 36-25 lead.

The Pacers overcame a 33-point performance from Cavs star Donovan Mitchell and 17 turnovers of their own that led to 22 Cleveland points. “We weathered the storm,” Haliburton said. “We did it by getting stops, getting out running and just playing Pacers basketball,” he added. — AFP



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Global dialogue on clean energy

FAISAL AL AJMI
MUSCAT, MAY 5

HIS HIGHNESS Sayyid Asaad bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Special Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, inaugurated the International Conference of the Energy Regulators Regional Association (ERRA), the first such conference to be held in the Middle East.

Organised by the Sultanate of Oman through the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR), the conference attracted more than 280 professionals from 50 countries. Featuring policymakers, regulators, academics and private sector leaders, the conference highlighted Oman's growing



Over 280 energy professionals from around the world are attending the ERRA Conference.

stature in the global energy market and its resolve to shape the future for sustainable energy governance. The conference was recognised as a strategic platform to advance sustainability and regulatory excellence. Senior-

level discussions included specialist scientific workshops on global energy transformation and investing in clean energy technologies. Bilateral meetings and technical exchanges between international institutions and

private sector stakeholders were also facilitated, with a view to forging regional partnerships and enhancing technical cooperation in new energy projects.

The event also reaffirmed Oman's status as a visionary and

trustworthy partner within the global energy community.

Dr Mansoor bin Talib al Hinaï, Chairman of the Authority for Public Services Regulation stated, "The Sultanate of Oman, via the Authority for Public Services Regulation, is hosting the high-profile Energy Regulators Regional Association (ERRA) conference, and for the first time in the history of the Middle East.

"This historic move shows Oman's growing leadership in the management of the important energy sector."

Dr Al Hinaï added: "The conference is a significant forum for the exchange of international experience to the benefit of private sector participants, regulatory institutions and government agencies.

Indian Ambassador inaugurates Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Centre at Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital



Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital, the flagship premium venture of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals proudly announces the inauguration of its new Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Centre, a modern facility dedicated to providing comprehensive care for patients recovering from surgery, managing chronic pain, and overcoming sports-related injuries.

The centre was inaugurated by His Excellency Shri Godavarthi Venkata Srinivas, honourable ambassador of India to Oman. The event was attended by Managing Directors of Badr Al Samaa Group, Dr. P A Mohamed and Abdul Latheef, who is also the board member of Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Executive Director, Moiden Bilal, Senior Management of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals and various dignitaries from public and private sector.

In his welcome note Mr. Abdul Latheef said that the new centre is equipped with cutting-edge technology and a multidisciplinary team

of five physiotherapists, rehabilitation experts, and pain management specialists whose focus is on restoring mobility, faster recovery after surgery and enhancing quality of life through personalized treatment programs.

Dr. P A Mohamed, speaking on the occasion said that Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital was established with the vision of ensuring majority of advanced treatments are available here in Oman. He said, "We got the most advanced technology, medical experts and well experienced team for the ultimate benefit of patients".

His Excellency Shri Godavarthi Venkata Srinivas appreciated and acknowledged the long journey of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals and its untiring desire of improving and advancing the standards in private healthcare. He said such additions in services and facilities reflect the long-term vision of the group. He appreciated the infrastructure, clinical expertise and technology of Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital.

Dr. Rajagopal T Naganathan, Specialist Orthopaedic Surgeon gave the overview of the Physiotherapy & rehabilitation Centre and explained briefly about all the modalities available in the department. Physiotherapists Jesikala and Shine Thomas shared the information upcoming modalities in centre like Repetitive Peripheral Magnetic Nerve Stimulation (rPMS), Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT) and Low-Level Laser Therapy (LLLT), which will be first of its kind modality in private healthcare sector in Oman.

In his thank you note, Moiden Bilal said that Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals strives to add newer facilities, services, expertise to ensure the availability of the best in the class medical services. He said that there will be further expansion of the physiotherapy and rehabilitation centre and the group aims at adding more modalities.

Firasath Hassan, Executive Director said that the centre is an important step in our mission to offer holistic recovery services. He said some of the modalities in the centre are very unique which has potential to ensure faster recoveries especially in post-surgical and sports injury patients.

With the rise in musculoskeletal disorders and post-surgical recovery needs, Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital aims to set a benchmark in rehabilitative care by combining clinical excellence with the advanced physiotherapy and rehabilitation modalities like Shockwave Therapy, Ultrasound, Repetitive Peripheral Magnetic Nerve Stimulation (rPMS), Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy (ESWT), Low-Level Laser Therapy (LLLT) and advanced training techniques.

Oman to boost gas pipeline capacity

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, MAY 5

OQ Gas Networks (OQGN), the sole owner and operator of Oman's national gas transportation system, is targeting a significant expansion of its pipeline network to support both volume growth, as well as enable the strategic management of the countrywide gas supply grid.

Future growth plans outlined by the publicly traded company – part of OQ Group – envision a 5.6-per cent rise in the network's current length of 4,235 km, and a 13.1-per cent increase in the network's current capacity of 70.48 billion cubic metres (BCM).

This growth is proposed to be achieved by 2027, the company noted in its 2024 Annual Report.

"OQGN's business plans align with Oman Vision 2040, focusing on energy diversification, digital transformation and sustainable growth. During the next three years, the company aims to expand its total pipeline length to nearly 4,500 km and increase network capacity to nearly 80 BCM," the company stated.

Gas demand is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of 4.7 per cent between 2024 and 2030, according to OQGN. In 2024, the company delivery 42.98 BCM of gas, entailing a 3.5-per cent increase over the previous year's total. Consumers included LNG facilities, power and desalination plants, and industrial sectors throughout the country.



A new Long-Term Network Development Plan (LTNDP) will help OQGN analyse and balance gas supply and demand over a seven-year horizon.

Of the many suppliers channelling natural gas to OQGN, through state-owned Integrated Gas Company (IGC), the Unified Shipper, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) contributed a 56.8-per cent share.

The largest consumer was the LNG sector, accounting for 41.3 per cent of total gas consumption, followed by the industrial and commercial sectors at 27.6 per cent.

Significantly, OQGN's new pipeline and capacity growth will be driven by around 10 ongoing projects, including the following strategic initiatives:

Fahud-Suhar Loop Line: It entails the construction of an additional 193 km, 42-inch loop line from the Fahud Compressor Station to Block Valve Station-6 in Al Dhahirah Governorate, running parallel to two existing 32-inch pipelines from Fahud Compressor Station to Suhar. The project also includes the

construction of a 2 km, 16-inch spur line to supply gas to the proposed Ibri Industrial Estate GSS and the extension of six block valve stations. When completed in 2027, the project will boost capacity at Suhar by more than 26 per cent.

Central Rich and Lean Gas Segregation Project (CRL): Centring on the development of a gas blending station for rich and lean gas segregation, this project also includes a 48-inch, 65km loop line extension from Block Valve Station 9 to the Sur GSS.

Total investment in the project, which will enhance gas value by segregating rich and lean gas, is around RO 70.8 million. The project has been partly commissioned.

Additionally, OQGN is rolling out a Long-Term Network Development Plan (LTNDP) designed to analyse and balance gas supply and demand.

ADVERTORIALS



The occasion serves as a global platform to raise awareness of the importance of occupational health and safety.

OETC MARKS WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK

MUSCAT: In alignment with its unwavering commitment to promoting health and safety in the workplace; and ensuring the implementation of the highest standards and best practices, Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) celebrated the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, observed globally on April 28 each year.

The occasion serves as a global platform to raise awareness of the importance of occupational health and safety; and to encourage institutions and employees to adopt leading health practices; and comply with safety standards that safeguard all stakeholders.

Each year, the global observance of this day adopts specific themes and slogans, reflecting global trends and developments across various sectors. OETC’s participation in this year’s celebration reflects its firm belief in the critical role of health and safety in achieving sustainable progress in line with national visions and aspirations.

This year’s celebration focuses on “Revolutionising Health and Safety: The Role of AI and Digitalisation at Work”. This theme underscores the role of AI and digital technologies in advancing occupational health and safety, minimising workplace injuries and encouraging institutions to embrace innovative systems that enhance worker wellbeing and operational performance.

OETC organised a series of activities and events to mark the occasion, including a lecture on aerial inspection of overhead transmission lines using drone technology, a recognition ceremony honouring top performers in Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) reporting, an interactive quiz competition using the Kahoot platform on workplace safety and a showcase of AI technologies designed to improve health and safety performance in the workplace.

Fahad Nasser al Kiyumi, General Manager of Quality, Health, Safety, Security and Environment at OETC emphasised the company’s strong commitment to fostering a culture of safety, protecting employee wellbeing and achieving the highest standards of compliance with all relevant policies, procedures and regulations.

Al Kiyumi highlighted the company’s most recent achievements in this area, noting that OETC has surpassed 55 million safe man-hours since the last lost-time injury. This remarkable accomplishment reflects the diligence and collective commitment of all employees to maintaining and adhering to the company’s comprehensive HSE systems and practices.

He stated: “We firmly believe that health and safety are foundational pillars of success in any organisation. Continuous improvement in this area is a shared responsibility that requires deep awareness and full commitment.

At OETC, we are dedicated to implementing the highest standards; and initiating programmes and activities that strengthen our health and safety culture.”

NBO CELEBRATES DIGITAL INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman (NBO) hosted its inaugural Digital Partnership Awards Ceremony at its Head Office in Muscat, an exclusive event celebrating innovation, collaboration and the outstanding contributions of public and private sector partners.

The ceremony recognised strategic partnerships that are driving Oman’s digital transformation and accelerating NBO’s vision of delivering seamless, customer-

centric digital banking experiences. By leveraging these alliances, NBO continues to enhance its platforms, simplify customer journeys and adopt innovative technologies that promote financial inclusion, aligned with the ambitions of Oman Vision 2040.

Key themes of the event included the importance of cross-sector collaboration, the power of digital innovation in improving customer experiences and the collective role in shaping a future-ready digital ecosystem.

Award categories included Best Digital Payment Acquirer Excellence and Best Digital Payment Processor, among others, honouring impactful efforts that have elevated Oman’s digital infrastructure.

This initiative reaffirms NBO’s commitment to partnering with government and industry leaders to build a smart, connected and digitally empowered national economy.

Bank Muscat committed to inclusive banking

BANK MUSCAT, the leading financial service provider in Oman, is dedicated to fostering an inclusive banking environment that caters to all community segments. As one of the earliest banking institutions to embrace this mission, the Bank actively works towards meeting the diverse needs of its customers, particularly those with disabilities.

In coincidence with the Arab Deaf Week, celebrated annually in the last week of April, Bank Muscat reiterates its commitment to financial inclusion by enhancing access to banking services for all societal segments.

The Bank is implementing a comprehensive strategy that prioritises accessibility by utilising modern technologies and interactive devices. The Bank has trained 180 employees in sign language and another 99 in disability service skills, ensuring that staff across various branches can effectively assist customers with diverse needs.

The Bank also offers the “Maliyat” programme, an electronic platform that provides free financial literacy courses tailored for all community members, including those with disabilities. This programme incorporates digital tools and sign language to enhance learning opportunities and promote informed financial decision-making.

Moreover, Bank Muscat prepares media and marketing communications in sign language to effectively convey information about its services and community initiatives.

With a focus on enhancing the banking



The Bank is implementing a comprehensive strategy that prioritises accessibility by utilising modern technologies and interactive devices.

experience for individuals with disabilities, Bank Muscat ensures that its 60 branches are equipped with accessible features, such as well-designed corridors, appropriate reception areas, dedicated parking, waiting areas, stairs and elevators; and specially designed entrances to facilitate seamless service.

To further promote community integration and support the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, Bank Muscat is launching several initiatives highlighting the importance of people with hearing, visual and physical disabilities. This includes the introduction of a groundbreaking direct debit card specifically designed for the blind, featuring a unique Braille account number for easier use in retail, online shopping and other transactions.

The card can be availed at any of the Bank’s branches across the governorates, reflecting Bank Muscat’s ongoing efforts to broaden access to financial services and maintain exceptional service standards for all customers.

To enhance the experiences of customers with disabilities, Bank Muscat actively collaborates with various institutions and associations.

Recent contributions include providing wheelchairs through partnerships with the Omani Association for the Disabled and the Association Of Early Intervention for Children with Disability, Braille computers with Sohar University and hearing devices for the Oman Association for People with Hearing Disabilities.

The Bank also supported Al Wafa Social Centre in the Wilayat of Izki with a number of air conditioners and supported the play yards in Al Wafa Centres in the Wilayats of Bidbid, Bahla and Al Mudhaibi, as well as the play yard in Al Aman Rehabilitation Centre in Al Khoudh with artificial turf.

Abraj highlights energy excellence at OPES 2025

MUSCAT: Abraj Energy Services, Oman’s leading oil and gas services provider, will participate as an Official Sponsor in the 13th edition of the Oman Petroleum and Energy Show (OPES), which will take place from May 12-14, 2025 at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre.

The company will spotlight its operational excellence, cutting-edge oil and gas technologies; and ongoing commitment to sustainability and workforce development.

Throughout OPES 2025, Abraj will showcase its competitive solutions and services, latest technologies and projects, success stories and future business opportunities.

The company’s participation aims to strengthen its positioning as a technical leader in drilling and well services, foster new partnerships, and expand its contribution to the industry’s sustainable growth and innovation.



This year, Abraj will host a mini-conference featuring a series of specialised sessions focused on the emerging trends, challenges and opportunities shaping the future of the oil and energy industry.

The programme will cover key topics such as occupational health and safety, operational excellence in drilling and well services, innovation and sustainability in the energy sector; and

the latest industry insights and developments. Delivered over two days, the sessions will include expert keynotes, dynamic panel discussions and insightful presentations.

“Abraj’s participation in OPES 2025 underscores our ambition to lead as a technical authority and knowledge hub in drilling and well services,” said Eng Saif al Hamhami, CEO of Abraj Energy Services.

“Through this platform, we showcase our expertise, drive innovation, and foster partnerships that fuel Oman’s energy future. Collaboration, insight, and excellence are the pillars of our journey — and OPES is where we shape the next chapter of sustainable, high-performance energy solutions.”

Abraj will also showcase its growing investment in training and upskilling initiatives and contributions to corporate social investment.

MHD ACERE CEO honoured with best innovation individual award

MUSCAT: MHD ACERE is proud to announce that its Chief Executive Officer, Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, has been honoured with the Best Innovation Individual Award at the Jetour International Annual Business Conference 2025, held in Shanghai, China.

This prestigious accolade is a testament to Al Bahrani’s visionary leadership, relentless drive for innovation and his role in steering Jetour’s rapid growth in the Sultanate of Oman. Under his guidance, Jetour Oman has introduced pioneering strategies, cutting-edge customer experiences and market-first initiatives that have redefined automotive retail in the region.

Jetour, derived from the words “Jet” and “Tour,” symbolises convenience and travel



MHD ACERE CEO, Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, receives the award at the Jetour International Annual Business Conference 2025.

in Mandarin. It reflects the brand’s core philosophy of delivering seamless journeys through innovation, spacious design and modern technology. Jetour’s latest lineup in Oman — including the bold Jetour T2, stylish X50 and eco-conscious PHEV from the Jetour Plus Series — epitomises its commitment to blending intelligence, safety, comfort and accessible luxury.

The brand continues to captivate both drivers and onlookers alike with vehicles tailored for exploration, digital connectivity and family versatility.

“We extend our warmest congratulations to Mohsin Hani al Bahrani on this well-deserved recognition,” said a spokesperson for MHD

ACERE.

“This award not only reflects his personal excellence but also acknowledges the trust and loyalty our customers and partners have placed in Jetour Oman.”

As one of the youngest and most dynamic CEOs in the region, Al Bahrani continues to play a pivotal role in transforming the automotive landscape in Oman — anchored in innovation, digital transformation and customer-centricity.

This international recognition further cements MHD ACERE’s commitment to excellence and reaffirms its position as a key player in shaping the future of mobility in the Middle East.

BUSINESS

MAJOR INITIATIVE

PDO LAUNCHES
FLARE GAS
RECOVERY PROJECT
WITH ENERHASH IN
HAZAR SOUTH



The project is expected to avoid approximately 25,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions p/a.

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, MAY 5

PETROLEUM Development Oman (PDO) — the country’s biggest producer of hydrocarbons — has commenced a major step in its decarbonisation strategy with the launch of a flare gas recovery project at the Zulaiyah Station in Hazar South. Implemented in partnership with Enerhash, the initiative seeks to convert flare gas into a sustainable energy resource using digital mining technology.

The agreement formalising this collaboration was signed by Dr Aflah bin Said al Hadhrami, Managing Director of PDO and Tamas Seregi, Chairman of the Board of Enerhash.

The project is expected to avoid approximately 25,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions annually, supporting PDO’s broader commitment to reduce routine flaring and promote low-carbon solutions across its operations.

Using Enerhash’s modular digital infrastructure, the project applies a decentralised approach by powering containerised data centres directly with flare gas. This setup enables rapid deployment with minimal capital investment, making it well-suited for remote locations like Zulaiyah and other southern oil fields.

The new initiative aligns with PDO’s long-term goals for energy transition and sustainability. It introduces a scalable model that could be adapted for wider application, particularly in areas where traditional flare gas recovery is challenged by dispersed infrastructure and small-scale gas flows.

This project complements PDO’s earlier efforts to attract vendors for flare gas recovery under its ‘South AP Flare Recovery Project’.

This initiative targets flare gas from atmospheric dehydration tanks in clusters such as Bahja, Rima, Amal, Marmul and Nimr. These sites present complex recovery conditions, with gas volumes ranging from 3 to 80 kilo standard cubic metres per day (ksm3/d) and hydrogen sulphide content reaching up to 14,000 PPM.

Under the flare gas purchase model applied in both efforts, vendors assume responsibility for the recovered gas, including its commercialisation and environmental liabilities. PDO provides the gas but retains no obligations for operational or environmental outcomes. This structure allows for reduced emissions without additional investment or risk exposure for PDO.

Enerhash’s involvement brings a digital innovation layer to the equation. By leveraging flare gas to power high-performance computing infrastructure, the project transforms what was once a waste stream into an asset — offering both environmental and economic benefits.

The Zulaiyah station project may serve as a practical reference for future deployments within PDO’s network and beyond, especially in similar geological and operational environments. It highlights how energy producers can integrate emerging technologies into existing infrastructure to support climate goals and value creation.

UNCERTAIN OUTLOOK

Oil prices drop after Opec+ output hikes



Oil prices fell more than 1% on Monday after Opec+ decided over the weekend to further speed up oil output hikes, spurring concerns about more supply coming into a market clouded by an uncertain demand outlook. Brent crude futures dropped by 87 cents, or 1.42%, to \$60.44 a barrel by 09:46 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$57.40 a barrel, down 92 cents, or 1.58%. — Reuters

NO PLANS

Trump wants a fair trade deal with China



US President Donald Trump on Sunday said the US was meeting with many countries, including China, on trade deals and his main priority with China was to secure a fair trade deal.

Trump said that he had no plans to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping this week. Asked if any trade agreements would be announced this week, Trump said that could “very well be” but gave no details. — Reuters

SLIPPED ANEW

Taiwan dollar surge sparks revaluation talk



The dollar slipped anew on Monday as a meteoric surge in its Taiwanese counterpart stoked speculation some Asian countries were prepared to engineer revaluations of their currencies to win United States trade concessions.

The Taiwan dollar climbed more than 3 per cent to 29.654 per US dollar, adding to a record 4.5 per cent jump on Friday and taking it to near three-year highs. — Reuters

US regulator outlines grid reform strategies

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, MAY 5

ANN E Rendahl, Commissioner at the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission; and First Vice President of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), presented a detailed overview of the United States’ renewable energy integration strategy during the 22nd Annual Conference of the Energy Regulators Regional Association (ERRA) held in Muscat.

Addressing a high-level panel on grid integration and future management solutions, Rendahl highlighted the complex policy and technical landscape the US faces in decarbonising its power sector, while maintaining system reliability and affordability.

“In the United States, energy policy is shaped at both the federal and state levels,” she said. “States determine how energy is generated, while the federal government oversees electricity transactions and transmission across state lines.”

Rendahl noted that customer preferences and utility commitments to clean energy are accelerating renewable deployment nationwide. However, this transition is not uniform, with each state adopting distinct approaches based on policy, technology and market design.

Among the most pressing



US regulatory utility commissioner Ann E Rendahl taking part in a panel discussion on grid integration and future management solutions.

challenges, she cited increased reliance on intermittent renewables, reduced system inertia from traditional generators, the growth of decentralised energy systems and rising electricity demand from data centres, industry and electric vehicles.

“To respond, the US is investing in modern grid technologies and reforming market structures to manage variability and improve resilience,” she said.

Federal efforts through the Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) are complemented by state-level initiatives.

California, she said, has moved aggressively, deploying over 13 gigawatts of battery storage — far exceeding its initial 2020 target of 1.3 GW. The state now aims to install 52 GW of short-duration storage and 4 GW of long-duration

capacity by 2045.

Other states, including Washington and Vermont, are piloting long-duration battery chemistries capable of withstanding multi-day winter outages when solar and wind output declines.

Rendahl also emphasised the value of demand-side flexibility. “By using time-based pricing and smart controls, utilities can avoid expensive new peaking plants and reduce customer costs,” she said. FERC’s Order 2222 now allows demand response, battery storage and EV charging systems to participate directly in wholesale power markets.

Another innovation gaining traction is the Virtual Power Plant (VPP) — a network of distributed energy assets such as batteries, EV chargers and smart appliances that operate together to support grid stability.

“There are currently 33 gigawatts

VISIT OMAN, A STRATEGIC PLATFORM TO PROMOTE INBOUND TOURISM

VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, MAY 5

THE Sultanate of Oman’s national booking platform, Visit Oman, has been catering to over 155,000 tourists in a year, who spend and contribute around RO 10 million to the domestic market. Speaking to the Observer on the occasion of the recently held Arabian Travel Market in Dubai, Shabib al Maamari, managing director, Visit Oman, said, “These numbers include tourists who have booked through our website directly as well as through our partners.”

Launched in 2021 as a subsidiary of Omran Group, Visit Oman aims to connect the accredited Omani travel supply chain, which includes airlines, hotels, transfers, tour operators and experience providers.

He said Visit Oman is also a strategic partner to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) and, as a Business-to-Business (B2B) booking Engine, works in source markets in partnership with the national airlines Oman Air and SalamAir.

“What we do is we provide our trade partners, the buyers, a fully fledged booking engine that gives them well over 200 products, 100 hotels, many transportation providers, among others. These trade partners can pick and choose from these products, buy them and then resell them to the end consumer, the tourists.

We’re trying to make booking easy for



SHABIB AL MAAMARI
Managing Director
at Visit Oman.

anyone interested. But we’re working with trade partners.”

On plans for Business to Customer (B2C), he said that it would require some years and also big investment. We feel the B2B strategy is faster and more reliable.

Since its inception, the B2B platform has grown to 30 source markets and around 220 trade partners that use our technology in the GCC, India, China, Russia, Western and Eastern Europe; and a couple of them in North America, South America, the Far East and Australia. We’re very much focused on the region, India and Europe; and we’re expanding to Russia and China.

Al Maamari said, “All of our products are quality assured, which is very important. It’s not anyone who can become part of the platform.

Also, we provide travel insurance to all to cover all of our experiences, which is a must for the European traveller. They like to know if they send someone experience that they bought and resold to a consumer, covered by insurance. If there is an accident, if something bad happens, they need that. We provide it. That gives a lot of our users

comfort and also the fact that this is a state-owned company guarantees a level of trust.”

Apart from Oman Air and SalamAir, Visit Oman is also connected to 80-plus airlines. Not all of these airlines come directly to the Sultanate of Oman and some of them come here via code-share partners.”

On the revenue model, Visit Oman offers free services to clients, suppliers and trade partners. It doesn’t cost them anything, but we take a commission if there is a transaction. So we do the business development on behalf of our suppliers.

We have well over 100 small and medium enterprises; and 80 per cent of our suppliers are small and medium enterprises.”

PLANS

“Last year, we launched a new technology that gave us Business-to-Business-to-Consumer (B2B2C), which means business relationships in which two companies partner to offer services to clients. Now, we can push more products on the platform of choice. Let’s say you don’t know much about Visit Oman and need time to trust and understand the products. So what happens? You go to Expedia, you go to Trip.com, you go to the platform of choice. We’re connecting to those platforms.

This gave us a competitive advantage to reach a wider audience. Now, we jumped from 30 to 175 markets and from 220 trade partners to around 500 million users.

OPINION

Hackers are flying to GISEC 2025



TARIQ
AL BARWANI

The writer is
the founder of
Knowledge Oman

THIS week, most of the prominent and senior cybersecurity professionals, tech giants, government agencies, and both the good and bad hackers from across the world will be flying to Dubai to attend one of the largest cybersecurity gatherings in the region, the GISEC Global 2025. And yes, I too am honoured to be invited to attend, meet, network and explore the latest in cybersecurity this year.

My article today will focus on all that is expected to happen at this event for your kind perusal. Oman is becoming digital, fully connected and intelligent, big thanks to the accelerating uptake of technologies such as 5G, cloud and AI. Full-fledged telecom operators and ISPs, i.e., Omantel, Ooredoo, Vodafone and Awasr, would need to continue to not only find ways to offer promotions (and discounts) to their solutions but also need to ensure their offerings are secured too. Cybersecurity should indeed be one of the top concerns for everyone, be it a provider or consumer. From as simple as using a secured handset to a robust telecom network infrastructure, being in the know of what is happening will keep everyone ahead of the game.

Briefly, the event is the 14th edition of GISEC Global. Every year, the latest and best of cybersecurity solutions are demonstrated at the event. More than 750 cybersecurity brands will be showcasing their solutions, and approximately 25,000 visitors from

over 160 countries will be walking at the 8 massive halls of the Dubai World Trade Centre Convention. GISEC this year is supported and is run in collaboration by the UAE Cybersecurity Council and the Dubai Electronic Security Centre – clearly an attest from the government on the importance of cybersecurity, especially now with the negative impact that AI brings to the table (such as deepfakes, to name a prime example).

According to the 2025 World Economic Forum's Global Security Outlook report, about 66% of organisations view AI as a game-changer in cybersecurity. Furthermore, the report highlighted that nearly half warn that generative AI is simultaneously arming hackers with scalable new attack vectors.

However, only 14% of organisations feel confidently equipped to respond. These insights obviously highlight how fast the global cybersecurity market is changing.

Last year, a survey conducted by PWC's Global Digital Trust noted that 45% of organisations in the Middle East consider mitigating cyber risks as their top operational priority. Hence, such events bring organisations, consumers and the tech heavyweights under one roof to discuss challenges and solutions for the same.

Huawei, one of the leading technology solution providers in the world, who is also the lead strategic partner of the event, would be showcasing the latest cybersecurity solutions and strategies in areas such

According to the 2025 World Economic Forum's Global Security Outlook report, about 66% of organisations view AI as a game-changer in cybersecurity. Furthermore, the report highlighted that nearly half warn that generative AI is simultaneously arming hackers with scalable new attack vectors.

as cloud, AI, and telecom infrastructure security.

Experts will be actively engaging with partners and policy-makers to help shape a more secure digital future. Several exclusive events will be organised during the week on comprehensive AI-native security solutions.

This clearly reflects the company's ongoing investment in global cybersecurity collaboration and its push to build more resilient digital ecosystems, especially in regions like the Middle East and Africa. I will try to share some of the highlights for you next week. GISEC Global 2025 isn't just about tech; it's about trust, talent, and the tools one would need to navigate the future of digital security. From AI-driven threats to critical infrastructure protection. Every discussion at the event would not only be relevant but also urgent, especially with our digitally connected world. Keeping an eye out for the latest trends is vital for keeping oneself, organisations associated and the nation as a whole safe. Cybersecurity is a top concern for many countries and industries worldwide. Building digital trust and ensuring cybersecurity has become a practice that everyone around the world, let alone Oman, is keen to pursue. Addressing the evolving threats in an increasingly AI-driven landscape is paramount for a safe, digitally connected nation. Where on the planet would be the best place to catch virtually everything in one spot? Stay tuned as I share the learnings next week.

TRUMP CHAOS
OFFERS FUNDING
WIN FOR EUROPE

NEIL UNMACK

Donald Trump's trade war is creating some unexpected European benefits. German 10-year Bunds are now yielding less than prior to incoming Chancellor Friedrich Merz's 500 billion euro fiscal binge. One reason: the US president's tariffs are driving money away from dollar assets. Instead of higher borrowing costs, Merz and Europe have a tailwind.

Bunds had been logical collateral damage from the "Merz spurt". In March, the yield on 10-year German bonds jumped over 0.4 percentage points as the future chancellor reformed the country's fiscal rules to boost infrastructure and defence spending – implying higher inflation and debt issuance.

Investors therefore demanded a higher return from German bonds, depressing prices.

More worryingly, Germany's benchmark status meant yields for weaker sovereigns also rose, with Italian borrowing costs nearing 4%.

Yet 10-year Bunds were back at 2.44% on Thursday, below the level before Merz's reforms were announced.

The fall in yields isn't a shock. Merz's fiscal binge remains months away, but the tariff war immediately damages European growth and lowers inflation expectations. As a result, interest rates and thus bond yields should fall.

Money market traders see the European Central Bank cutting rates again in June more from their current 2.25%, according to derivative prices.

Yet the moves in German bonds aren't just down to lower rate expectations.

There are also signs that yields are being suppressed by demand for low-risk, euro-denominated debt from investors seeking alternatives to the dollar.

One example: the gap between 10-year swap rates – the cost of hedging interest rates through 2035 and thus a proxy for pure monetary policy expectations – and German yields.

This so-called swap spread can be seen as a reflection of non-monetary policy factors that affect bond prices, like the supply of debt or general appetite for risk.

Historically, German borrowing costs have sat below swap rates, held down by factors like ECB quantitative easing and Berlin's fiscal austerity. In March, Bund yields nevertheless rose 17 basis points over swap rates, as the markets began to price in a Merz fiscal binge.

Since then, however, Trump's tariffs last month have fuelled a demand for euro-denominated assets. That has prompted German 10-year yields to fall more sharply than swap rates, closing the swap spread gap again.

That shift may not be permanent. — Reuters

Oman's connectivity fuels
diversification and vision

STRATEGICALLY

positioned at the crossroads of major global trade routes, Oman is embarking on an ambitious connectivity revolution that promises to transform its economic landscape.

The Sultanate of Oman's comprehensive infrastructure development across road, rail, air, and sea transport is becoming a cornerstone of its Oman Vision 2040 economic diversification strategy, positioning the country as an emerging logistics powerhouse in the region.

Oman's massive investment in connectivity infrastructure represents one of its most compelling value propositions for both local and international investors. The Oman Transportation Infrastructure Construction market is projected to reach \$2.38 billion by 2025, with robust growth expected through 2033.

This development is not merely about building roads and ports — it's about creating an integrated ecosystem that enhances Oman's competitiveness on the global stage.

The country's well-maintained road network already ranks among the top globally for quality, with 62,240 kilometres of roads including nearly 2,000 kilometres of expressways.

Major projects like the dualisation of Sultan Said bin Taimur Road connecting the north and south and the expansion of the Muscat Expressway demonstrate the government's commitment to enhancing domestic connectivity.

Perhaps the most transformative element of Oman's connectivity strategy is its railway development plan.



While the country currently lacks a mainline railway network, the Oman-UAE Railway Project (Hafeet Rail) represents a significant step forward.



DR YOUSUF HAMED AL
BALUSHI
yousufh@
omaninvestgateway.com

The writer is founder and CEO - Smart Investment Gateway, economists, board adviser & business transformation mentor.

While the country currently lacks a mainline railway network, the Oman-UAE Railway Project (Hafeet Rail) represents a significant step forward.

This 303-kilometre cross-border link will connect Sohar Port to Al Ain in Abu Dhabi, dramatically reducing travel times — passenger trains will cover the distance between Sohar and Abu Dhabi in just 100 minutes.

The railway's impact extends beyond passenger transport. Commercial partnerships like the agreement with EMSTEEL to transport substantial volumes of limestone and red shale from Oman to the UAE will revolutionise freight movement. With an annual freight volume

of 4.2 million tonnes over a 15-year term, this project alone demonstrates the economic potential of rail connectivity for industrial players.

Looking ahead, Oman's plans for a comprehensive national railway network spanning 2,135 kilometres will create a transformative transportation backbone, connecting major ports, industrial hubs and population centres.

The proposed phased development includes high-speed lines capable of 350 km/h for passengers and 200 km/h for freight, positioning Oman at the forefront of regional transportation technology.

This connectivity revolution aligns perfectly with Oman Vision 2040's economic diversification goals. By enhancing logistics efficiency, Oman is creating the foundation for growth across multiple sectors. Improved connectivity reduces transportation costs and time-to-market, making Oman more attractive for manufacturing operations.

The efficient movement of raw materials and finished goods enhances productivity and competitiveness, opening new opportunities for industrial investors.

Enhanced road networks to destinations like Al Jabal Al Akhdhar and Musandam,

coupled with modern airports in Muscat, Salalah, Duqm, and Sohar, are making Oman's diverse attractions more accessible to international visitors, creating significant opportunities in the hospitality and tourism services sectors.

With strategically located ports like Salalah, Sohar and Duqm, Oman is cementing its position as a key logistics hub.

These ports offer advanced cargo handling capabilities and efficient clearance processes, with cargo clearance averaging no more than six hours.

For import-export businesses, this efficiency represents a competitive advantage when establishing regional operations.

The government, through initiatives like the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, is actively creating opportunities for SMEs in transport and logistics, fostering entrepreneurship and economic inclusion. Local entrepreneurs can explore specialised logistics solutions, last-mile delivery services for e-commerce and digital platforms to expand their operational capabilities.

The ripple effects of this connectivity revolution extend to foreign investment and job creation. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Oman has increased by 17% over the past five years, reaching a cumulative value of RO 30 billion by Q4 2024. Key sectors attracting significant FDI include transport and logistics, renewable energy and manufacturing — all benefiting from enhanced connectivity.

Oman Investment Authority (OIA), the country's sovereign wealth fund, plays a pivotal role in this transformation by strategically investing in infrastructure projects that enhance the country's connectivity while generating sustainable returns.

ART/LIFE



L I F E S T Y L E

SEA THERAPY IN SUR: A SELF-PROFESSED SEA LOVER 'S ODE TO OMAN

> 20

LIFESTYLE

Coronation artwork commissioned by King seen for the first time



ARTWORK commissioned by Britain's King Charles to capture key moments from the coronation weekend has been revealed ahead of the unveiling of official coronation portraits.

Paintings and monochrome images showing the Gold State Coach procession, heralds waiting to take part in events; and the King and Queen during the Westminster Abbey coronation have been seen for the first time.

Charles followed a long-held tradition and commissioned five artists to capture significant events from the coronation weekend, with four of the creatives being former students from his Royal Drawing School.

Fraser Scarfe was outside Buckingham Palace and Gideon Summerfield at Trafalgar Square; Phoebe Stannard was inside Westminster Abbey; and artist and illustrator Shana Lohrey was invited to Windsor Castle to capture the atmosphere, crowds and ambience of the coronation concert.

Eileen Hogan, an Emeritus Professor at the University of the Arts London and a Royal Drawing School trustee, was commissioned to paint the coronation service — the first woman to be given this role.

Hogan said: "When I was appointed to paint the coronation from Westminster Abbey, I was very aware that I was the first woman to be appointed in this historical role and then I thought, 'What details could a painting bring that modern-day TV cameras could not?'"

"The more I thought about it, my conclusion was that the stillness of a painting really isolates and intensifies significant moments and emphasises meaning; whether that be ritualistic, spiritual, or simply extremely human."

The coronation was held on May 6, 2023 and Charles saw the finished pieces, now part of the Royal Collection, last September during a presentation at his Clarence House home. Scarfe, who is the Royal Drawing School's head of education delivery, was commissioned by Charles to capture images from his recent state visit to Italy and became the first official tour artist to create images digitally alongside traditional methods.

He said: "There were so many incredible moments during the day."

"For me, the real standout moment was when Their Majesties went out onto the balcony and the crowds were able to come and stand in front of Buckingham Palace to celebrate the coronation. — PA Media/dpa

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



LIFESTYLE

Visitors walk down the Bramante Staircase at The Vatican Museums, during a press tour at the Vatican. — AFP



FASHION

Darren Criss poses before the Spring Summer 2025 Christian Siriano show in Manhattan, New York City, US. — AFP



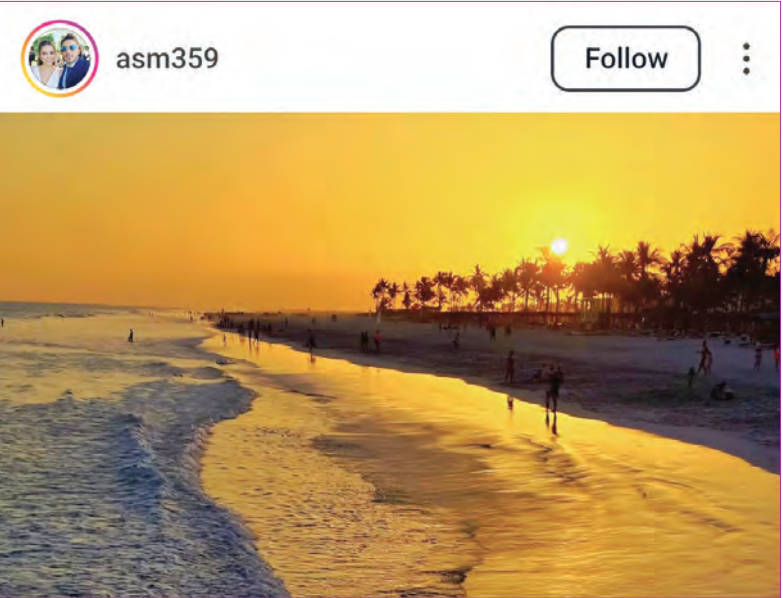
ENTERTAINMENT

A woman sings along as she dances on a giant dance floor set-up for people 60-years-old and above, ahead of the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest in Basel. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Caught Off Guard



Beauty of Oman's Coast

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.

A Roman gladiator and a lion met in combat... only one walked away



GLADIATORS fought lions and other wild animals in the arenas of the Roman Empire, a spectacle celebrated in ancient texts, marble reliefs, mosaics and modern films. However, concrete evidence of these encounters has remained elusive; archaeologists have yet to find skeletons with clear animal-inflicted wounds. That changed with the discovery of a Roman-era skeleton in Britain, providing the first tangible proof of man-beast combat. The skeleton was unearthed during a 20-year-old excavation in York, initiated by a couple renovating their yard. An initial survey revealed an ancient cemetery, halting construction plans. The site contained the remains of over 80 individuals, many showing signs of trauma. Their injury patterns and burial practices suggested they were likely gladiators from

around 1,800 years ago, during Britain's time as a Roman outpost. One skeleton, labelled 6DT19, exhibited peculiar small indentations on the hip bones. Researchers hypothesised these scars resembled bite marks from a large predator — possibly a lion. To confirm, the team collaborated with British zoos, examining bones gnawed by lions to understand bite dimensions. Using a grid of light, they mapped the wounds on zoo animal bones and compared them to those on 6DT19. The analysis revealed the injuries matched lion bites. The wounds probably didn't cause death but indicate 6DT19 was incapacitated, then attacked and dragged away by the animal, providing rare direct evidence of gladiator-animal combat in ancient Britain.

— NYT



Al Naghal dates harvest kicks off early in Dima W’attayeen

BY MOHAMMED SAID AL BUSAFI

STRATEGICALLY

located in the heart of Al Sharqiyah North Governorate, the Wilayat of Dima W’attayeen heralds the arrival of the Al Qaidh (summer) season with an exciting milestone. The first ripened Al Naghal dates have appeared on the horizon, signalling the start of the harvest in the village of Al Ghayyan, specifically on the farm of local resident Hamad bin Salim al Thekhri. This marks Dima W’attayeen as one of the earliest locations in Oman to see the prized dates brought to fruition, with markets across the sultanate of Oman — and even neighbouring countries — already eager to share in this seasonal bounty. Oman's farmers hold their breath in anticipation of Al Qaidh, the season when Al Naghal palms produce their succulent first fruits. Typically beginning in May and stretching through September — occasionally spilling over into November — this period is vital for local agriculture. The harvest energises the economy, boosting incomes for farmers and invigorating trade flows within the region and beyond. Hamad bin Nasser al Hasani,

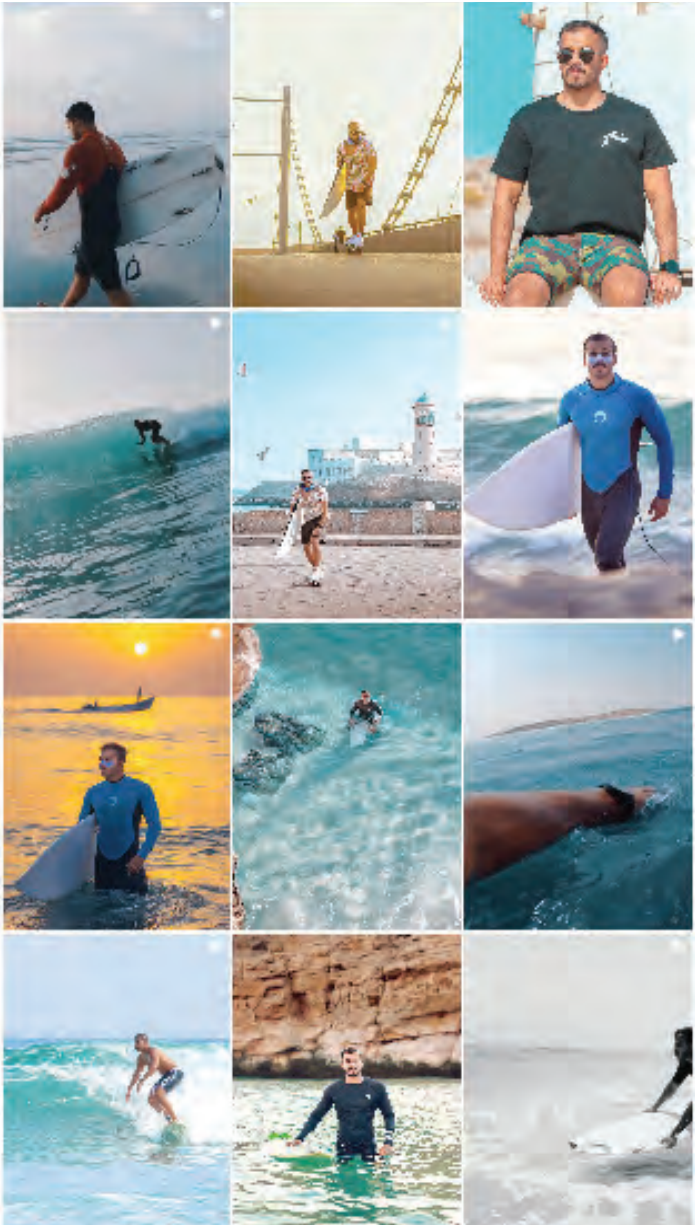
an experienced farmer and date marketer from the Wilayat of Dima W’attayeen, expressed pride in this seasonal milestone. “The emergence of the first Al Naghal dates is a promising sign of a good harvest,” he explained. “It’s the fruit of meticulous care, from planting to harvest. Our wilayat continues to lead the way year after year.” Al Naghal dates reach maturity in roughly 95 days, making them one of the earliest varieties to ripen. They are cultivated extensively across Dima W’attayeen's villages and have become a symbol of the region's agricultural heritage. Celebrated for their exquisite taste and rich nutritional profile, Al Naghal dates are considered among the finest in Oman. Alongside them, other early varieties — such as Qadami, Qash, and Miznaj — also make their debut, contributing to an early, abundant supply of fresh dates. Mohammed bin Nasser al Busafi, a local trader deeply involved in the date market, highlighted the significance of the Al Naghal tree. “This variety is a true emblem of Dima W’attayeen's identity,” he noted. “It requires careful cultivation to maintain its high quality and the season offers farmers a valuable opportunity for profitable gains, which in turn helps uplift their standard of living.” The region's unique geographical position, combined with its

favourable climate — thanks to its proximity to the Tropic of Cancer and the Eastern Al Hajar Mountains — fosters the early ripening of dates. The local farmers have preserved time-honoured knowledge and skills passed down through generations, reinforcing the region's reputation as a hub of date cultivation. At the start of the season, the prices for a single date can soar. For instance, local resident Said bin Hamoud al Hasani paid as much as RO 4 for just one date — an indication of the high demand and limited early-season supply. The elevated cost reflects the scarcity during the initial weeks of harvesting. As the season progresses and quantities increase, prices tend to decrease, making dates more accessible to all. Traders often source dates from a variety of villages — including Sawt, Al Biyyadh, Al Ghubra, Aqda'a and Al Arjali — ensuring a steady flow of fresh produce to markets. The early Al Qaidh harvest isn't merely a local event; it's a vital phase that bolsters food security, fosters self-sufficiency and provides lucrative opportunities for farmers and traders alike. In essence, the early ripening of Al Naghal dates in Dima W’attayeen marks more than just the start of a season — it embodies Oman's deep-rooted agricultural tradition and its ongoing commitment to sustainable, prosperous farming.

FEATURES



SEA THERAPY IN SUR:
A SELF-
PROFESSED
SEA LOVER'S
ODE TO OMAN



BY YERU EBUEN

KHAMIS SALIM al Alawi's Instagram feed offers a breathtaking portal into a world where the sea's mystique and beauty is at its most cinematic. Filled with dreamy landscapes, shimmering waves and glimpses into Oman's rich coastal life, his posts are more than images — they're a testament to a profound love for the ocean. For surfing lovers and sea enthusiasts alike, Khamis's reels serve as a treasure trove of hidden escapes and vibrant marine life, seen through the eyes of a true local. His cinematic captures reflect a heart that beats for the sea, celebrating both surfing and Oman's coastal heritage.

Through his visuals, Khamis professes his love affair with Oman's waters, where waves crash in a symphony of nature's power and grace. His adventures have taken him across many legendary spots — from Ras Al Hadd to the depths of Ras Al Jinz — but his posts often focus on the Wilayat of Sur, a city he calls his true love. Here, Khamis finds sanctuary, embodying Oman's ancient maritime spirit and remaining one of its most captivating treasures.

DISCOVERING SUR: OMAN'S MARITIME JEWEL

Sur holds a unique place in history. One of Oman's oldest cities, it was a vital hub across the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Oman's waters. Historically, Sur thrived as a bustling port, fostering trade between the Arabian Peninsula, India, Southeast Asia and Africa. In the 18th and 19th centuries, its port was lively, with over 150 ships sailing daily, promoting cultural exchange and prosperity.

Today, Sur is renowned for its shipbuilding tradition — crafting traditional dhows that have navigated oceans for centuries. Attractions include the Bilad Sur Castle, which once protected the city, and the Al Ayjah Fort, showcasing its strategic importance. Sunaysilah Fort offers panoramic views, while the Sur lighthouse marks its role as a maritime beacon. Verdant valleys like Wadi Shab and Wadi Tiwi invite exploration and Ras Al Jinz hosts the Turtle Sanctuary, where marine turtles breed.

Interestingly, Sur is the first city in Oman to witness sunrise — a symbol of its pioneering spirit. Its long history as a shipbuilding and trading hub shapes its identity today, blending ancient traditions with modern passion.

THE LIFE OF A SEA LOVER

Khamis's life is an ongoing adventure — an expression of his bond with the ocean's moods and seasons. His experiences are woven into his story — swimming with dolphins, exploring waters in shades of pink and emeralds, discovering hidden beaches untouched by time. His relationship with the sea is profound, rooted in respect, curiosity and stewardship. Whether standing on a dhow's bow, feeling salt spray on his face, or teaching children to surf, Khamis exemplifies the modern Omani seaman — an ambassador of the ocean's wonder.

His social media features stories of bioluminescence nights, shell harvesting and hatchings of fragile sea turtles. Each snapshot is a love letter to Oman's coastal landscapes, urging viewers to cherish and protect these environments. His advocacy extends to environmental education, inspiring local communities and visitors to see the sea as a delicate ecosystem worth preserving.

Through reels and posts, Khamis promotes marine conservation, turning admiration into action. He collaborates with fishermen, marine biologists and volunteers — organising beach clean-ups, removing ghost nets and campaigning for endangered species like green and hawksbill turtles. His efforts also include removing harmful fishing gear from coral reefs and raising awareness about ocean health.

As the owner of Oman Surfers School, Khamis teaches youth the art of surfing, fostering a new generation imbued with love and stewardship for the sea. His community-building initiatives unite surfers, fishermen and environmental volunteers working towards cleaner beaches and healthier waters.

As Oman evolves with modern development, Khamis remains anchored in the traditions of its maritime roots. He embodies the transition from ancient seafaring and trade to a vibrant community of surfers and conservationists. His love for surfing and ocean exploration signifies a future where fun and sustainability coexist, encouraging the next generation to enjoy Oman's coastline responsibly.

His love song to Sur — full of reverence — resonates through his efforts to preserve the sea. For Khamis, sea therapy isn't just personal; it's a mission to inspire community awareness of the importance of marine conservation. His journey reminds us that while seafaring traditions may change, love for the sea remains timeless and vital. You can follow his adventures on Instagram @surferoman.

