

O M A N O B S E R V E R D A I L Y

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PAGES 20 BAISAS 200

SUNRISE 05:53 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR 04:37 AM

DHUHR 12:08 PM

ASR 03:34 PM

MAGHRIB 06:17 PM

ISHA 07:28 PM



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4

BREAKFAST
IS BRAIN
FOOD

SHORT TAKES

HM AND UN CHIEF
DISCUSS REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENTS

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received a phone call from António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN). The telephonic conversation focused on His Majesty's perspectives on a number of developments in the region, most notably the latest developments and situations related to the Palestinian issue and the continued Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip, in addition to the situation in Yemen, and ways to intensify international efforts to adhere to international law and UN resolutions to achieve security and peace and spread the umbrella of justice for all.

OMAN AIRPORTS WIN
PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS



Oman Airports has received a number of prestigious awards under the Airport Services Quality Program (ASQP), recognising the excellence of Muscat and Salalah airports and the integrated travel experience they provide to passengers. Muscat International Airport won four awards in the category of airports serving 5 to 15 million passengers annually, including Best Airport in the Middle East in its category, Best Performance for the Most Dedicated Staff, Easiest Airport Journey and Cleanest Airport in the Middle East. **DETAILS ON P15**

CONFERENCE ON
DIGITAL UNIVERSITIES
SET FOR TUESDAY

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in cooperation with the Arab Open University, will host the Digital Universities Arab World 2025 on Tuesday. The three-day conference, themed 'Digital Innovation for Sustainable and Flexible Higher Education', will discuss the latest global trends in digital university education, showcase pioneering experiences in the transition to innovative and sustainable education, and explore prospects for cooperation between Arab universities in the fields of educational technology, artificial intelligence, and blended learning. The conference will bring together more than 300 participants and 80 specialised speakers from 28 countries, along with 100 organisers and nearly 70 higher education institutions. **SEE P3**



The Correspondent magazine is proud to announce its latest edition, an inspiring exploration of Oman through the voices of its remarkable people. Titled '50 People You Have to Meet in Oman,' the issue delves into the heart of a nation where authentic encounters reveal its true essence.

Structured into five compelling parts, the publication introduces pioneering visionaries shaping Oman's future, master artisans preserving its crafts, taste keepers safeguarding culinary traditions, heritage guardians protecting its cultural memory, and experience custodians inviting readers to

engage with Oman as active participants. This collection is a tribute to the countless stories woven into Oman's fabric. Whether you are new to Oman, seeking your first discovery or a long-time resident eager to deepen your understanding, this edition promises to serve as a

meaningful guide. It is a reminder that Oman is a land of stories, where every encounter has the power to illuminate what makes this nation so extraordinary. Grab your copy today or download the digital version online at [www.omanobserver.om](#)

Oman welcomes UN
move on Palestine state

Israel says over 250,000 residents left Gaza City

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN has welcomed the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the New York Declaration on a peaceful solution to the Palestinian cause and the implementation of the two-state solution.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Saturday, the Sultanate of Oman called on the Security Council to support the implementation of the declaration through concrete actions to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military said on Saturday that more than 250,000 people have left Gaza City for other parts of the territory over the past few weeks, since it intensified its assault on Gaza's largest urban centre.

"According to IDF (military) estimates, more than a quarter of a million residents of Gaza City have moved out of the city for their own safety," the military's Arabic-language spokesman Colonel Avichay Adraee said on X.

The United Nations estimates that about one million Palestinians live in and around Gaza City. Media restrictions in Gaza and difficulties in accessing many areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify details provided by the military or tolls reported by the Palestinian territory's civil defence agency.

On Saturday, the Israeli military dropped leaflets urging residents in western districts to



Displaced Palestinians, fleeing northern Gaza due to an Israeli military operation, on Saturday. — Reuters

evacuate, as Gaza's civil defence agency reported continuous air strikes.

"For your safety, evacuate immediately via Al Rashid Street to the south of Wadi Gaza. You have been warned."

Israel has come under

mounting international pressure to halt its offensive. In recent weeks, the military has primarily targeted high-rise buildings.

The United Nations and members of the international community have warned against

the military's assault for fear it will worsen the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza City, where the UN has declared a famine. According to the civil defence agency, Israeli strikes killed five people since dawn on Saturday. — Agencies

Hermitage Museum branch soon in Dhofar

SAINT PETERSBURG: The Sultanate of Oman signed an agreement with the Hermitage Museum in the Russian Federation to establish a branch of the museum at the Al Baleed archaeological site in Dhofar Governorate.

The agreement comes as part of the Sultanate of Oman's participation in the 11th St Petersburg International Forum of United Cultures held in St Petersburg, Russia.

The branch of the Hermitage Museum in the Sultanate of Oman will serve as a platform for cultural and knowledge exchange in the field of museums and



Officials signing the agreement.

heritage and will enhance cooperation in exhibitions, academic studies, archaeological research and educational programmes.

Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, who headed the Sultanate of Oman's delegation at the forum, said that the Hermitage Museum branch at the Al Baleed archaeological site, a Unesco World Heritage Site, will open the door to Russian archaeological missions and contribute to the transfer of Russian expertise in museum and cultural management. **SEE ALSO P2**

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



ENJOY FREE ENTRY TO OMANI-KOREAN MILITARY MUSIC SHOW TODAY

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Muscat, will host the Omani-Korean Military Music Show on Sunday, September 14, at 5 pm at Al Qurum Natural Park Theatre in Muscat.

Entry will be free and on a first-come, first-served basis. The theatre will open its doors to the public from 4:30 pm, accommodating around 4,000 people. This military musical event is the culmination of the solid partnership and growing cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Korea. The show will present a unique blend of Omani and Korean music in harmony and discipline, reflecting the authenticity of military arts and their ability to unite cultures. This event embodies cultural exchange and strengthens the bonds of friendship between the peoples of the two countries, in light of the strong Omani-Korean relations that have extended since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1974 and include many areas of cooperation.

OMAN AIRPORTS TO LAUNCH DIRECT MUSCAT-BEIJING ROUTE FROM NOV 30

MUSCAT: Oman Airports has announced the launch of a direct air route linking the Sultanate of Oman and the People's Republic of China, starting November 30.

The route, operated in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the Chinese Embassy in Muscat, and China Eastern Airlines, will connect Muscat International Airport and Beijing Capital International Airport.

Two weekly flights will operate on Sundays and Wednesdays using Airbus A330-300 aircraft, with a capacity of 299 seats. The new service is expected to enhance connectivity and cater to business and leisure travellers alike.

Eng Ahmed bin Said al Amri, CEO of Oman Airports, said the Muscat–Beijing route marks a strategic addition to Oman's international network. He noted that it will support tourism and investment while strengthening Oman's position as a key regional hub in aviation and logistics.

Li Bin, head of the China Eastern Airlines team, stressed that the cooperation reflects the strength of Oman–China relations. — ONA

OCCI trade delegation boosts global expertise in Australia

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, SEPT 13

The official visit of the Omani trade delegation to Sydney, Australia, led by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), underscored the transformative role of international missions in shaping the skills, vision and global outlook of Omani entrepreneurs. Part of a wider tour across Australia, the delegation aimed not only to strengthen bilateral economic ties but also to provide entrepreneurs with firsthand exposure to innovation-driven environments.

The Sydney itinerary featured a high-level business forum organised by the Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the

Government of New South Wales. Attended by Omani and Australian officials, investors and business leaders, discussions centred on artificial intelligence, digital innovation, renewable energy and knowledge-based industries. For Omani entrepreneurs, the benefits of such visits extend far beyond traditional trade objectives.

Eng Qasim al Balushi, Business Development Manager at OQ's Ladeen programme, said, "Our participation through OQ and Ladeen reflects Oman's commitment to strengthening its global presence. Beyond promoting investments in polymers and manufacturing, this mission allows entrepreneurs to learn from international expertise in technology, logistics, and



The delegation visited innovation and research hubs and offered insights into practical applications of AI

renewable energy, directly supporting Oman Vision 2040."

Maktoum al Muqbali, Chair of the Digital Economy and AI Committee at OCCI Al Batinah North, highlighted

the opportunities for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship: "The delegation's engagement opens avenues for collaboration with Australian institutions

specialising in technology and start-ups. It allows us to support emerging entrepreneurs while introducing models that can be adapted to Oman's economic landscape."

Entrepreneur Huda al Muqbali from Al Batinah North Governorate added, "These international experiences are invaluable. They provide exposure to global practices, inspire creative thinking, and help develop Omani solutions that are both competitive and sustainable. Such visits are key to preparing entrepreneurs for the challenges of an interconnected economy."

During their stay, the delegation visited innovation and research hubs, including Tech Central, the University of Technology Sydney, and Hysata, a world leader in

high-efficiency hydrogen electrolyzers. These visits offered delegates insight into practical applications of AI, robotics, digital education, and green energy, while facilitating direct engagement with Australian start-ups and academic institutions.

The mission concluded with a shared commitment to strengthen partnerships, expand knowledge networks and create new investment opportunities.

Participants emphasised that international exposure is critical to developing entrepreneurial talent, broadening perspectives, and nurturing a culture of innovation - ultimately contributing to Oman's strategic vision for economic diversification and sustainable growth.

Oman and Qatar review economic, investment ties

AN OMANI DELEGATION, headed by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, paid an official visit to the State of Qatar to strengthen bilateral relations and explore opportunities for economic partnership and integration between the two brotherly countries.

The Omani delegation comprised government officials, representatives from the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and businesspersons.

On the sidelines of the visit, the minister and his accompanying delegation met with Mohammed bin Saif al Suwaidi, CEO of the Qatar Investment Authority.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance cooperation in promising sectors such as mining, tourism, and industry, and reviewed Omani investment opportunities in the fields of industry, energy, logistics, food security and technology. During the meeting, the two sides also discussed the importance of establishing effective communication channels between the public and private sectors and accelerating the development of investment opportunities between the two brotherly countries.

During its meeting with Shaikh Khalifa bin Jassim al Thani, Chairman of the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the delegation discussed mechanisms for fostering trade partnerships including holding trade exhibitions, activating the role of the Omani-Qatari Joint Business Council and establishing joint companies that contribute to increasing trade exchange.

The minister and his accompanying delegation also met with Shaikh Faisal bin Thani al Thani, Qatari Minister of Commerce



The Omani delegation comprised government officials, representatives from OIA, OCCI and businesspersons

and Industry. They discussed enhancing industrial and commercial cooperation between the two sides, including projects in green hydrogen, petrochemicals, and food industries, in addition to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and exchanging expertise in the field of investment promotion and export development.

During the meeting, the two sides agreed to explore opportunities for industrial integration and develop joint promotional programmes for Omani and Qatari products in international markets.

Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister

of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, discussed with Abdullah bin Hamad al Attiyah, Qatari Minister of Municipality, ways to promote Omani exports of agricultural and fishery products and building materials. They also discussed the challenges facing some Omani companies in the building materials sector.

During a visit to the Qatar Freezone Authority, the minister reviewed with Qatari officials opportunities for integration between Omani ports and Qatari free zones to facilitate trade flow and exchange expertise in managing and operating these zones. — ONA

Agreement signed to establish Hermitage Museum branch in Dhofar Governorate

SAINT PETERSBURG: The Sultanate of Oman signed an agreement with the Hermitage Museum in the Russian Federation to establish a branch of the museum at the Al Baleed archaeological site in Dhofar Governorate.

The agreement comes as part of the Sultanate of Oman's participation in the 11th St Petersburg International Forum of United Cultures held in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

The branch of the Hermitage Museum in the Sultanate of Oman will serve as a platform for cultural and knowledge exchange in the field of museums and heritage and will enhance cooperation in exhibitions, academic studies, archaeological research and educational programmes. It will also provide technical support and museum supervision, organise annual special exhibitions, build and



empower capacity, and participate in the development of educational and awareness programmes and cultural and knowledge exchange programmes.

Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, who headed Oman's delegation to the forum, said that the Hermitage Museum branch at the Al

Baleed archaeological site, a Unesco World Heritage Site, will open the door to Russian archaeological missions and contribute to the transfer of Russian expertise in museum and cultural management. This will help develop specialised professional skills, enhance knowledge and empowerment and raise efficiency in museum management.

The Minister of Heritage and Tourism valued the invitation to participate in the 11th International Forum of United Cultures, which discussed areas of cooperation and exchange of expertise and views with participating countries in the sectors of heritage, tourism, and culture, with the aim of enhancing communication to serve common goals and aspirations. He expressed his appreciation for the developed relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Russian Federation. — ONA



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SHORT TAKES

The two sides exchanged views about regional and international issues

OMAN TAKES PART AT GCC-RUSSIA MEETING IN SOCHI

SOCHI: The Sultanate of Oman took part in the 8th ministerial meeting between GCC states’ foreign ministers and Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation. The meeting was held in Sochi, Russia.

The Sultanate of Oman’s delegation was led by Khalid bin Hashil al Muselhi, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Administrative and Financial Affairs.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed ways to consolidate relations between GCC states and discussed the joint action plan of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Russian Federation. They also exchanged views about a number of regional and international issues.

The meeting was attended by Shaikh Ahmed bin Hashel al Maskari, Head of the GCC Department at the Foreign Ministry, Hamoud bin Salim al Tuwaih, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation, and a number of Foreign Ministry officials. — ONA

PROJECT LAUNCHED FOR ORPHANS SUPPORT BUILDING

Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar led the launch ceremony

MUSCAT: Al Rahma Association, a motherhood and childhood care institution, launched a project to set up an orphans’ support building codenamed ‘Al Khair Wafi’ (Goodness is Abundant).

The launch ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.

The proceeds of the building will be allocated to finance programmes in support of Al Rahma Association’s registered orphans — a total of 1,439 from different governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

These association’s programmes seek to meet the basic needs of orphans, including school supplies, Eid clothing and methods to hone the skills of the orphans and provide them with expertise in various fields.

The launch of the project is in pursuance of ‘Al Khair Wafi’ initiative, first launched by Al Rahma Association in 2018, to lend support to orphans through a variety of sustainable projects. — ONA

Oman to host Digital Universities Conference on Tuesday

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, in cooperation with the Arab Open University, will host the Digital Universities Arab World 2025 on Tuesday.

The three-day conference, themed ‘Digital Innovation for Sustainable and Flexible Higher Education’, will discuss the latest global trends in digital university education, showcase pioneering experiences in the transition to innovative and sustainable education, and explore prospects for cooperation between Arab universities in the fields of educational technology, artificial intelligence and blended learning.

The conference will bring together more than 300 participants and 80 specialised speakers from 28 countries, along with 100 organisers and nearly 70 higher education institutions, reflecting the significant momentum and shared commitment to advancing the digital

transformation of the higher education sector in the region.

The conference provides a platform that brings together university leaders, experts, industry partners and innovators in the Arab region to discuss the role of digital innovation in reshaping the higher education system

and explore the exceptional opportunities offered by digital transformation and artificial intelligence in developing teaching and learning methods, supporting the goals of sustainability, globalisation and social responsibility in education.

The conference programme includes panel discussions and specialised workshops, addressing various topics, including: the future of hybrid and virtual learning, the impact of artificial intelligence on higher education institutions, governance models in light of digital transformations, and mechanisms for evaluating universities’ responses to technological developments and their impact on the lives of graduates.

The conference offers an opportunity to exchange experiences and best practices that contribute to shaping the future of university education in the Arab world. — ONA

MoL highlights key role in regulating labour market

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

PROFESSIONAL LICENSING distinguishes a mere job from a recognised profession, the Ministry of Labour (MoL) has said. The ministry has outlined sector-specific conditions and procedures for obtaining a professional licence. Its main goal is to regulate the labour market and ensure competency.

Licensing improves service quality, reduces errors, and builds trust between employers and clients. It prevents unqualified individuals from practicing sensitive professions and aligns labour standards with Oman Vision 2040.

It also protects practitioners. Licensed professionals gain legal recognition and safeguards against exploitation. Business owners prefer licensed professionals because they are assured of adherence to standards.

To obtain a professional licence, applicants generally need:

- Relevant academic or professional qualifications, passing a competency test based on national standards,
- Practical experience in some professions and participation in training or continuous

Professional licensing strengthens workforce readiness, ensures business continuity

professional development programmes.

Also needed are completion of administrative procedures, including online application, submission of documents, payment of fees and evaluation via tests or interviews. MoL is rolling out licensing in phases. Currently, it is mandatory in logistics, energy, and minerals sectors. More sectors are expected to join gradually.

The ministry urged companies and

employees to start the licensing process one to two months before the expiry of a worker’s card or contract. This ensures timely issuance, avoids fines, and supports smooth contract renewals.

Professional licensing is a proactive step. It strengthens workforce readiness, ensures business continuity, and fosters a skilled, professional labour market aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

MoTCIT opens bids for major road upgrades in Al Wusta and Al Sharqiyah North

VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) has opened bids for major road projects in Al Wusta and Al Sharqiyah North governorates, attracting several leading construction firms.

Among the key projects is the upgrading of the Sinaw-Mahut-Al Duqm road (Part 4) in Al Wusta. Contractors were required to submit bids for two options on the 54-km stretch: one with an all-weather grade pavement and another with a fair-weather grade. The all-weather option includes the design and construction of a roundabout and a Type A T-junction, while the fair-

weather alternative is more cost-effective but subject to traffic disruptions during heavy rain and wadi flow.

Similarly, the Sinaw-Mahut-Al Duqm road (Part 3), spanning 84 km across Al Sharqiyah North and Al Wusta, was tendered under two grading options. Five companies submitted bids for both projects, which were officially opened on September 11. In addition, bids for the remaining works on Turki Bin Said Road (Section 1, Package 1B and Section 2, Package 2A) were opened on September 10, with four firms competing. The scope covers construction, repair, reconstruction, rectification, modification, upgrading and improvements to existing road facilities along the Al Sharqiyah Expressway.

SPOTLIGHT



BREAKFAST IS BRAIN FOOD

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

AS CHILDREN return to school, eating breakfast at a consistent time and ensuring it includes healthy, nutritious foods can boost their energy, improve academic performance and help cultivate life-long healthy eating habits

Breakfast is one of the most important meals, especially for students who need energy and focus to perform at their best. By providing the necessary nutrients, breakfast helps the body start the day well, enhancing concentration, improving memory and maintaining energy levels throughout the day. Therefore, parents are advised to ensure a healthy breakfast is served daily, avoiding items rich in sugar or unhealthy fats.

Breakfast is not just a passing meal; it is the foundation of a successful school day and a healthy lifestyle. Studies show that breakfast significantly improves students' ability to concentrate during class. Eating breakfast helps improve blood flow to the brain, which enhances focus and attention. Furthermore, breakfast helps reduce feelings of hunger throughout the day, which contributes to improving mood and avoiding feelings of fatigue or discomfort that can negatively impact concentration.

By providing the body with essential nutrients such as proteins and complex carbohydrates, the brain becomes better able to process and store information. For this reason, a healthy breakfast is considered the foundation for better academic performance.

A balanced and varied meal is an essential nutrient for starting the day well. Breakfast should contain a combination of proteins, healthy carbohydrates, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

A healthy breakfast not only enhances academic performance and concentration, but also has a positive impact on students' overall health. Eating it helps stimulate metabolism and balance blood sugar levels, reducing the risk of obesity and heart diseases. Eating it daily also contributes to bone health through calcium-rich foods, such as milk and yoghurt, which help strengthen bones and teeth.

In addition, eating breakfast can promote digestive health, as fibre-rich foods help improve bowel movements and protect the body from digestive problems.

In 2020, a scientific review was conducted on the increasing phenomenon of most children around the world skipping breakfast. The reasons include time constraints, family lifestyles and not feeling hungry in the morning. The report pointed to the negative impact of this on health. The researchers stated that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, in terms of its impact on children's memory, mood, performance and physical fitness; and that eating it regularly is one of the most important indicators of a healthy lifestyle.

A study also indicated that children's refusal to eat breakfast has several factors and causes that parents should consider to encourage their children to eat well before leaving for school. One of the main reasons for this is drowsiness. Most children do not get enough sleep, so they feel tired when they wake up, their stomachs are sluggish and they do not have an appetite for food.





Recall

Recall Date: 14/09/2025

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
Ferrari - Purosangue	2024 - 2025	13

Recall Consequence

It is necessary to install a spacer between the positive pole of the fuse box power supply and the passenger-side footrest bracket, to avoid possible contacts between these two elements. Any contact could cause a short circuit inside the fuse box that could lead to the activation of the brake warning light.

Recall Action

Installation of a spacer between the positive pole of the fuse box power supply and the passenger-side footrest bracket.

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SHORT TAKES



The workshop covered topics, including planning locust control operations at all levels

CALLS FOR STRONGER NATIONAL DESERT LOCUST PLANS

SALALAH: A five-day regional workshop on preparedness and response planning for desert locust outbreaks concluded in the Wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar Governorate.

The workshop was organised by the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The workshop recommended that national emergency plans be regularly prepared and updated, then submitted to relevant authorities for activation in the event of any desert locust outbreaks. It also advised leveraging electronic planning tools, as well as pesticide inventory management systems.

Furthermore, it stressed the importance of regularly notifying national, regional and international bodies about the latest locust developments to ensure readiness and preparedness for crises. — ONA

OMAN EMBASSY IN SOUTH KOREA ORGANISES PHOTO EXHIBITION IN SEOUL

SEOUL: The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in the Republic of Korea organised a photography exhibition titled ‘Beautiful Oman’ at Sejong Art Center in Seoul. The five-day event was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Omani Society for Arts.

Zakariya bin Hamad al Saadi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Korea, delivered a welcoming speech in which he said that the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Korea share deep-rooted cultural relations. He also underlined the importance of cultural exchange in enhancing understanding among peoples.

For her part, Cho Tae-sook, President of Korea Tourism Association (KTA), the exhibition’s guest of honour, said that the Sultanate of Oman boasts a rich cultural and artistic heritage and commended the exhibition’s high standard and innovative content. The exhibition showcased 50 selected photographs taken by 28 professional Omani photographers. The exhibits offered visitors a captivating visual experience and enabled them to explore the Sultanate of Oman’s vivid scenery that exudes natural beauty, unique culture and authentic art. — ONA



The exhibition showcased 50 selected photographs of 28 professional Omani photographers

OMAN POST MAINTAINS LEAD IN EMS GOLD CATEGORY AWARD

DUBAI: Oman Post has won the Gold Category Award of Express Mail Service (EMS) for the third year in a row. It also maintained second place in the Customer Care category among members of the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

The awards, based on performance results for the year 2024, were announced during the extraordinary general assembly of the EMS Cooperative, held in Dubai.

EMS offers a fast postal solution that complies with the best international standards, making it possible for letters and parcels to be



Oman Post serves customers in more than 190 countries worldwide

sent abroad and delivered to end-users within 3 to 10 days. Backed by the world’s largest last-mile coverage network, Oman Post serves customers in more than 190 countries worldwide, ensuring reliable, secure and efficient delivery of letters and parcels. EMS Performance Awards are distributed annually to honour outstanding postal operators for their performance in international express mail service.

It is a service provided by postal companies to UPU members within a network connecting 175 countries worldwide. — ONA

Al Batinah North launches digital service platforms



A centralised platform strengthens communication between government entities and the public

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, SEPT 13

AL BATINAH NORTH Governorate is making significant strides in digital transformation with the launch of a suite of innovative platforms designed to enhance public services, streamline operations, and improve daily life for citizens. These initiatives align with the national vision for a smarter, more connected Oman.

At the forefront is the Electronic Document and Records Management System, officially inaugurated by Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North.

The system moves administrative processes into a fully digital environment, reducing reliance on paper documentation and ensuring greater efficiency and transparency. Complementing this are

The platforms “enhance government efficiency while directly improving citizens’ quality of life.”

platforms tailored to various societal and institutional needs. The Summer Centers Platform streamlines management of youth programmes and activities, enhancing planning and participation.

The Athar Platform introduces a structured approach to employee recognition and performance, allowing institutions to nominate, evaluate, and reward staff, thereby encouraging excellence.

The Marriage Fund Platform simplifies access to marriage support services, enabling beneficiaries to complete requests more quickly and transparently, reducing bureaucratic hurdles for families.

Developed by the Governorate’s team in Al Batinah North, these platforms form an integrated digital ecosystem. Eng Salim al Kindi, Head of the Governorate’s Digital Transformation Taskforce, said they

“enhance government efficiency while directly improving citizens’ quality of life.”

Also launched is Tajawub, a centralised nationwide platform that allows citizens to submit proposals, inquiries, complaints, and service reports, strengthening communication between government entities and the public.

These platforms were recently showcased at the Comex Global Technology Exhibition 2025, highlighting their role in Oman’s broader digital journey. Beyond exhibitions, they serve as practical tools that bring services closer to the community, reduce administrative burdens, and support Oman Vision 2040’s sustainable development goals.

Through these forward-looking initiatives, Al Batinah North Governorate is paving the way for public services that are efficient, transparent and responsive to the evolving needs of society.

Oman launches first digital platform showcasing folk games

MUSCAT: The Child Culture Centre, affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, has launched a pioneering digital initiative that brings Omani folk games into a modern digital environment.

The first of its kind in the Sultanate, the project aims to preserve intangible cultural heritage while engaging younger generations through technology.

Omani culture, deeply rooted in

centuries of history, represents the identity and authenticity of Omani society. It connects past and present, instils pride in national heritage, and contributes to shaping the future.

Preserving and developing this heritage ensures it remains a source of inspiration for future generations, while supporting Oman Vision 2040 and promoting the Sultanate’s cultural standing regionally and internationally.



The project promotes Oman’s cultural standing regionally and internationally

Salwa bint Saif al Rashidiyah, Supervisor of the Child Culture Centre, said: “The centre has been working on various digital projects to raise a generation proud of its cultural and national identity, while also equipped with skills that keep pace with scientific and technological changes. Among these projects is the digital revival of popular Omani games such as Al Anbar and Al Sayyad, developed in 3D using advanced technology.”

The games, designed in environments that reflect Omani landscapes, aim to introduce new generations to traditional play in an innovative and engaging way. They also encourage creativity, problem-solving, and digital documentation of heritage. Al Rashidi added that the Centre plans to expand the project to include more traditional Omani folk games in the near future, ensuring their preservation for generations to come. — ONA

SUGGESTINGLETTER



US President Donald Trump gestures, while he boards Air Force One, in Maryland. — Reuters

TRUMP DEMANDS
NATO HALT RUSSIA
OIL PURCHASES

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that he was ready to sanction Moscow, but on the condition that all Nato allies agree to completely halt purchases of Russian oil and implement their own sanctions. He also suggested members of the transatlantic alliance consider slapping tariffs of 50 per cent to 100 per cent on China as a way to help end Russia’s war in Ukraine.

“I am ready to do major Sanctions on Russia when all Nato Nations have agreed, and started, to do the same thing, and when all Nato Nations STOP BUYING OIL FROM RUSSIA,” Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform, which he described as a letter to all Nato nations and the world. Trump has repeatedly threatened Russia with additional sanctions — including last weekend after the Kremlin unleashed its biggest-ever aerial barrage against Ukraine — as a way to hit at revenue Moscow needs for its grinding war.

But so far, he has failed to follow through, frustrating Kyiv. The president, who met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin last month at a summit in Alaska, branded Nato nations’ purchase of Russian oil “shocking” and said it weakens their bargaining power over Moscow. “Anyway, I am ready to ‘go’ when you are. Just say when?” Trump also raised the prospect of Nato imposing tariffs on China, which is believed to have boosted strategic cooperation with Moscow and held a high-profile summit with Putin recently in Beijing.

“I believe that (Nato sanctions on Russia), plus Nato, as a group, placing 50% to 100% TARIFFS ON CHINA, to be fully withdrawn after the WAR with Russia and Ukraine is ended, will also be of great help in ENDING this deadly, but RIDICULOUS, WAR,” Trump said. “China has a strong control, and even grip, over Russia, and these powerful Tariffs will break that grip.” If the 32-member alliance does as I say, the WAR will end quickly,” Trump said. “If not, you are just wasting my time.”

Meanwhile, Russia said that it had captured a new village in Ukraine’s central Dnipropetrovsk region, which Moscow’s forces say they reached at the beginning of July. The defence ministry said its troops had seized the village of Novomykolaivka near the border with the Donetsk region — the epicentre of fighting on the front. DeepState, an online battlefield map run by Ukrainian military analysts, said the village was still under Kyiv’s control.

Russian forces have been carrying out offensives in Ukraine for months and gaining ground across the eastern front. At the end of August, Ukraine had for the first time acknowledged that Russian soldiers had entered the Dnipropetrovsk region, where Moscow had claimed advances at the start of the month.

The Russian army currently controls about a fifth of Ukrainian territory. The Kremlin is demanding that Ukraine withdraw from its eastern Donbas region as a precondition for halting hostilities, something that Kyiv has rejected. — AFP

EMPHASISED COMMITMENT

Peru, Colombia to ensure Amazon navigability



Peru and Colombia committed to ensuring navigability along the Amazon River, where a disputed island remains a point of contention between the two countries. “The delegations of Peru and Colombia emphasised their commitment to... preserve navigability conditions in the Atacuari-Leticia sector of the Amazon River, for the benefit of the riverine populations of both countries,” said a joint statement released by their foreign ministries following a two-day meeting. — AFP

AMBUSH
KILLS 12
SOLDIERS IN
PAKISTAN
RESTIVE
NORTHWEST

PESHAWAR: At least 12 soldiers were killed in an ambush in northwest Pakistan on Saturday, government and security officials said, in an attack claimed by the Pakistani Taliban. Militancy has surged in the border regions with Afghanistan, although Saturday’s attack was one of the deadliest in months in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Islamabad accuses neighbouring Afghanistan of failing to expel militants using Afghan territory

to launch attacks on Pakistan, an accusation that authorities in Kabul deny. The Pakistan military said after the ambush early on Saturday that intelligence reports “have unequivocally confirmed physical involvement of Afghan Nationals in these heinous acts”.

“Pakistan expects the Interim Afghan Government to uphold its responsibilities and deny use of its soil for terrorist activities against Pakistan,” it said in a statement. The Pakistani Taliban, the

Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), claimed responsibility for the attack in a message on social media. The group is separate from but closely linked with the Afghan Taliban. A local government official said a military convoy was passing through a town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s South Waziristan district at around 4:00 am when “armed men opened fire from both sides with heavy weapons”. Twelve security personnel were killed and four were wounded, the official said. — AFP

Nepal sets March elections
as nation gets interim PM

NEPAL’S

PRESIDENT Ramchandra Paudel has dissolved parliament and called for fresh elections on March 5 following a week of deadly violence that culminated in the appointment of the country’s first woman prime minister. The statement from Paudel’s office came just hours after he announced former Chief Justice Sushila Karki would lead the country on an interim basis following the deadly “Gen Z”-led anti-graft protests that forced former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli to resign. According to the statement, the president has “dissolved the House of Representatives” and fixed March 5 next year for the elections. Karki was appointed after two days of intense negotiations between Paudel, army chief Ashok Raj Sigdel and the protest leaders behind Nepal’s worst upheaval in years, in which at least 51 people were killed and more than 1,300 injured.

Nepal’s southern neighbour, India, said it hoped that the developments would help foster peace and stability. “Heartfelt congratulations to the Honorable Sushila Karki Ji on assuming the office of Prime Minister of Nepal’s interim government. India is fully committed to the peace, progress and prosperity of Nepal’s brothers and sisters,” Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X.

The country-wide protests were sparked by a social media ban that has since been rolled back. The violence subsided only after Oli resigned on Tuesday. Nepal has



A Nepali Army soldier guards outside presidential building “Shital Niwas”, in Kathmandu. — Reuters

By Saturday, normality was returning in the country of 30 million people tucked between China and India, with most parts of the capital Kathmandu seeing shops reopening and vehicles returning to the streets after some prohibitory orders in force

grappled with political and economic instability since the abolition of its monarchy in 2008, while a lack of jobs has driven millions of young people to seek work in other countries like the Middle East, South Korea and Malaysia. By Saturday, normality was returning in the country of 30 million people tucked between China and India, with most parts of the capital Kathmandu seeing shops reopening and vehicles returning to the streets after some prohibitory orders in force since Tuesday were suspended.

Relatives of the deceased gathered outside the Prime Minister’s official residence in Kathmandu, demanding martyr status for those killed - which confers recognition that they died in the service of their country - and compensation. Some refused to take the bodies of their relatives from the

morgue until their demands were met. “My brother should be declared a martyr as he died for the country, and the government should give compensation to my parents,” said Sumitra Mahat, sister of 21-year-old Umesh Mahat, who was killed during the protest.

She, along with other family members, stood in front of the Prime Minister’s official residence with a banner displaying pictures of some of those who died. Most said their relatives had been shot.

Gen Z protester Manjita Manandhar said she had “mixed emotions” over Karki’s appointment, which came after the death of so many young people during the unrest. “But we did it!!!! For them! For New Nepal! The journey has just begun. We all Nepalis have to stay strong and put our best foot forward to make Nepal the best in the world. This is just the beginning,” she said.

The only woman to have served as chief justice, Karki was the preferred choice of the protesters who cite her reputation for honesty and integrity and her stance against corruption. She held the top judicial post for about a year until mid-2017.

Bipin Adhikari, a constitutional expert and analyst, said Karki’s first challenge was to investigate the violence and destruction of public property during the protest and bring those responsible to justice.

“She must provide good governance, control corruption, maintain law and order, assure the people about the security conditions and make policing strong,” he said, adding that all these were major challenges. — Reuters



110,000 TURN OUT FOR FAR-RIGHT RALLY IN LONDON

LONDON: More than 100,000 people massed on Saturday in central London for a march and rally organised by far-right activist Tommy Robinson, as anti-racism campaigners held a smaller counter-protest. Huge crowds, many draped in English and British flags, gathered through the morning just south of Westminster for what Robinson, a veteran of UK far-right organising, has branded the country’s “biggest free speech festival”.

His latest “Unite the Kingdom” event saw attendees march over Westminster Bridge before rallying near Downing Street for speeches by far-right figures from across Europe and North America. “The silent majority will be silent no longer,” Robinson told the crowd. “Today is the spark of a cultural revolution.” — AFP

SECURING FUTURE

India’s Modi calls for peace in Manipur



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed for peace in Manipur state - the scene of two years of deadly violence.

“The land of Manipur is a land of hope and aspiration. Unfortunately, violence has cast its shadow on this beautiful region,” he said, addressing residents. “I appeal to all organisations to take the path of peace to fulfil their dreams and secure the future of their children,” he said. — Reuters

RETURNING RELATIONS

Afghanistan, US agree to prisoner swap



Washington’s special envoy Adam Boehler made a rare visit to Kabul, where he said the US would move forward with a prisoner exchange. “Adam Boehler, referring to the issue of detained citizens between Afghanistan and the United States, said that both countries will exchange prisoners,” deputy prime minister Abdul Ghani Baradar’s office said. “Both sides emphasised that they will continue to discuss various existing and future issues in bilateral ties”. — AFP

The New York Times

EPA to stop collecting emissions data from polluters



MAXINE JOSELOW

The author is a reporter for The New York Times covering climate policy

THE ENVIRONMENTAL Protection Agency moved to stop requiring thousands of polluting facilities to report the amount of heat-trapping greenhouse gases that they release into the air. The EPA proposal would end requirements for thousands of coal-burning power plants, oil refineries, steel mills and other industrial facilities across the country. The government has been collecting this data since 2010 and it is a key tool to track carbon dioxide, methane and other gases that are driving climate change.

The announcement followed months of efforts by the Trump administration to systematically erase mentions of climate change from government websites while slashing federal funding for research on global warming. “Alongside President Trump, EPA continues to live up to the promise of unleashing energy dominance that powers the American dream,” Lee Zeldin, the EPA administrator, said in a statement. “The Greenhouse Gas Reporting Programme is nothing more than bureaucratic red tape.” He added that ending the programme could save American businesses up to \$2.4 billion in compliance costs over the next decade.

Critics said the proposal could hobble federal efforts to fight climate change, since the government cannot reduce emissions if it cannot track where they are coming from. “With this move, they’re taking away the practical and material capacity of the federal

government to do the basic elements of climate policymaking,” said Joseph Goffman, who led the EPA’s office of air and radiation during the Biden administration.

For the past 15 years, the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Programme has collected data from about 8,000 of the country’s largest industrial facilities. That information has helped guide numerous decisions on federal policy and has been shared with the United Nations, which has required developed countries to submit tallies of their emissions. In addition, private companies often rely on the programme’s data to demonstrate to investors that their efforts to cut emissions are working. And communities often use it to determine whether local facilities are releasing air pollution that threatens public health.

The EPA proposal would not eliminate emissions reporting requirements for certain oil and gas facilities such as pipelines that transport natural gas. That’s because those reports were required by Congress as part of the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act. Instead, the EPA is proposing to allow those specific oil and gas facilities to postpone emissions reporting until 2034. Congressional Republicans already delayed a related requirement for the facilities to pay a fee on their methane emissions until 2034.

Carrie Jenks, executive director of the environmental and energy law programme at the Harvard Law School, said the data had shown that many large oil and gas companies

The announcement followed months of efforts by the Trump administration to systematically erase mentions of climate change from government websites while slashing federal funding for research on global warming

were reducing their emissions of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that is roughly 80 times more effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere in the short term. “Not having the government verify this data is hard, but there could still be some voluntary efforts to collect it” by companies and states, Jenks said.

The proposal to end the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Programme injects uncertainty into a different programme that is favored by the Trump administration and the fossil fuel industry: tax credits for companies that capture and bury their carbon emissions. To qualify for those generous tax credits, companies must submit their emissions data to the EPA. The proposal follows a rapid-fire series of steps by the Trump administration to weaken or dismantle environmental protections. Under the 2015 Paris Accord, the agreement among nations to combat climate change, the United Nations has required that all developed countries provide data on their domestic emissions each year. But the United States missed an April deadline to submit this data, and Trump began the yearlong process of withdrawing from the Paris pact on his first day back in office. In addition, the Trump administration has asked Nasa to decommission and possibly destroy two satellites that measure greenhouse gases from space. In contrast, in July, Europe’s first carbon-tracking satellite launched with the goal of capturing more granular emissions data.

After Kirk killing, Americans fear something is wrong



EDGAR SANDOVAL

The writer is a reporter for The New York Times covering Texas

AFTER CHARLIE KIRK, the right-wing activist, was fatally shot on Wednesday, two thoughts occurred to Edward Padron, a 67-year-old locksmith in Brownsville, Texas. One was immediate. One was slower to rise. A longtime conservative, Padron said he first assumed “a hate crime against a Republican” had just happened. But then he thought of other recent acts of violence across the political spectrum, from the attempts last year on the president’s life to the fatal shootings in June of a Democratic lawmaker in Minnesota and her husband. It seemed to him as if some terrible disease was gripping the nation, with no cure on the horizon. “This could happen to anybody in this country,” Padron said, speaking from his home near the Mexican border. “I think that people across the board are afraid.”

That anxiety echoed in interviews with Americans, including a group of voters that The New York Times has been following throughout the Trump presidency. No matter their beliefs, people said they were deeply unsettled after the killing of Kirk, who had built a national movement promoting right-wing politics on campuses like the one in Utah where his life ended. Some of those interviewed had not heard of Kirk. Others felt strongly about him and his politics, for and against. But virtually all agreed that Kirk’s violent death seemed to confirm a deep fear that something is seriously wrong in this nation.

It was not just the gun violence. In some sense, that has become a daily tragedy, lamentable but unsurprising. As several people pointed out, there was also a school

shooting in Colorado on Wednesday. Instead, Kirk’s death at 31 symbolized for many the collapse of what they thought was a basic, common-sense, need-not-debate American value: that people expressing a political opinion should not be shot for it. “There was someone on TV, and he kept saying that this was not who we are — that we are not one of those countries that shoots people over politics,” said Charles Phoenix, 62, a left-leaning artist based in the Los Angeles area. “But it is who we are. We do shoot political leaders. We are that country.”

In interviews, people whipped through their own experiences and fears, trying to put a finger on just how things had become this ugly. They talked about friendships that dissolved into arguments, the infinite stream of disinformation, the knee-jerk name-calling, the calls for violence, the inability to see past partisan manipulation and calmly debate. “Unfortunately, we are broken,” said Dave Abdallah, 60, a real estate agent in Dearborn, Michigan.

In Marietta, Georgia, Taylor Busch, 44, said the rancor over the Kirk shooting spilled into a Discord channel where he and other aficionados of the video game Destiny 2 regularly talk. Some of the members, he said, have known each other for 10 years. “We’ve always kept it very dry, stayed away from political events,” said Busch, who voted for Kamala Harris last year. But after one of his friends posted a video of the killing, an argument erupted. The gamers who supported Kirk bristled. They said, “Well, I like the things that he liked. I believed in things he believed in. You think I should be murdered?” Busch recalled. “I’m like, no one’s saying that.” Busch said that he was trying to make the point



Mourners at an impromptu memorial to Charlie Kirk, in Phoenix.

In interviews, people whipped through their own experiences and fears, trying to put a finger on just how things had become this ugly. They talked about friendships that dissolved into arguments, the infinite stream of disinformation, the calls for violence, the inability to see past partisan manipulation and calmly debate

that Kirk “said these horrible things, and at the same time, it’s horrible that he died.” Two people left the group, deeply offended. Several people on the right reported a similar rush of fear and vulnerability.

In Utah, Bryce Youngquist, 43, a software salesperson in Salt Lake City, said he was at a luncheon at his alma mater, Brigham Young University, when a host stood up and announced the news of the shooting. Amid the gasps and the prayers, he said, his sadness for Kirk’s family was mixed with “kind of a terrifying feeling” that the shooting had, in some way, threatened him as a conservative. “This feels like a turning point,” he said. “How are we going to move forward now?”

Some wondered whether Americans fully understood how rare it is to be able to peacefully exchange ideas — especially ones that provoke deep disagreement. In Michigan, Abdallah, the real estate

agent, worried that the shooting would chill free speech, worsen polarization and incite people with “the wrong mental direction” to violent action, as had happened so often in Lebanon, where he was born. “I hope this type of thing does not discourage other people from going on campus and speaking,” he said, but the response to Kirk’s death made him fear for American discourse.

In Lacombe, Louisiana, Clifford Eugene, 74, also worried about political rhetoric. “Since the election of President Barack Obama, I feel like the country has gotten more and more divisive,” said Eugene, a retired bank examiner for the Treasury Department. “Now, you have leaders who demonize the other side and declare them enemies of the people.” But what could be done? Eugene, a Democrat, was at a loss to name a remedy for this angry and entrenched nation.



AUDRA D. S. BURCH

The writer is a national reporter, based in South Florida and Atlanta



SHAWN HUBLER

The writer is the Los Angeles bureau chief for The New York Times

OPINION

Love and memory in the shadow of Alzheimer’s



**DR HAMED
AL SINAWI**

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at SQU Hospital

THE DOCUMENTARY ‘Malcolm and Barbara: Love’s Farewell’ captures the painful journey of a man diagnosed with Alzheimer’s at just 51 years old. Over the course of eleven years, the film follows Malcolm’s transformation from a talented musician into a frail, dependent patient. His wife, Barbara, is by his side throughout, feeding him, comforting him, enduring his aggression when he lashes out in confusion. The story is not just about one man, but about the resilience and heartbreak of families facing Alzheimer’s.

Watching this documentary, I was struck by how closely it mirrors the experiences of many patients and families I meet in my clinic. One of the most distressing changes in Alzheimer’s is the gradual fading of names and faces. A man may look at his wife and believe she is his mother. Grandchildren are mistaken for his own children. Even when a patient arrives at the clinic accompanied by a son, he may smile warmly but say, “I don’t know his name, but he is a kind man.” The memory of names is gone, yet the bond of

trust and affection remains.

Over time, speech is lost, and patients become unable to express their emotions in words, which can leave families feeling unloved or forgotten. I remember a daughter asking me tearfully, “Does he still love us?” My answer was yes. Love may no longer be spoken, but it is still felt. Body language, such as holding a hand, maintaining eye contact, or bringing a familiar perfume or book, can evoke recognition and comfort. These small gestures carry enormous meaning.

Science tells us that human memory is divided into two parts: factual memory and emotional memory. Factual memory stores names, dates and skills, while emotional memory preserves the deep imprint of life experiences — graduating from university, falling in love, holding a baby for the first time. Research shows that Alzheimer’s attacks factual memory early, but emotional memory is often preserved until the later stages. This is why specialists encourage families to keep visiting loved ones, even if the patient does not seem to know who they are. The patient may forget your name or

One of the most distressing changes in Alzheimer’s is the gradual fading of names and faces

your visit, but the feelings of warmth and connection remain.

A person with Alzheimer’s should not be kept indoors all the time. He or she would benefit from exposure to nature and movement: a short drive along the coast, the feeling of sand under their feet, or the sound of birds in the garden. They may not remember who took them there, but their body relaxes, their face lights up with a smile, and for that moment, life feels meaningful again.

Studies suggest that sadness and distress can linger longer than happiness in those with memory loss. This means it is essential to avoid unnecessary conflict and instead focus on creating moments of joy, calm and reassurance.

In my opinion, we cannot yet defeat Alzheimer’s, but we can cherish every moment that remains. Love may be reshaped by illness, but it does not disappear. In many ways, it becomes even more visible in the smallest gestures, the quietest touches, and the unspoken bond between patient and family.

ARMANI’S WILL LAYS PATH TO POTENTIAL BUYOUT BY RIVAL

TAIMAZ SZIRNIKS

Fashion legend Giorgio Armani asked in his will, made public on Friday, for a major luxury group to take a stake in his company, citing LVMH, EssilorLuxottica or L’Oreal as potential buyers.

The Italian designer, who died on September 4 aged 91, had kept strict control of the business empire built up over five decades, which ranged from haute couture to hotels.

But in his will, published by the Italian press, the billionaire said that the foundation which inherits the company should sell a 15-per cent stake to a major fashion house.

He named French luxury giant LVMH, cosmetics group L’Oreal and eyewear firm EssilorLuxottica as his preferred buyers, although another of similar stature would also be acceptable. L’Oreal, which has sold Armani perfumes and cosmetics since 1988, said it was “touched and honoured” that Armani had considered the group a potential stakeholder, saying it would consider the idea carefully.

LVMH chief Bernard Arnault likewise said he was “honoured”, calling Armani a “true genius”.

“If we were to work together in the future, LVMH would set its sights on further strengthening its worldwide presence and leadership,” Arnault said. Under the will, the new shareholder would have the possibility of taking a majority stake in the group within three to five years of the opening of the will on Thursday.

If there is no sale, Armani requested his company be listed on the stock market, with the Armani Foundation retaining 30.1 per cent of the shares.

In a statement, the Giorgio Armani executive committee insisted the foundation would maintain a strong influence whatever happened.

“The foundation... shall never hold less than 30 per cent of the capital, thereby acting as a permanent guarantor of compliance with the founding principles,” it said.

These include an ethical approach with “moral integrity and fairness”, the global development of the Armani name, and a focus “on innovation, excellence, quality, refinement of the product and the pursuit of an essential, modern, elegant and understated style”.

Armani’s net worth was estimated at \$11.8 billion at the time of his death, according to Forbes magazine.

The Milan-based designer had no children and bequeathed his entire company to his foundation. It will be managed by his partner, Leo Dell’Orco, and his nephew and niece.

The foundation will hold 10 per cent of the company’s shares and the remainder in bare ownership — ownership without the right of use, according to the will. — AFP

Israel’s attack on Qatar signals end of illusion

ISRAEL’S ATTACK on Qatar was not a defensive strike. It was not about protecting Israeli civilians. It was a deliberate escalation, targeting Hamas leaders engaged in discussions around Donald Trump’s ceasefire plan.

Benjamin Netanyahu has destroyed what little hope remained for peace in Gaza and sent a chilling warning to every country in the region: Israel will strike anywhere, at any time, with impunity. Netanyahu’s message is clear. Any state that dares to even speak with those Israel labels as “terrorists” risks being attacked. This is not diplomacy. It is bullying. By striking Qatar, central to mediation efforts, Netanyahu has shown he is interested only in war without limits.

The comparison to 1938 is unavoidable. Then, many in Britain clung to the illusion that Hitler could be reasoned with, although his actions proved otherwise. Netanyahu plays the same role: a leader whose repeated violations of international law, rejection of ceasefire efforts and pursuit of a Greater Israel show he cannot be trusted as a partner in peace. To believe otherwise is to repeat the mistakes of appeasement.

For years, Arab states have sought to balance diplomacy with restraint, avoiding direct confrontation with Israel. That is understandable. But restraint has not prevented aggression.

Netanyahu has calculated he can act with impunity, shielded by Western governments. Words of condemnation will not stop him. The attack on Qatar proves he is prepared to extend the conflict across the Middle East.

The Arab states have a stark choice. Either they continue to hope Netanyahu can be restrained by



A picture shows a man looking at smoke billowing after explosions in Doha’s capital Qatar, on September 9, 2025. — AFP



**KARIM
EASTERBROOK**

The author is a Former School Principal Cambridge, UK

words, or they recognise the reality: he will not stop unless he is made to use force. Unity is the only answer. That unity must transcend old divisions and rivalries, even some mistrust between Arab governments and Iran.

Netanyahu’s threat is not limited to Gaza. It is a regional danger. And the only way to confront it is through a collective military stand. That does not mean reckless escalation. But it does mean presenting a credible deterrent, military as well as political. Without it, Netanyahu will continue to destabilise the region, one strike at a time. Some Arab governments may believe they can avoid confrontation by staying neutral, by keeping their distance from Gaza or by quietly cooperating with Israel. But the attack on Qatar shows neutrality offers no protection. If Israel is willing to strike a state that has played the role of mediator, then no state is safe. The illusion of safety through silence is just that, an illusion. This is a decisive moment

for the Gulf states. The attack on Qatar is not an isolated incident. It is a signal of intent.

Netanyahu has shown he is willing to destabilise the entire region if it serves his political and military objectives. The time for illusions is over. Just as Europe in 1938 faced the choice between appeasement and resistance, the Arab states now face a similar decision.

They can continue to hope Netanyahu will be restrained by diplomacy, or they can act together to stop him before it is too late. The Arab world has the strength and resources to confront this danger but only if it acts together. Fragmentation will only embolden Netanyahu further. The choice is stark: unite now while there is still time or wait until the region is dragged into a wider war on Israel’s terms. History has already taught us what happens when aggression is ignored. The question is whether the Arab states will learn that lesson or repeat it.

Protecting sports stars from themselves, and each other



RAY PETERSEN

The writer is a media consultant

SPORTS, ONCE the pinnacle of dreams and aspirations for every young man and many young women, need heroes and heroines, need some good news, and need concern for individuals to become a priority. Tennis has been particularly unpleasant in recent weeks, with first Daniil Medvedev, the 2021 US Open Champion, flying into a rage when his opponent, Benjamin Bonzi, was allowed by the umpire to replay a point due to a photographer encroaching on the fringes of the court. Medvedev flew into a six-and-a-half-minute vitriol-laden tirade at the umpire and his opponent, before resuming play. Bonzi would go on and win the match, before Medvedev smashed his racquet into pieces courtside in another fit of temper. Then, just a couple of days later, as Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko, having lost her second-round match in straight sets, at its conclusion, accused her opponent, America's Taylor Townsend, of having “no education and no class”, in an extraordinary courtside rant, interpreted by many onlookers as a racist attack. Whether it was or not, it was ugly, and reaffirmed the writer's opinion of tennis, at the highest level, as a selfish and indulgent sport more than any other. Petulance in tennis, or any sport, is unpalatable, and even though the caricature ‘MacEnroe style’, of berating, and ‘ganging up’ on umpires and referees in the way that is commonplace in football, is bullying, and there is no other word for it. Such bullying reflects badly upon the sports that appear to condone it by not acting against it. Bans,

suspensions, financial penalties and (in-play) penalty points are rarely used due to controlling bodies not wanting to upset or antagonise their sports superstars. However, they have responsibilities beyond their sports, to families and societies, to get their sports in order. The common denominator in both incidents is that the antagonists, Medvedev and Ostapenko, have extended histories of intemperate behaviour, volatile and unpleasant, yet rarely penalised. In any other environment, be it work or in society, such behaviour would be interpreted as bullying and harassment, and subject to punitive consequences, which no other sport tolerates to the same extent. Rugby union is fighting a very different battle currently, with former players of both codes seeking redress for long-standing and repeated concussion issues, with tackling collisions proving akin to knockout punches from heavyweight boxers. In 2018, popular New Zealand Maori halfback, Billy Guyton, retired, citing adverse reactions to multiple concussions, which culminated in a diagnosis of chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, a neurodegenerative condition that severely affects behaviour, mood and cognition, often resulting in early-onset dementia. During 2023, at only 28 years of age, Guyton passed away, having taken his own life. Shane Christie, a successful and highly respected Highlanders loose forward, also retired with multiple concussions, reporting frequent headaches and memory loss, saying, “It feels like a bruise in your head,

Petulance in tennis, or any sport, is unpalatable, and even though the caricature ‘MacEnroe style’, of berating, and ‘ganging up’ on umpires and referees in the way that is commonplace in football, is bullying, and there is no other word for it

and when you're walking, it hurts. So, when you're thinking it hurts, when you're trying to exercise, the pressure hurts.” Now, Christie too has taken his own life, and at only 39, this marks the loudest call yet to this game's administrators for greater action. Former All Black prop Carl Hayman has led campaigning around CTE awareness, and this has resulted in law changes penalising head contact, and the provision of ‘smart’ mouthguards that report head injury impacts (HIA's) during matches, with HIA assessments determining the player's continued participation, or otherwise, and recovery protocols. However, Christie's tragic demise surely signals a watershed for the game, with some form of protective helmets perhaps being essential to its future appeal, and indeed, its future. Boxing has had a long-standing refusal to respond to the consequences of combat, currently hiding behind the rapid growth in popularity of the UFC and MMA, which appear even more brutal. But that's a childish defence of its combatant's well-being. The NFL in America, too, has a history of responding to its players' health and well-being during and after their playing careers. However, their commitment does seem minuscule, and their progress glacial. Bullying and harassment, the mental and physical consequences of sports at the elite level may be inescapable, and may be at the heart of individual choice, but let's do what we can to protect the participants of all sports, from themselves, and others, where we can.

MISS PALESTINE TO COMPETE ON GLOBAL STAGE

SAHAR AL ATTAR

Nadeen Ayoub, the first Palestinian to compete in Miss Universe, will step onto the stage at the height of one of the most harrowing periods in her people's history, determined to show they are more than headlines of war. “We're more than our struggle and pain,” she said in Dubai, where she is preparing to raise the Palestinian flag at the pageant in Thailand in November. “Right now, our people need a voice and we don't want our identity to be erased,” she said, nearly two years into the Israel-Hamas war that has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza. As Israel intensifies its onslaught, causing what the United Nations has called a famine in Gaza City and widespread destruction in the territory, Ayoub said she wanted to showcase her homeland's rich heritage and beauty, to humanise a people long reduced to just their suffering. Palestinians are also “children who want to live, women who have dreams and aspirations,” said the beauty queen, her fair face framed by long dark brown hair. Ayoub lives between Ramallah, Amman and Dubai, where she founded an organisation that trains content creators on sustainability and artificial intelligence. She grew up in the occupied West Bank, the United States and Canada. After earning degrees in English literature and psychology, she went on to teach and work for NGOs in the occupied territories. “My parents are both academics, and they always told me to focus on my university (studies),” she said. But after modelling at a fashion show in Italy, people working in the industry encouraged her to look into competing in beauty pageants, so she launched a Miss Palestine franchise. “Something as simple as having a (Miss Palestine) organisation is difficult,” even though it is a given in other countries, she said. Part of the difficulty is that Palestinians are divided between the occupied West Bank, besieged Gaza and annexed East Jerusalem, while many are refugees in neighbouring countries, living abroad or in Israel. Though recognised by the vast majority of countries, some nations do not recognise a Palestinian state, making representation on a world stage an act of defiance for people like Ayoub. “(Palestine) is a country, it is a nation, I will be representing an actual country,” Ayoub insisted. Western frustration with Israel's conduct in Gaza has pushed several countries, including Britain and France, to say they will recognise Palestinian statehood later this month. — AFP

The Ukrainian bell tolls... for whom

AMONG UKRAINIANS on the frontline of the fight against Russia, one word has been coming up increasingly frequently: zakinchuyemosya, which translates roughly to “we are running out.” Ukrainian fighters are courageous, resourceful and resilient, but they are not invincible, nor are their potential replacements infinite. And the “coalition of the willing” that is supporting Ukraine has no plans to send troops until after the war ends, and even then, they may not be ready to fight a “kinetic war” if (or when) Russia violates an eventual ceasefire or peace deal. Manpower is among Russia's greatest advantages in its war against Ukraine. Though Ukraine's daily casualties are lower, its population is one-quarter the size of Russia's. Even after losing an estimated 250,000 soldiers, with total casualties probably exceeding 950,000, Russia is nowhere near “running out.” Whether Russians are lining up to fight is irrelevant. From carrying out massive conscription drives and offering financial benefits like subsidised mortgages to recruiting prisoners and importing North Korean soldiers, Russian President Vladimir Putin will stop at nothing to feed his war machine. Given his apparent willingness to treat soldiers as expendable and shrug off any number of losses, one must assume that Russia will be able to sustain a grinding war of attrition for as long as it takes to deplete Ukraine's ranks. That is why supporting Ukraine now requires finding ways to put foreign boots on the ground there. This does not necessarily mean sending in Nato troops – a step that member states, fearing escalation and expansion of the war, surely would not approve. Rather, the coalition supporting Ukraine must lend its political, legal and financial support to recruit volunteers from their countries, or from third



Foreign volunteers have made invaluable contributions to the war effort.



ANNA HUSARSKA

The writer is a former senior policy adviser at the International Rescue Committee and a former senior political analyst at the International Crisis Group

countries, to join the Ukrainian International Legion. This is not a novel idea. The international brigades of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) – immortalised in Ernest Hemingway's For Whom the Bell Tolls, André Malraux's Man's Hope and George Orwell's Homage to Catalonia – are perhaps the best-known example of foreign soldiers fighting to save a country's democracy. Thousands of foreign volunteers also helped to defend Finland against Stalin's massive and brutal Soviet Army in 1939. Perhaps Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had this in mind when, two days after Russia's full-scale war, he called on “all foreigners who want to join the resistance” to go to Ukraine. Hotlines were opened and websites were created. Over the course of three years, about 17,000 volunteers reportedly showed up, with some enlisting in the International Legion and others being integrated into various units. Foreign volunteers have made invaluable contributions to the war effort. In Kyiv's Maidan Square, one finds the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes among the thousands

of yellow-and-blue Ukrainian flags dedicated to fallen soldiers. But their numbers have fallen short of need. As the journalist Colin Freeman points out, far more foreign fighters – 35,000 – joined the IS, despite knowing that they would face ostracism and even prosecution if they later returned home. Ukraine's cause, by contrast, enjoys considerable global support. According to Freeman, many Ukrainians believe that the International Legion could have been 100,000-strong by now if it had been better run, perhaps with help from Ukraine's allies. With Ukraine running out of soldiers, now is the time to find out. The first step is compensation. Foreign soldiers currently earn the same salary as Ukrainians, from about \$500 per month to \$3,000 for frontline duty. While that might be enough to attract volunteers from some countries – many Colombian fighters (the largest group of foreign volunteers in Ukraine) report having material motives – it is much less than what, say, an American or British combat veteran would make as a security guard at home. ©Project Syndicate, 2025

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Argentina's Andres Molteni in action during his doubles match with Horacio Zeballos against Netherlands' Botic Van de Zandschulp and Sander Arends. — Reuters

GERMANY AND ARGENTINA QUALIFY FOR DAVIS CUP FINAL 8

PARIS: Germany reached the Davis Cup Final 8 with a 4-0 rout of Japan as Argentina also qualified after knocking out last year's finalists Netherlands, while Belgium took a commanding 2-0 lead over Australia in their second-round qualifying tie on Saturday.

After Germany took a 2-0 lead on Friday in Tokyo, their victory was completed when Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz saved three set points in the second set to beat Japan's Yosuke Watanuki and Takeru Yuzuki 6-3 7-6(4) in the doubles. Justin Engel then beat Rei Sakamoto 6-3 6-7(2) 10-7.

Last year's semifinalists Germany are the first team to enter the Final 8 through the qualifiers, joining hosts Italy in the culminating round set for November in Bologna. "Right now, the locker room is dancing and singing. We're looking forward to Bologna and hopefully we're getting one step further," Germany captain Michael Kohlmann said. Argentina also qualified when Andres Molteni and Horacio Zeballos beat the Dutch duo of Sander Arends and Botic van de Zandschulp 6-3 7-5 to take an unassailable 3-0 lead in Groningen.

COLLINGTON BEATS DE MINAUR Australia's Alex de Minaur, who reached the US Open quarterfinals earlier this month, lost to Belgium's Raphael Collignon 7-5 3-6 6-3 in Sydney, and Zizou Bergs fought through cramps to beat Jordan Thompson in straight sets to consolidate the visitors' 2-0 lead. "I think when you play for your country, there is no pain," Bergs said. Australia captain Lleyton Hewitt said the hosts needed to stay positive as they could still stage a comeback to win the tie on Sunday. "There's nothing better than a good comeback story. We're a long way from being done and we can just easily turn this thing around," De Minaur said. — Reuters

Pakistan thrash Oman in Asia Cup opener ahead of India battle

DUBAI: Heavyweights Pakistan cruised to a 93-run win over Oman on Friday in a Group A match at the Dubai International Stadium to get ready for their blockbuster clash against defending champions India on Sunday. Chasing 161 to win, Oman batters capitulated against some incisive and clinical bowling of the experienced rivals to be bowled out for 67 in the 17th over. Except for Aamir Kaleem (13), Hammad Mirza (27) and Shakeel Ahmed (10), no Omani batter reached double digits to be bowled out for their second lowest T20I total after their 47 against England in the ICC T20 World Cup last year. Spinners Saim Ayub and Sufyan Muqeem claimed two wickets each while Mohammad Nawaz and Abrar Ahmed claimed one each with pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Faheem

Ashraf taking the other wickets to fall with Vinayak Shukla run out to a brilliant throw from Afridi. Though the win was an easy outing for Pakistan, it was not before Oman bowlers came up with an encouraging show to restrict their fancied rivals to 160 in the maiden Asia Cup T20I clash. Experienced Aamir Kaleem (3/31) and debutant Shah Faisal (3/34) picked three wickets apiece with Kaleem dismissing Pakistan top scorer Mohammad Haris (66) and skipper Salman Agha off successive deliveries. Shakeel Ahmed also impressed with a spell of 4-0-17-0 Faisal gave Oman a dream start after Pakistan opted to bat first by dismissing opener Saim Ayub leg before off the second ball of the match with the total at four. Sahibzada Farhan and Haris then put Pakistan



Oman skipper Jatinder Singh (extreme left)

back in the game with an entertaining 85-run stand. Haris, who scored 66 off 43 deliveries, led from the front and was the primary contribution that helped Pakistan reach 160. Either side of him, Pakistan struggled. They managed just two boundaries in the first five overs, which produced just 31 runs, with Saim Ayub falling for a golden duck. Sahibzada Farhan, put down early, scratched through his innings for 29 off 29, and it was left to Haris, promoted

up the order, to inject impetus into the innings. 16 came off the final powerplay over, and that was the start of the onslaught. Until then, Haris had 16 in 18. His next 25 balls would produce 50 as Pakistan raced up close

to eight runs per over, but once again, Oman pegged them back. Kaleem, the left arm Oman spinner, was the pick of the bunch as he had Haris drag on, before Salman Ali Agha lapped a full toss off his first delivery to deep midwicket. It produced another barren spell for Pakistan and the boundaries dried up again. Fakhar Zaman struggled for timing and Hasan Nawaz, so often a hammer at the death, couldn't get himself in, and holed out off his 15th ball for nine runs. It wasn't until Mohammad Nawaz arrived in the 17th over, his cameo ensuring Pakistan got past the 150 mark. BRIEF SCORES: Pakistan 160/7 (Farhan 29, Haris 66, Zaman 23; Kaleem 3/31, Faisal 3/34) beat Oman 67 all out in 16.4 overs (Kaleem 13, Mirza 27; Ayub 2/8, Muqeem 2/7, Ashraf 2/6)

Hockey league semis to witness fierce clashes

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

THE CURTAIN has fallen on the preliminary round of the 2025 First Division Hockey League, where the semifinal spots were decided after action-packed rounds that featured a flurry of goals and dramatic shifts in the standings. In Group One, Dhofar established itself as a dominant contender by finishing top with 9 points, earned through three consecutive victories, underlining its readiness to continue the fight for the title. Nizwa claimed the second ticket after collecting 4 points from a win, a draw, and a loss, edging ahead of Qurayat on goal difference, as the latter settled for third despite being level on points. Ittihad exited the competition after suffering three straight defeats.

Group Two witnessed a sweeping performance from Sohar, which displayed remarkable form by securing maximum points (9) from three wins, scoring 25 goals and conceding only one, making it the most powerful attacking and defensive side in the competition so far. Masirah joined them in second place with 6 points from two wins and one loss, while Al Nahda finished third with 3 points. Saham crashed out without any points after three defeats.

With these results, the much-anticipated semifinals will see Dhofar (Group One leader) face Masirah (Group Two runner-up) today at 5:00 pm, while Sohar (Group Two leader) will take on Nizwa (Group One runner-up) at 7:00 pm, in two decisive clashes to determine the finalists competing for the league, which will held at Oman Hockey Stadium in Al Amerat.

QURAYAT SEAL THE WIN OVER ITTIHAD WITH THREE GOALS Qurayat closed its preliminary round campaign with a valuable 3-1 victory over Ittihad at the Oman Hockey Stadium in Al Amerat. The match began with defensive caution from both sides until Azyed bin Salim al Fazari broke the deadlock for Qurayat in the 11th minute from a penalty corner, ending the first quarter with his team ahead. Ittihad equalised in the 18th minute through captain Fouad Ali Rabie, also from a penalty corner, as the first half (first and second quarters) ended 1-1.



Al Nahda and Saham players fight for the ball

In the third quarter, Qurayat took advantage of its opponent's forward push, with Mohammed bin Ahmed al Darmaki scoring in the 44th minute from a powerful shot after a well-organised move. In the 50th minute, Azyed bin Salim al Fazari struck again with a perfectly executed penalty corner to seal a 3-1 victory for Qurayat .

AL NAHDA DOWN SAHAM WITH A CLEAN 2-0 WIN At Sohar Sports Complex, Al Nahda earned a well-deserved 2-0 victory over Saham.

The first quarter ended goalless, with Al Nahda showing solid defensive organisation while Saham's attacks lacked real threat. In the final minute of the second quarter, Ahmed Abdullah put Al Nahda ahead from the penalty spot. Al Nahda maintained its advantage throughout the third quarter, and as the match drew to a close, Ayham al Araimi sealed the win with a brilliant individual effort, scoring the second goal in the 56th minute. The result confirmed Al Nahda's triumph as they exited the competition with pride.

SHORT TAKES



Marco Bezzecchi during the second practice session ahead of the San Marino Moto GP Grand Prix at the Misano World Circuit Marco Simoncelli. — AFP

BEZZECCHI
TAKES POLE AT SAN
MARINO GP

MISANO ADRIATICO, ITALY: Marco Bezzecchi claimed pole position for the San Marino MotoGP on Saturday as the flying Marquez brothers were denied a one-two in the final seconds of qualifying. Aprilia rider Bezzecchi delighted the Italian crowd at the Marco Simoncelli circuit in Misano Adriatico by clocking a top time of one minute and 30.134 seconds, just 0.088sec ahead of Alex Marquez.

“It’s fantastic, I had a very good lap, a very good morning overall. Very happy about my performance, also the team obviously did a wonderful job,” said Bezzecchi. “Happy to make a good show for them (the fans), and we have to concentrate on the race this afternoon and especially tomorrow.” Alex Marquez had looked to be heading for a second pole in as many weeks ahead of his sibling and runaway championship leader Marc Marquez until Bezzecchi’s rapid final lap gave the 26-year-old Italian a second pole of the season.

And Marc Marquez was denied a place on the front row for both Saturday’s sprint race and the Grand Prix on Sunday by former MotoGP champion Fabio Quartararo, who had to come through the first qualifying session but secured third place on the grid at the last by finishing 0.94sec behind Bezzecchi. “I always put a lot of energy on one lap, this is my strongest point, but today I didn’t expect to make P3, especially with this lap as I made a few mistakes,” said Frenchman Quartararo. However Marc Marquez still has a chance to further increase his whopping 182-point championship lead over Alex Marquez, as he has won 14 of this season’s 15 sprints. Barring disaster at Misano, the Spaniard will have a chance to win the title at the Japan MotoGP in a fortnight, moving level on seven championship triumphs with his great rival Valentino Rossi. His Ducati teammate Francesco Bagnaia suffered another blow at his home track by finishing just eighth in qualifying, the two-time champion’s worst ever starting grid position for a MotoGP race at his home track of Misano. Bagnaia sits third in the championship standings but with seven GP weekends left to be completed the out-of-sorts Italian is 250 points behind Marc Marquez. Joan Mir missed out on qualifying and will not take part in the sprint after the Honda rider failed to recover from a neck injury suffered in a crash during practice on Friday. — AFP



Third placed Japan’s athlete Hayato Katsuki (L), first placed Canada’s Evan Dunfee and second placed Brazil’s Caio Bonfim celebrate with their countries’ flags following the men’s 35 km race walk final during the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. — AFP

Dunfee and Perez claim
world golds in Tokyo

Allman on course for elusive
discus gold

RACEWALKERS Evan Dunfee of Canada and Spain’s defending champion Maria Perez took the opening gold medals at the Athletics World Championships on Saturday, while the big beasts of the women’s discus and men’s shot advanced safely through qualifying.

Despite an early morning start, the humidity made for testing conditions for the walkers, but 34-year-old Dunfee battled through in two hours, 28 minutes and 22 seconds for his first global title.

“My coach and I have been together since I was 10 years old, and back then we sat down and set goals to become world champion and to set the world record. We managed to do both this year and it really is a dream come true,” Dunfee said.

World record holder Perez, who did the 20 km-35 km double in Budapest two years ago, is on course to repeat it after a dominating victory in 2.39.01.

Once the walkers had departed, the field events took centre stage at the magnificent stadium, with a totally different atmosphere to when it hosted the COVID-delayed Olympics in 2021 athletics with no fans present.

American double Olympic discus champion Valarie Allman threw 66.07 metres to qualify comfortably for Sunday’s final, where she will hope to end her frustrating

Crouser into shot put final after
first throw of the season

world title drought. Allman has won five consecutive Diamond League titles and has not lost a competition in two years. Her world-leading throw of 73.52 metres in Ramona in April was the longest by anyone for more than 35 years, albeit aided by the wind-assisted “weather doping” of the venue.

Allman, who won Olympic gold in the same Tokyo stadium four years ago, has back-to-back bronzes in the world championships and will be desperate to top the podium this time. Teammate Laulauga Tausaga, who beat her to gold in Paris, also advanced with 64.99.

Croatia’s two-times world and Olympic champion Sandra Elkasevic, 35, who served a doping ban in 2011, is seeking a sixth medal at her seventh world championships. She needed two throws, but her second of 66.72 was the longest of the morning.

Ryan Crouser, double world and triple Olympic shot put champion, arrived in Tokyo on a wing and a prayer after not competing all season due to an elbow injury. However, he shook off the rust impressively with a 23.37-metre opening effort to sail into Saturday night’s final.

Crouser was joined by Josh Awotunde and Adrian Piperi as the US seeks a 12th gold in the last 16 championships. New Zealand’s 2017 world champion Tom Walsh was the

Walkers Dunfee, Perez take first
golds of world championships

best qualifier with 21.74 metres. Defending champions the United States qualified fastest for the mixed 4x400 relay, an event making its fourth appearance at the championships.

Olympic champions the Netherlands also progressed, less impressively, as did South Africa in an African record and, much to the excitement of the home fans, Japan after a national record to finish fifth in their heat.

The always-entertaining and often moving preliminaries of the men’s 100 metres also gave the crowd plenty to cheer. Athletes a million miles away from the likes of Olympic champion Noah Lyles enjoyed their brief, sometimes not-so-brief, moment in the spotlight as some of the sport’s lesser nations are allowed to send a competitor who has not reached the qualifying standard.

Abdul Rahim Abdullah of Brunei managed only 40 metres of his big day before pulling up injured, while Gibraltar’s Sean Penalver produced a season’s best of 11.87 seconds, a time that would see him cross the line 20 metres behind the leaders when the big boys get involved later on Saturday.

Haiti’s Christopher Borzor - perhaps inspired by the exploits of his near-namesake Valeriy Borzov, the Soviet Union’s double Olympic sprint champion in 1972 - was the fastest of the qualifiers in 10.41 seconds. — Reuters

Salt shines as England thrash South Africa to level T20 series

MANCHESTER, UNITED KINGDOM: Phil Salt hit the highest score and quickest century by an England batsman in a T20 international as the hosts hammered South Africa by 146 runs to level their three-match series at 1-1 during a record-breaking evening at Old Trafford on Friday. Opening batsman Salt’s astounding 141 not out was the cornerstone of England’s mammoth 304-2. It was the first time in a T20 international between two Test-playing nations a side had reached 300, with India having come closest previously, scoring 297-6 against Bangladesh in Hyderabad in 2024. South Africa, faced with a colossal chase, unsurprisingly lost early wickets and were dismissed for 158 in under 17 overs, with skipper

Aiden Markram’s 41 their top score. An elated Salt told Sky Sports: “That was really good fun. A personal milestone but the fact we got 300 and won by such a big margin, I can’t have asked for much more.” Only Zimbabwe with 344 against the Gambia in October last year and Nepal, who amassed 314 when playing Mongolia two years ago, have made more at this level. Jofra Archer took 3-25 in three overs after the England express quick did not feature in the Proteas’ series-opening win in a rain-shortened match in Cardiff on Wednesday. Salt’s 119, the existing England record at this level, had been at the heart of his country’s previous highest T20 total of 267-3 against the West Indies in Trinidad in December



England’s Phil Salt in action. — Reuters

2023. The 29-year-old, out for a golden duck in Cardiff, turned the tables in style with a remarkable 60-ball innings featuring 15 fours and eight sixes on his Lancashire home ground. His fourth T20 hundred — no other England batsman has more than one — came off 39 deliveries. It was also the quickest century in any format by an England batsman, surpassing Liam Livingstone’s 42-ball effort in a T20 against Pakistan at Trent Bridge in 2021.

PHENOMENAL Salt shared a blistering opening partnership of 126 in a mere 7.5 overs with county colleague Jos Buttler (83) after England were sent into bat before England captain Harry Brook chipped in with an

unbeaten 41. “Pretty lost for words,” said Brook. “The way them two (Salt and Buttler) started off was just phenomenal. “Me and Jos were stood out there and said we never thought anyone get 300.” Markram admitted things had gone against South Africa even before the first ball, saying: “Probably started getting it wrong from the toss, so that one’s on me. “Two masterclasses up front from them and when you’re put under that amount of pressure it’s tough to come back.” The aggressive Salt struck fours off the first three balls of the match as he sliced Marco Jansen over point, before whipped the fast bowler through fine leg and driving him down the ground. — AFP

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Martin Zubimendi scores their third goal. — AFP

ZUBIMENDI SHINES AS ARSENAL THUMP FOREST 3-0

LONDON: Arsenal ruined Ange Postecoglou’s first game in charge of Nottingham Forest as Martin Zubimendi’s double sealed a 3-0 win at the Emirates Stadium on Saturday. Zubimendi bagged his first goals for the Gunners following his close-season move from Real Sociedad.

The Spain midfielder opened the scoring in the first half and netted again in the closing stages after Viktor Gyokeres doubled Arsenal’s lead soon after the break. Arsenal’s third win in four games took them to the top of the table on goal difference ahead of Liverpool, who face Burnley on Sunday.

A 1-0 defeat against champions Liverpool in their last match before the international break had punctured the optimism at Arsenal after successive wins against Leeds and Manchester United to start the season. But this was the kind of confident display, highlighted by Noni Madueke’s virtuoso performance, that Gunners boss Mikel Arteta believes will keep his side in contention to win the title. “When the players have been away for internationals, it’s always a question mark how they’re going to react and connect again. To win 3-0, another clean sheet is very important,” Arteta said.

“Unbelievable from Zubimendi, two very difficult goals in terms of execution. He’s come into the club and you feel a real presence, a real authority with everything he does on the pitch.

“Some of the players were starting for the first time so, overall, very good.”

The only dark cloud for Arteta was an injury to Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard, who was forced off in the first half with what looked like a shoulder problem.

Odegaard joins a lengthy injury list that already includes Bukayo Saka, Kai Havertz, Gabriel Jesus and William Saliba.

“It’s the same shoulder. He was uncomfortable to continue. That’s a shame because he played with the national team and was feeling good. He’ll do everything to be involved midweek (in the Champions League) but I don’t know,” Arteta said.

It was a frustrating return to north London for Postecoglou, just three months after he was unceremoniously sacked by Tottenham despite winning the Europa League last season to end the club’s 17-year trophy drought.

Postecoglou was hired by Forest this week following Nuno Espirito Santo’s dismissal after his relationship with owner Evangelos Marinakis collapsed. Marinakis immediately piled pressure on Postecoglou, who presided over Tottenham’s worst top-flight finish since 1976-77 last season, by claiming Forest were in a position to challenge for major trophies. However, the Australian didn’t win a north London derby as Tottenham boss and was unable to guide Forest to their first victory on Arsenal turf since 1989. “They’re a very good side and pretty formidable at home. But even in that context, it’s disappointing,” Postecoglou said.

“It’s been a really disruptive week for the players. We’ve only had one training session together but hopefully now we can start bedding in some of the principles we need to.” Arsenal’s Eberechi Eze made his first start since signing from Crystal Palace in August, while the winger’s England team-mate Declan Rice was left on the bench. Arsenal’s set-piece excellence had tormented Postecoglou during his time at Tottenham and it nearly paid off again when Jurrien Timber’s glancing header flashed just wide from Madueke’s corner. It was no surprise when Arsenal took the lead from another dead-ball delivery in the 32nd minute, but Zubimendi’s strike was far from routine.

Meeting the ball on the volley, he blasted a brilliant strike from the edge of the area that took a slight deflection off Forest defender Murillo as it flashed past Matz Sels. Gyokeres put Arsenal in complete control just 46 seconds after the interval. It was a goal that showcased Arteta’s summer recruitment as Eze whipped in a low cross for Gyokeres to slot home with ease for his third goal since arriving from Sporting Lisbon. Zubimendi administered the knockout blow in the 79th minute, rising to meet Leandro Trossard’s cross with a clinical header. — AFP



Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the 20th stage of the Vuelta a Espana. — AFP

Vingegaard set for Vuelta after stage 20 win

DENMARK 'S JONAS VINGEGAARD set himself up to win the 2025 Vuelta

a Espana when he increased his overall lead with victory on Saturday’s penultimate stage, leaving his closest rival Joao Almeida in his wake in the final kilometre.

Vingegaard, two-times Tour de France winner and the Vuelta runner-up in 2023, won his third stage of this year’s race in style, validating his pre-race favourite’s tag. After almost three weeks of racing, the Vuelta, and stage 20’s 165.6-km ride from Robledo de Chavela, all came down to the last gruelling kilometres to the summit finish at Bola del Mundo, and Visma-Lease a Bike rider Vingegaard went for glory rather than simply defending his red jersey. Portugal’s Almeida (UAE Team Emirates XRG) began the day 44 seconds behind the Dane but did not have the legs to challenge and trailed in fifth on the stage, 22 seconds behind Vingegaard, who holds a one minute 16 second lead going into Sunday’s final stage to Madrid.

“I tried, I had nothing to lose,” Almeida



Jonas Vingegaard celebrates on the podium wearing the red jersey after stage 20. — Reuters

said. “I felt on the limit throughout the stage, the sensations were not the best.”

Vingegaard’s teammate, and 2023 winner, Sepp Kuss was second on the stage, 11 seconds behind the winner, with Australian Jai Hindley (Red Bull-BORA Hansgrohe) in third. After a large early breakaway was whittled down to two men, Mikel Landa and Giulio Ciccone were caught with three kilometres remaining and the real race began, with the main GC riders battling not

only for the stage win but for ultimate glory.

Five riders were out in front, the top four overall along with Kuss, and, with the onus on Almeida, Vingegaard was tucked in waiting for an attack which never came. Vingegaard seized his chance and nobody could keep pace with the 28-year-old Dane. After he lost out to Almeida on stage 13’s summit finish at Angliru, this win had an even sweeter taste for the leader.

“I wanted to win in Bilbao and at the Angliru, but the Bola del Mundo is also very special,” Vingegaard said.

“I felt much better today than in the last summit finishes. I’m very happy with how things have gone and the way the team has worked throughout these three weeks. “In the end I didn’t feel at the limit and in the final kilometre I decided to go for the stage. The last 300 metres were incredibly tough. I don’t think things will change tomorrow, I hope to keep the red jersey.” Britain’s Tom Pidcock (Q36.5 Pro Cycling Team) hung on grimly with Hindley attacking, and came in fourth, holding on to third place with a gap of 30 seconds to the Australian, and he looks set to claim his first Grand Tour podium finish. — Reuters



Jonas Vingegaard in action during stage 20. — Reuters

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34m metric tonnes of cargo handled through Sohar Port and Freezone

TOTAL CARGO handled at Sohar Port and Freezone reached about 34 million metric tonnes in the first half of this year, influenced by regional geopolitical shifts compared with the same period in 2024.

This coincided with substantial investments in facilities and the adoption of advanced digital solutions that are enhancing operating capacity.

These developments are expected to accelerate throughput and strengthen the global competitiveness of the integrated ecosystem. Dredging at the liquefied natural gas (LNG) berth has been completed, expanding Oman's strategic capacity for energy exports and paving the way for promising near-term opportunities.

Emile Hoogsteden, CEO of Sohar Port and Freezone, said the performance reflects the clarity and effectiveness of the strategy at Sohar Port and Freezone, and its confident progress on a long-term growth path through infrastructure upgrades, digital innovation, sustainable business solutions and stronger supply-chain resilience. He added that the integrated ecosystem is cementing its position as a strategic gateway for international trade, reinforcing its role in Oman Vision 2040 and the region's wider growth.

He noted the port recorded a record year for investment in 2024, with momentum continuing in 2025 — bolstering ambitions for a more prosperous future across all



Construction is progressing on a major infrastructure expansion covering 670 hectares

fronts.

He affirmed ongoing efforts to enhance operational efficiency, support Oman's industrial growth and create sustainable value for stakeholders, with a focus on attracting high-quality investments.

The Sohar Port and Freezone signed six new land-lease agreements in H1 2025

covering more than 92 hectares, with investments exceeding \$1.3 billion. The projects span green manufacturing, energy and logistics — underscoring the Freezone's role in strengthening cooperation and partnership within an integrated ecosystem. This supports the Freezone's position as a vital hub for sustainable industrial

development and deepens Oman's regional trade links.

Construction is also progressing on a major infrastructure expansion in the Freezone covering 670 hectares, which will increase capacity, create an attractive environment for future industries and reinforce its position as a key centre for trade and investment.

Mohammed bin Ali al Shizawi, Acting CEO of Sohar Port and Freezone, said the continuing expansion reflects the Freezone's strong investment fundamentals and investor confidence in its integrated platform. By developing 670 hectares, the Freezone will provide a business environment conducive to the growth and success of advanced industries, supported by world-class infrastructure, advanced operations and an enabling regulatory framework.

He explained that the Freezone's strategic direction is anchored in contributing to Oman's economic diversification, in line with global shifts towards green energy and the circular economy, thereby enhancing the position of Sohar Port and Freezone as a destination for future industry and logistics.

Sohar Port and Freezone's commitment to supporting the national economy is also reflected in higher in-country value (ICV) indicators: 62 per cent of purchase orders were awarded to Omani companies, while the share of orders placed with local suppliers rose to 96 per cent, up from 91 per cent in the same period of 2024. — ONA

Austrian Finance Vice Minister leads major business delegation to Oman



The Austrian delegation was one of the largest missions of its kind to visit Oman

MUSCAT: Austrian Vice Minister of Finance, Andreas Reichhardt, visited Oman for the second time this year, leading a prominent business delegation to Muscat from September 6–10.

One of the largest missions of its kind, the delegation brought

together leading Austrian companies and institutions spanning mining, minerals, digitalisation, higher education, transport and tourism.

During the visit, the delegation held high-level meetings with senior officials from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Energy and Minerals and

the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

They also engaged with the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) to explore new avenues for bilateral cooperation and investment.



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REDEFINES HEAVY
LIFT LOGISTICS

Khimji Ramdas, one of Oman’s most trusted and diversified business conglomerates, has announced the launch of KRHL — a specialised entity dedicated to heavy lift logistics and project cargo solutions. The new business is designed to address the growing demand for safe, reliable and innovative transportation of oversized and complex cargo across critical sectors including energy, oil and gas, infrastructure, mining and construction.

As Oman accelerates investments in green energy, infrastructure development and industrial projects, KRHL brings world-class expertise to manage complex heavy lift requirements from planning through to execution. With a safety-first approach, KRHL delivers end-to-end solutions encompassing feasibility studies, engineering support, multimodal transportation, route surveys, permit acquisition and on-site coordination.

“KRHL represents our commitment to driving Oman’s growth by providing specialised logistics solutions that match the scale and complexity of the nation’s most ambitious projects”, said Malvika Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas. “Our focus on innovation, precision and operational excellence ensures that KRHL stands as a trusted partner for industries looking to move forward — literally and figuratively”. Arijit Das, Head of Projects and Inland Logistics, Khimji Ramdas Shipping mentioned: “The launch of KRHL is a natural extension of the company’s legacy in shipping and logistics. By combining international technology with our local expertise, we are uniquely positioned to deliver safe, reliable and innovative solutions for oversized and complex cargo. Our goal is to empower industries in Oman and beyond with logistics capabilities that keep pace with the scale of their ambitions”. “TII Group is a global leader in specialised transport solutions from Germany and is proud to partner with KRHL in bringing world-class TII SCHEUERLE heavy haulage capabilities to Oman. Our advanced heavy-duty trailers and transport solutions, combined with KRHL’s deep expertise and local market understanding, ensures that even the most challenging loads are moved with precision, safety and efficiency. This collaboration marks a significant step towards setting new standards for heavy lift logistics in the region”, stated Thomas Ziegler, Global Head of sales Heavy Transport.

Leveraging the heritage and expertise of Khimji Ramdas Shipping, KRHL is well-positioned to set new benchmarks in heavy lift logistics, both within Oman and internationally. By combining specialised equipment, advanced engineering capabilities and a highly skilled team, KRHL ensures the safe, efficient and timely movement of heavy and over-dimensional cargo, supporting the success of large-scale industrial and infrastructure projects worldwide.

BROAD
MONEY UP
RO 1.35 BN;
CREDIT
GROWTH
ACCELERATES

Oman’s broad money supply (local liquidity) rose 5.6% year-on-year to RO 25.4107 billion at end-June 2025, from RO 24.0625 billion a year earlier, preliminary data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed.

Currency in circulation declined 9% to RO 1.5552 billion. Narrow money (M1) increased 7.7% to RO 7.2512 billion, compared with RO 6.7325 billion at end-June 2024.

Total lending and financing by commercial banks and Islamic banking windows climbed 8.4%



to RO 34.0695 billion, up from RO 31.4320 billion a year earlier. Private-sector deposits rose 6% to RO 21.9164 billion, versus RO 20.6685 billion.

The average interest rate on total credit eased 1.7% to 5.487%, from 5.581%. Net foreign assets increased 4.4% to RO 7.3029 billion, against RO 6.9937 billion a year earlier. The effective exchange rate index of the Omani rial edged up 0.6% to 119.1 at end-June 2025, compared with 118.4 at end-June 2024. — ONA

Sohar Intl, MoHUP sign pact
to launch Aqari platform

IN CONJUNCTION with Comex 2025, Sohar International signed an exclusive agreement with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to formally launch the Aqari platform through the electronic payment gateway. This landmark partnership reflects a shared commitment to advancing digital transformation in the Sultanate of Oman and underscores Sohar International’s position as Oman’s Digital Leader.

The Aqari Platform, introduced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and powered by Sohar International, is set to revolutionise the way land and housing transactions are conducted.

By digitalising the sale and purchase of land through a secure and user-friendly platform, the initiative simplifies property-related processes for citizens and residents while ensuring efficiency, transparency and reliability.

Sohar International stands as the exclusive bank to provide the Ministry with a fully automated, end-to-end financial solution, managing every aspect of transaction settlement within the platform.

Commenting on the occasion, Abdulwahid bin Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said: “We at Sohar International take pride in our role as an enabler of digital innovation in the Sultanate of Oman.”

“The signing of the agreement during Comex 2025 to launch the Aqari platform reaffirms our ability to deliver advanced, fully integrated digital solutions that support government initiatives and serve the people of the nation.”

“It also underscores our commitment to shaping the future of the national financial ecosystem and contributing to the broader goals of comprehensive digital transformation”.

With its seamless integration into government systems, fully digital workflows, automated reconciliation and streamlined payment processing, the Aqari platform delivers a frictionless experience that aligns with Oman Vision



2040 objectives.

BENCHMARK

The launch highlights the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in driving the nation’s digital economy and sets a benchmark for innovative partnerships.

The signing of the agreement at Comex 2025 reaffirms Sohar International’s dedication to strengthening Oman’s digital ecosystem, partnering with key government entities and continuing its mission of enabling people to win through innovation and technology.

Omran, Ithca honour tourism & hospitality innovators at Comex

MUSCAT: The Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group), in collaboration with Ithca Group, successfully featured the winning innovators and entrepreneurs of the Tourism & Hospitality Track within the Scale Award at Comex Oman 2025.

This milestone marked the first major tourism start-up-focused competition, combining showcasing, pitching and networking under one roof. The showcase celebrated some of the most promising start-ups, presenting pioneering solutions that addressed real-world industry challenges while exploring opportunities to shape the future of tourism.

The Tourism & Hospitality Track was developed to support and empower start-

ups in the sector by addressing real-world challenges and inspiring innovative solutions informed by global and regional trends.

Participants were given direct access to investors and industry partners, creating a valuable platform for exposure, investment and knowledge exchange. The top ten projects presented their pitches to a judging panel, gaining direct engagement with decision-makers and potential backers.

The top three projects in this track were also recognised: “Valo”, an integrated smart booking application for tourism establishments in Oman that offers innovative financial solutions to boost profitability and operates on a “pay-per-use” model;



“GuiderX”, an on-demand platform that directly connects travellers with local tour guides in real time; and “Mulhem”, an immersive visual and sensory experience that blends entertainment with cultural elements, utilising advanced motion seating technologies in 3D and 6D with dynamic effects such as air, vibration and water spray.

The collaboration between Omran Group and Ithca Group reflects a strategic alignment to foster a thriving start-up ecosystem. Ithca Group’s investment in the outcomes of its Business Accelerators Programme, coupled with Omran Group’s role in connecting high-potential start-ups to market opportunities, has created a direct pathway for

entrepreneurial ventures to contribute to Oman’s tourism development. Together, both organisations are enabling a pipeline of innovative solutions that strengthen the sector’s competitiveness, create economic value and empower a new generation of tourism entrepreneurs.

This initiative complements other national entrepreneurship programmes, hackathons and incubation efforts in tourism, ICT and sustainability. It underscores both organisations’ commitment to nurturing innovators, advancing private-sector growth and building platforms for collaboration that accelerate progress towards Oman Vision 2040.

SELECTIVEGROWTH



The accolades add to the growing list of international awards earned by Oman Airports

OMAN AIRPORTS WINS TOP SERVICE QUALITY AWARDS

MUSCAT: Oman Airports has received several prestigious accolades under the Airport Service Quality Programme (ASQP), with both Muscat and Salalah airports recognised for excellence in passenger experience by Airports Council International (ACI).

Muscat International Airport won four awards in the category of airports serving 5–15 million passengers annually, including Best Airport in the Middle East, Best Performance for the Most Dedicated Staff, Easiest Airport Journey and Cleanest Airport in the Middle East.

Salalah Airport secured five awards in the category of airports serving under two million passengers annually: Best Airport in the Middle East, Best Dedicated Staff, Easiest Airport Journey, Most Enjoyable Airport for Passengers and Cleanest Airport in the Middle East.

In addition, Salalah Airport was named to the Director General’s Roll of Excellence, one of ACI’s highest honours, recognising airports that have consistently maintained top performance over the years. Muscat International Airport was included in the same list last year, reaffirming its regional leadership.

These accolades add to the growing list of international awards earned by Oman Airports, underscoring its commitment to enhancing the passenger experience and consolidating the Sultanate of Oman’s position as a leading regional aviation hub. — ONA

Oman, ChinaAMC sign MoU to boost bilateral investments

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

CHINA ASSET MANAGEMENT CO (CHINAAMC) — a major mutual fund manager in China with assets exceeding \$423 billion under management — announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with an Omani government delegation representing a number of state and public sector financial institutions.

The MoU, aimed at catalysing two-way bilateral investment projects, also lays “the groundwork for further financial cooperation between China, Oman and the Gulf States”, Beijing-headquartered ChinaAMC — billed as one of the country’s largest fund managers — noted.

Representing the Omani side were senior executives from Oman Investment Authority, the Financial Services Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange and Muscat Clearing & Depository, as well as investment managers Mars Development & Investment and Jabal Asset Management. Signing the MoU were ChinaAMC CEO Li Yimei and Jabal Asset Management CEO Evgeny Korovin.

The MoU is one of several agreements forged during the delegation’s weeklong tour of major Chinese cities, which included high-level meetings in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Beijing. The Omani officials



Representatives from Oman pictured during their visit to ChinaAMC’s head office in Beijing recently

engaged with representatives of Chinese regulators, stock exchanges, sovereign funds and other local government entities. In all, around 15 such meetings took place, including with ChinaAMC and CITIC Securities (China’s largest full-service investment bank and brokerage firm). Importantly, the latest MoU builds on a partnership between ChinaAMC and Jabal Asset Management, first unveiled late last year, which launched the Loong Fund to enable access to China’s equity market. Jabal Asset Management is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Omani government and

Oman Investment Authority is an anchor investor in the Loong Fund. Following that agreement, ChinaAMC became the first mutual fund company in China to partner with the Omani government.

Among other key pacts clinched during the Omani delegation’s visit to China, the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) signed separate Memoranda of Cooperation with the Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE) and the Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SZSE) as part of its efforts to strengthen international partnerships and develop capital markets.

Furthermore, the Future Fund Oman (FFO), an Oman Investment Authority (OIA) fund and Templewater, a leading pan-Asia alternative asset manager, signed an agreement to launch Oman’s first dedicated Energy Transition Fund (ETF) in Hong Kong. With an initial capital base of \$200 million, the Fund is designed to catalyse Oman’s energy transformation and economic diversification under Oman Vision 2040. It will focus on high-impact sectors including clean molecules, energy storage, e-fuels, smart mobility, renewables and green data centres.

Oman-India forum explores new economic horizons

NEW DELHI: As part of the Sultanate of Oman’s efforts to strengthen its international economic relations and support the diversification objectives of Oman Vision 2040, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, represented by Invest Oman, participated in the FICCI LEADS 2025 Forum hosted in New Delhi. The event brought together leading business figures and international experts to discuss global trade issues, the green economy, innovation and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

In this context, Invest Oman organised the “Advantage Oman — India” Business Dialogue, a roundtable that gathered prominent investors and executives of leading Indian companies. The session focused on priority sectors for both sides, including mining, pharmaceuticals and real estate development, with the aim of showcasing Oman’s promising investment opportunities and reinforcing economic and trade cooperation between Muscat and New Delhi.

The dialogue served as an effective platform for direct engagement between the Omani and Indian business communities, fostering opportunities for partnerships and joint investments that advance mutual interests. The



Invest Oman organised the “Advantage Oman — India” Business Dialogue, a roundtable that gathered prominent investors and executives of leading Indian companies.

Omani delegation also presented the Sultanate of Oman’s key competitive advantages, including its strategic geographic location, long-term stability, major ongoing projects and a wide array of incentives and enablers designed to improve the investment climate.

Iibtisam bint Ahmed al Faroojiyah, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for

Investment Promotion, emphasised that the organisation of this dialogue reflects Oman’s commitment to strengthening economic ties with the Republic of India. She noted that the event provided an ideal platform for direct engagement with the Indian business community and for highlighting the unique opportunities that position Oman as an attractive destination for high-value

investments. “Oman offers a competitive investment environment supported by government facilitation and strategic projects that open broad horizons for sustainable growth”, she added.

Pankaj Kanaksi Gokaldas Khimji, Adviser for External Trade and International Cooperation at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, underscored that Oman attaches great importance to building strategic partnerships with India, guided by a clear vision to enhance its role as a regional investment hub.

He stated: “This dialogue represents a pivotal step towards expanding avenues of cooperation with the Indian business community and showcasing the competitive advantages that Oman offers to support business growth and joint investments”. The “Advantage Oman – India” Business Dialogue forms part of a series of international promotional initiatives led by the Sultanate of Oman, through Invest Oman and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, to consolidate its position as a regional investment hub and to establish effective economic partnerships with global markets. The Republic of India is recognised as a strategic and promising partner across several key sectors.

NUCLEAR DEFENCE

Australia to invest \$8 bn in N-sub shipyard



Australia said it would spend \$8 billion to establish defence facilities in Western Australia to help deliver submarines under the AUKUS nuclear submarine deal.

The AUKUS pact, agreed upon by Australia, Britain and the US in 2021, aims to provide Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines from the next decade to counter China’s ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region.

SALES SLOWDOWN

China plans to ‘stabilise’ auto sector growth



China unveiled a plan to ‘stabilise’ growth in its auto sector in the face of a price war between competitors and export woes, state media reported. Announced jointly by eight government departments, the plan for 2025 and 2026 “stresses cost surveys and price monitoring”, as well as encouraging innovation and domestic demand, according to Xinhua.

ECONOMY BOOST

IFC signs \$500m contract with Basrah Gas



The World Bank’s International Finance Corporation (IFC) signed a \$500 million investment contract with Iraq’s Basrah Gas Co on Saturday for associated gas and the development of facilities at the Umm Qasr port.

In a later statement, the Basra Gas Co said the loan will finance ‘one of its most significant’ projects that will limit gas flaring and strengthen the Iraqi economy.

OPINION

Innovation: Forging a knowledge-based economy



**DR HILAL
AL SAWAI**

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert

RECENTLY, THE country of Oman has become one of the most innovative centres in the Middle East. thanks to the country’s Oman Vision 2040 road map, Oman is in the process of transitioning from a resource-heavy economy to one that is sustain with the core pillars of imagination, research and technology. This metamorphosis is not only changing the business world, but also motivating a new generation of entrepreneurs, business people and researchers.

INNOVATION IN OMAN VISION 2040
At the heart of Oman’s transformation is Oman Vision 2040, the country’s most important and long term strategic development approach to the future. It aims to shift the emphasis from the growth of oil and gas revenues to the development of new sectors of the economy that offer growth and employment opportunities to the population. Oman is focusing on the development of the renewable power as well as ancillary industries, logistics, fisheries, tourism and high end technologies, seeking to become a sustainable innovator in the region.

The establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation along with the Oman Vision 2040 status tracking and reporting unit are important government efforts to develop dreaming and detailing encouraging policies. Today, innovation is by far the most critical factor to compete in the world’s economy.

Innovation is an issue Oman’s universities and research centres are focusing on.

Sultan Qaboos University has made strides across different fields such as AI as well as sustainability and has founded research programmes for them. Oman has continued the alignment of technological development and the backbone of the Oman economy by the development of Innovation Park Muscat (IPM) which serves as an infrastructure for R&D integration of Oman’s universities, the government and the private sector.

These initiatives offer Oman’s youth an opportunity to sharpen the relevant skills and knowledge as well as the learning of practical experiences that will give them an edge internationally. Oman’s pride is that this generation is being raised to grasp problems and treat them as avenues for innovation.

STARTUPS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
There is a growing culture of entrepreneurship activity driven by a young vibrant population combined with the development of a new venture creation framework with many incubators, accelerators and capital. Riyada, the Authority for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises and Oman Technology Fund are examples of such organisations that are dedicated to supporting new venture creators with advisory services, funds and collaboration networking.

Fintech startups providing digital banking solutions and companies venturing into green technologies show that innovators from Oman are targeting both local and global problems. The Oman Innovation Festival serves to showcase the work of these innovators and foster cross-industry collaboration.

The establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation along with the Oman Vision 2040 status tracking and reporting unit are important government efforts to develop dreaming and detailing encouraging policies. Today, innovation is by far the most critical factor to compete in the world’s economy.

Oman has solar and wind investments in the leadership position in the green hydrogen global race, which has positioned the country as a leader in the renewable energy market. Oman is capturing the world clean energy shift.

Such projects contribute to energy independence and reduce fossil energy reliance and are set to improve jobs and long-term sustainability with policies that ensure technological growth.

INNOVATION CULTURE
Policies and large projects aside, innovation in Oman is equally a matter of cultural change. More and more, schools are introducing STEM curricula designed to nurture problem-solving and critical thinking skills at an early age. National-level competitions and hackathons enable both students and professionals to demonstrate their inventive skills and transform their ideas into real-world solutions.

This cultural change means that innovation will be a part of everyday life, not only the exclusive domain of laboratories and executive offices. People will be inspired to think differently and actively participate in the country’s advancement.

THE WAY FORWARD
Oman is still at the beginning of its journey into innovation; the advancement, however, is visible. Active academic institutions, strong government support and an entrepreneurs’ generation are working for the Sultanate of Oman to thoroughly construct a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

CLOSING THE CERTIFICATION GAP IN CORROSION PROTECTION



**NAJAH
AL RIYAMI**

The writer is a Media and Communication Master’s graduate

Across the Gulf, billions of dollars are poured into pipelines, desalination plants and critical infrastructure designed to fuel economies and sustain societies. Yet beneath the layers of steel and protective coatings lies a more fragile foundation: the workforce itself. Without consistent training and internationally recognised certifications, welds can fail, coatings may be misapplied and inspections lose their credibility — leading to costly downtime, environmental risks and shortened asset lifespans.

For Alan Thomas, CEO of the Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP), the issue is clear. “Certification is not just a box to check — it’s a vital safeguard”, he explains. “Globally, corrosion causes an estimated \$2.5 trillion in economic losses yearly and in the oil and gas sector alone, corrosion-related failures can account for 20–30% of unplanned maintenance costs. Certification ensures coatings are applied correctly, welds meet specifications, inspections are credible and downtime is minimised. It creates a shared language of competence and accountability”.

That shared language is something Oman and the wider Gulf are beginning to embrace more urgently. With over \$1 trillion in infrastructure projects planned or underway across the GCC, the stakes are high. “There’s a growing recognition in the Gulf that technical excellence must be matched by workforce readiness”, Thomas notes. “Oman, in particular, is taking steps to close the training gap by investing in localised education and seeking partnerships to upskill its workforce. We see increasing demand for internationally recognised credentials and AMPP is here to meet that need, not just with global standards, but with local delivery”.

The risks of inaction are stark. In high-salinity environments like the Gulf, small mistakes can snowball into catastrophic failures. Thomas warns that “up to 40% of pipeline failures are linked to corrosion-related issues, many due to human error, misapplied coatings, or inspection oversights. Without properly certified professionals, these risks multiply — jeopardising safety, driving up lifecycle costs and even damaging reputations”.

For AMPP, the path forward is about building capability, not dependency. The association has already certified more than 85,000 professionals in over 150 countries, with credentials spanning corrosion engineering, coatings inspection, cathodic protection and more.

Practical path to food security and good jobs

STAND ON our coast at sunrise and you see why this story matters. The sea is generous, but it is not limitless. Aquaculture — farming fish and shellfish in controlled conditions — lets us take pressure off wild stocks while still feeding families and building new businesses. It is simple in idea and powerful in impact: clean water, healthy seed, good feed, careful monitoring and a cold chain that keeps quality intact from farm to table.

Over the past year, Oman’s farms produced about 5,500 tonnes of seafood, worth more than RO 12.5 million. This year, the pipeline has grown, with 22 projects under way and investment commitments exceeding RO 1 billion. These are not abstract numbers. They mean new hatcheries, ponds, cages, laboratories, ice plants and transport routes. They mean technicians with stable work, coastal SMEs supplying services and young Omanis choosing a career that keeps them close to home.

Why should the public care? Because aquaculture answers three national needs at once. First, food security. We get reliable, high-quality protein at stable prices, even when global markets are volatile. Second, diversification. We create non-oil value and steady jobs along the coast and inland. Third, sustainability. We protect wild fisheries by producing more in controlled settings with health and environmental standards.

To make this sector truly work, we should keep the approach practical and human. The first step is time. Investors can manage risk, but they struggle with delay. A single, digital licensing lane with clear timelines would help projects move from plan to production faster. When government publishes the target days for each step — and meets them — confidence rises and costs fall.

The second step is place. We should map and set aside suitable sea areas and corridors for land-based farms that clean and reuse water. This avoids conflict, protects the



Over the past year, Oman’s farms produced about 5,500 tonnes of seafood, worth more than RO 12.5 million



**QASIM AL
MAASHANI**

The writer is the head of business and politics section at Oman Observer

environment and gives operators certainty. Good sites mean healthier stock, lower mortality and better yields.

The third step is value. A tonne that leaves the farm whole and on ice earns one price. The same tonne, portioned, quick-frozen, branded and traceable earns more. Processing near farms, strong cold storage and reliable refrigerated transport through Salalah and Al Duqm can lift incomes without lifting catch. A simple national quality mark — “Seafood Oman” — backed by testing and QR codes would tell buyers exactly what they are getting and where it came from.

The fourth step is know-how. Aquaculture is a craft that blends science and routine. We need hands-on training in hatchery work, feeding schedules, water testing and disease prevention. Partnerships with universities and equipment suppliers can deliver short courses that lead straight to jobs. When farms meet clear biosecurity standards, insurers can offer lower premiums. Good practice then becomes good business.

The fifth step is cost. Feed and energy can strain margins. Encouraging local feed partnerships, exploring alternative inputs such

as seaweed-based proteins and supporting clean energy for cold rooms and ice plants will make our producers more resilient. These are sensible measures that pay back in lower operating costs and stronger sustainability credentials.

None of this ignores risk. Disease episodes can spread quickly if rules are not followed. Skills gaps can slow new projects. International markets can change. But these risks are manageable with steady discipline: regular testing, transparent reporting, clear movement controls and honest communication between authorities and operators. When the rules are fair and predictable, most people follow them.

Aquaculture is not a silver bullet. It is a solid tool that fits our geography, our labour market and our economic goals. It keeps more value inside Oman. It offers real careers for young people who want technical work tied to the sea. It lets us present a national product with pride: Omani abalone raised to a premium standard, shrimp grown responsibly, finfish handled with care and freshwater species farmed in efficient, land-based systems.

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TRENDS

Popular Gaza ice cream parlour stirs nostalgia with first UAE branch



BELOVED Palestinian ice cream parlour Kazem, forced to shutter its Gaza doors in 2023 as the Israel-Hamas war escalated, has opened up in the United Arab Emirates, offering not just frozen treats, but a taste of nostalgia to the local community.

Kazem is now serving scoops of ice cream and its famous barrad, a traditional Palestinian slushy drink with citrus flavours, in Ajman, a small emirate roughly 45 km (28 miles) north of Dubai, the region’s tourism and business hub.

Owner Mohammad Kazem Abu Shaban, whose father founded the business, said he chose Ajman for its established local Palestinian community.

“Every time they come here, they say it brings back memories of 30, 40 years ago”, Abu Shaban said. “It brings back memories of the days when they used to go to Gaza and drink the barrad that I’m famous for”. Kazem began serving ice cream in northern Gaza in 1950 and remained a local fixture for over 70 years before it was forced to close.

Its Gaza location reopened in February, but supply shortages and instability made it impossible to sustain operations, Abu Shaban said, adding the shop opening relies on the availability of raw materials.

“By God, the situation in Gaza is bad”. Opening in Ajman was a way to preserve a piece of Palestinian heritage far from home, said Abu Shaban, who hoped to open branches in other cities like Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Dubai’s Mohammad Khamis Ali al Mazrouei said he understood the hype around Kazem once he had tried the ice cream and barrad.

“I mean, it is special”, he said.

For Abu Shaban, who has lost his brother and niece in the war, Kazem is not just about dessert, but a way to keep memories of Gaza alive, one scoop at a time.

“It is an indescribable feeling. Your family, relatives and friends come; and they bring back the memories we lost in Gaza”. — Reuters

VERA WANG
HAUTE



FASHION

A model presents a creation at Vera Wang’s Haute Spring/Summer 2026 wedding dress collection show during China Fashion Week in Beijing. — AFP



MUSIC

Nigerian Afrobeats singer and songwriter Adekunle Almoruf Kosoko, known professionally as Adekunle Gold and AG Baby, poses during a photo session in Paris. — AFP



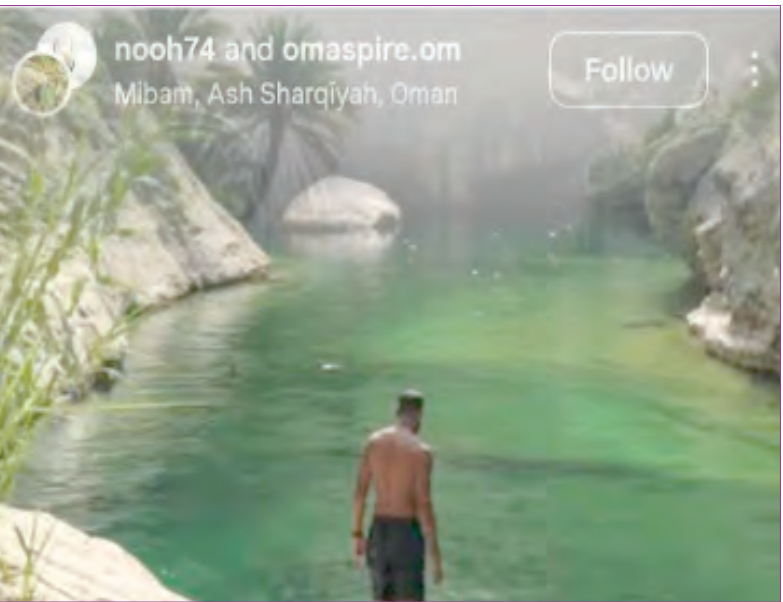
MUSEUM

Harriet Reed, Curator of Contemporary Performance at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), poses with late British musician David Bowie’s Ziggy Stardust guitar. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Through the Narrow Alleys

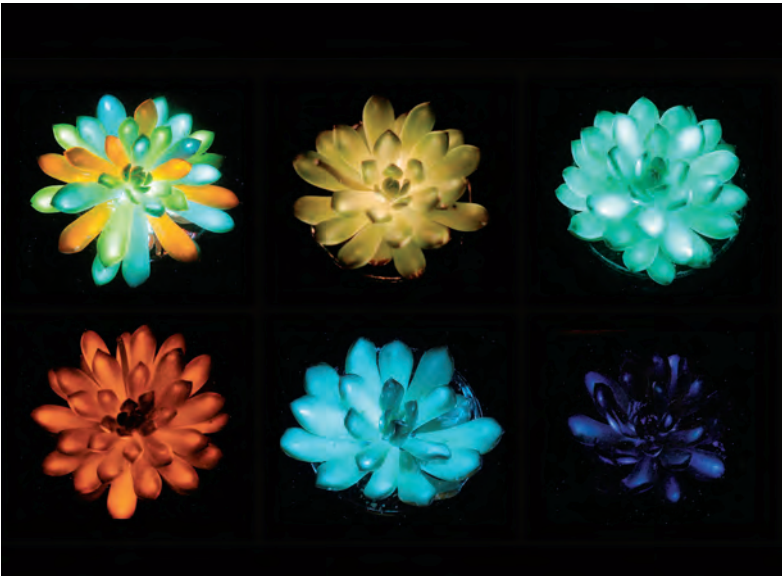


Beauty of Remote Places

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.

It’s a night light.
It’s a plant. It’s a
glowing succulent.



PLANTS already serve us in countless ways, providing food, clothing and the air we breathe. In the future, they may even help us find our way to the bathroom at night.

A recent study by researchers at South China Agricultural University details how they created glow-in-the-dark plants by injecting synthetic materials into living succulents. These bioengineered plants can emit various colours and “recharge” with light exposure, offering a potential new source of illumination.

The project was carried out at the university’s Key Laboratory for Biobased Materials and Energy. The researchers aimed to develop “a living, light-charged plant lamp”, explained Shuting Liu, the paper’s first author. Although glowing plants have appeared in science fiction, they have only been part of real-world experimentation

since the 1980s, when scientists inserted a firefly gene into tobacco plants. More recently, commercial glowing petunias have been produced.

Liu’s team used a substance called strontium aluminate — similar to the glow-in-the-dark stars often stuck on bedroom ceilings. Unlike chemical reactions in bioluminescent organisms, strontium aluminate exhibits phosphorescence: it absorbs energy from external light and releases it gradually.

She aimed to achieve a brighter glow by using larger particles, about the size of a human red blood cell. After trial and error with various plants, she found success with a succulent called Echeveria Mebina, where the particles produced a smooth, emerald-like shimmer across the leaves. “It looked almost magical”, Liu said. — CARA GLAIMO /NYT



Following the
sounds of Arabic to
rediscover Paris

PARIS is often associated with a single language: the romantic melody of French that echoes through its cafes, bookstores and cobbled streets. But as a cosmopolitan capital city, it is home to many more — and one in particular has helped shape the way Parisians speak, think and connect.

Arabic is France’s second-most-spoken language, with roughly 4 million speakers. From cafe terraces to music, art and food, its influence is woven into the fabric of Parisian life. As someone who moved to Paris to learn French, I’ve been intrigued by how many Arabic words have made their way into everyday speech. Expressions like wesh (what’s up?), kiffer (to like) and bled (village, hometown) are borrowed from North African dialects and adopted into the city’s vibrant slang. Last year, curious about its role in French culture, I signed up for Arabic lessons. Aside from a basic notion of literary Arabic, they gave me an insight into how it has been influencing French for centuries, giving us words like pastèque (watermelon), magasin (shop) and jupe (skirt). Paris has also attracted Arab intellectuals, artists, students and writers who contribute to its cultural and linguistic fabric. Yet visible traces of this influence are scattered and often overshadowed by dominant narratives of French identity. The French Constitution states that “the language of the Republic is French”, and discussions around the place of Arabic in society are often highly politicised.

“Generally, the Arabic language is perceived negatively by a large part of the French population”, said French Lebanese journalist Nabil Wakim, author of “Arabic for Everyone: Why My Language Is Taboo in France”. In recent years, however, a growing number of voices — from writers to historians and cultural figures — have been celebrating the history of the Arabic language and culture in the French capital and beyond. For visitors interested in linguistic and cultural discovery, here are some of the people, neighbourhoods and businesses where Arabic has quietly shaped everyday life in Paris.



‘THEY PICK UP WORDS FROM OUR DIALECT’

On a recent afternoon, Chez Baya, a Tunisian restaurant in the 11th arrondissement, flowed with the smell of freshly baked mlawi (flatbread) and ojja (eggs poached in a tomato and pepper sauce).

Kamel Faleh, the owner, tries not to speak in his mother tongue in front of his French-speaking customers — “so as not to annoy them”, he said. But some are very interested in learning Arabic: His restaurant sits across the street from my language school and students often drop by after class in the evenings and on the weekends.

Faleh told me that when he first arrived in France, he didn’t speak French and had to learn it. “It’s nice to see people adapting to us as well”, he said. “They pick up words from our dialect, like ‘chwoya’, which means ‘a little bit’”. Arabic has been taught in Paris at least since the creation of the Collège de France, one of France’s most prestigious research institutions, in 1530 — which means that Arabic was taught in France even before French was, said Tarek Abouelgamal, a linguist and the educational coordinator of the language school at Paris’ Arab World Institute.

The institute, which opened in 1987 in a contemporary building on the Left Bank, is dedicated to preserving and promoting Arabic

language and culture. Its library hosts weekly poetry readings and its museum hosts a vibrant lineup of exhibitions.

‘THE TOP NAMES IN ARABIC LITERATURE’

The Arab World Institute’s position in the Latin Quarter acknowledges the long-standing relationship between the city’s Arab population and this iconic Parisian neighbourhood, where the Grand Mosque of Paris was built in the 1920s. Over the summer, the museum hosts walking tours that explore this little-known part of its history.

Home to the Sorbonne University, the Latin Quarter is the symbolic birthplace of the cafe as a place where intellectuals converged to debate and exchange ideas. The introduction of coffee can be traced back to the mid-17th century with the arrival of Ottoman ambassador Soliman Aga, who dazzled Parisian high society with lavish “coffee ceremonies” and contributed to the opening of the first French coffee shops, including Le Procope, a cafe on many travellers’ itineraries.

“The Latin Quarter is known all over the world for its cafes, but what’s interesting is that a neighbourhood that is so symbolic of 20th-century Paris is also very symbolic of Arab culture in the city”, said Coline Houssais, the author of “Paris in Arab Letters”, which explores the relationship between Arab writers and the City of Light.

Among the Sorbonne’s famous alumni are some of the most notable figures in Arabic literature, including Egyptian authors Mohammed Hussein Heikal, whose 1913 novel “Zeinab” is considered by many scholars to be the first Arabic novel and Taha Hussein, who was nicknamed the Dean of Arabic Literature; and playwright Tawfiq al Hakim, who spent much of his student years frequenting theatres and the Paris Opera.

“Paris is full of the top names in Arabic literature and continues to have strong ties with the Arab world”, said Caterina Detti, when we meet one morning at her bookshop, Maktaba Berfin, one of few in the city dedicated solely to Arabic-language books. — NYT

FEATURES



BLENDING ANCIENT
TECHNIQUES WITH
MODERN METHODS
TO ELEVATE OMANI
SPICE

AFRAH AL BALUSHI

AS DAWN begins to break over Al Seeb, the aroma of freshly roasted spices drifts through the modest kitchen of Aisha al Farsi. While most residents are still asleep, she is already immersed in her craft. Today, like every day, she starts early, driven by a passion to preserve and elevate her country's rich culinary heritage.

Arranged on her worktable are bowls of high-quality spices — cumin, coriander, turmeric, cinnamon and cardamom — all sourced carefully from local farmers and trusted suppliers.

Her hands, steady and practiced, roast certain spices in a small pan over gentle heat, releasing a fragrant aroma that fills the room. This step, rooted in tradition, is vital to unlocking the full flavour of her blends, a technique passed down through generations but perfected by her.

Once roasted, the spices are ground meticulously — either with a traditional mortar and pestle or a modern electric grinder — until they form a smooth, fragrant mixture. Each batch Aisha produces is a labour of love, crafted with precision to ensure that her marinated meats, rice dishes and soups are infused with authentic Omani flavours.

Her journey into spice-making began out of curiosity — an insatiable desire to understand how Oman's cherished spice blends were created. She started experimenting in her small kitchen, sourcing the freshest ingredients and testing various combinations. Her goal was simple: to produce high-quality, natural

'bazaar' spice blend, crafted from a mix of coriander, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, black pepper and cloves, remains a cornerstone of traditional cuisine. Preparing this blend requires roasting and grinding spices in specific proportions — arts that Aisha masters with care.

This blend isn't just a kitchen staple. It transforms dishes such as shuwa — slow-cooked marinated meats often cooked in underground sand pits — and madfoon, a flavoursome method of cooking rice and meat together. These dishes are woven into Oman's cultural fabric, particularly during festive occasions and owe much of their distinctive character to the



spices and marinades that could meet the needs of her local community and reduce reliance on imported products. To reach a wider audience, Aisha actively uses social media platforms to market her products among family, friends and online followers. Her digital campaigns showcase her unique blends, share cooking tips and highlight the cultural significance of Omani spices, helping her build a growing customer base both locally and internationally.

Over time, her passion blossomed into a business. Today, Aisha runs her own enterprise, specialising in Omani barbecue marinades and spice mixes that she sells at prominent markets such as Muttrah and Al Seeb, as well as through social media channels. Her products are notably distinguished by their authenticity and fresh, natural ingredients — qualities that have garnered a growing following both in Oman and abroad.

"I want to support my community and contribute to Oman's economy", Aisha explains. "That's why I'm committed to creating more marketing outlets and expanding our reach through electronic platforms, which are vital to connecting with customers far and wide". She emphasises that her vision aligns with supporting economic development by fostering local entrepreneurship and creating more avenues for women to participate in the spice industry.

Her advocacy extends to supporting women entrepreneurs through training and support programmes and she encourages community participation in markets and promotional events. She believes that such initiatives would not only help women like herself thrive but also foster a vibrant, sustainable spice industry that honours Oman's historic trade routes.

Behind her work lies a deep appreciation for Oman's ancient Spice Route — the network that once clothed this nation in a fragrant legacy. Oman's treasured

spices Aisha so lovingly crafts.

Omani cuisine is renowned for its bold, aromatic flavours. Dishes like maqboos — a fragrant rice dish often enriched with saffron — and seafood seasoned with vibrant spices showcase the country's diverse culinary influences. Using fresh herbs such as coriander, mint and parsley, along with her spice mixes, Aisha elevates these ingredients into a symphony of flavours.

Her commitment to quality is matched by her dedication to sharing her knowledge. She often hosts small workshops for women, teaching them how to prepare traditional spices and encourages community support for local producers. Her goal is to create more avenues where women can earn livelihoods, preserve traditions and promote Oman's culinary identity globally.

In the closing hours of her day, Aisha carefully packages her spice blends, ensuring they are airtight and preserved for long-term use. Her family gathers around a meal seasoned with her homemade spices — a simple yet profound moment of pride.

Every jar and packet symbolises not only her heritage and her hard work but also her vision to expand Oman's spice market. She dreams of making her spices accessible beyond local markets — introducing her products to international markets, collaborating with local farmers to ensure sustainable sourcing and establishing dedicated spaces where women can come together, learn and grow.

Aisha envisions a future where Oman's rich spice heritage is celebrated worldwide, where her efforts inspire other women entrepreneurs and where the aroma of Oman's spices continues to weave through markets, kitchens and communities across the globe, carrying with it the story of Oman's ancient trade routes, its vibrant culture and the dedication of women like herself who are shaping its future.